

Obsessive Thoughts and Emotional Regulations of Day Scholars and Hostellers

Shangavi K.^{1*}, Dr. Vyjayanthi Mala²

ABSTRACT

Obsessive-compulsive thoughts are recurrent ideas that can lead to repetitive behaviors. These are inappropriate thoughts, visuals, cravings, anxieties, or doubts that frequently come to the mind of an individual. Emotional regulation is the capacity to identify, control, and appropriately react to emotions. Compared with day scholars, hostellers frequently experience higher levels of stress, anxiety, and depression (Preet Kamal, 2023). Day scholars usually have the support of their family and friends, maintain a sense of familiarity and strength, and have greater freedom to manage their time and activities regarding regulating, balancing, and contributing to their emotional regulation. There are few studies on obsessive-compulsive thoughts in this demographic. This study examined and compared the obsessive-compulsive thoughts and emotional regulation of day scholars and hostellers. The researcher adopted an ex post facto study design. Data were gathered using a convenient sampling technique, and 141 participants were selected. The Obsessive-Compulsive Inventory-Revised (Foa et al., 2002) and the Emotional Regulation Questionnaire (Gross & John, 2003) were used to collect the data. Data were assessed using the independent sample t-test and Karl Pearson's product-moment correlation. The findings showed a strong positive correlation between emotional regulation and compulsive thoughts. Obsessive thoughts are more common among hostellers than among day scholars, and among those who have been at the hostel for more than three years, the frequency of obsessive thoughts is higher. There were no gender differences in emotional regulation or obsessive thoughts. Compared with urban residents, rural residents have more obsessive thinking. In terms of obsessive thought and emotional regulation, there was no significant difference between an extended family and a nuclear family.

Keywords: *Day Scholars, Hostellers, Obsessive-Compulsive Thoughts*

Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) is a mental illness that can affect people of different ages and backgrounds. Uncontrollable, unwanted thoughts (obsessions) and ritualized, repetitive behaviors (compulsions) are the characteristics that a person feels driven to perform. Obsessions are defined as thoughts, emotions, or urges that recur uncontrollably in a person's mind. They are often distressing and distracting, and they can cause severe anxiety or distress. Emotional regulation is the ability to recognize,

¹MPhil Scholar, Department of Psychology, Madras School of Social Work, Chennai, India

²Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Madras School of Social Work, Chennai, India

*Corresponding Author

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manage, and respond to one's own feelings. It involves taking action to modify the intensity of an emotional experience without avoiding or suppressing emotions. It is possible to build emotional control skills through practice, and they are advantageous to both mental and physical health. Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) is defined by the recurrent use of inappropriate coping techniques, and it has been linked to impaired emotion regulation. According to Ferreira et al. (2021), individuals suffering from obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) tend to suppress their emotions instead of using effective reappraisal approaches. Kreiser et al. (2019) found a correlation between poor emotion cognition and fear of emotions, specifically dread of positive and negative affect. OCD sufferers frequently perceive intrusive thoughts as having more negative significance and possible consequences. Fergus and Bardeen (2014) state that cognitive-behavioral models of obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) propose that individuals with dysfunctional beliefs experience increased emotional distress when confronted with intrusive thoughts because they evaluate them negatively. In patients with OCD, who typically struggle to control their emotions, strong emotions may be linked to obsessive thinking (Khosravani 2018). Compulsive behaviors and other maladaptive emotion management strategies, such as compulsion and suppression, are common in OCD sufferers (Hong et al., 2022). The negative effects of OCD may be lessened by improving emotional regulation abilities, and acceptance and cognitive reappraisal may help alleviate the suffering associated with OCD symptoms (Ferrández-Mas, 2023). Anxiety illness known as obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) is characterized by recurrent, unpleasant thoughts that are called obsessions and compulsions, which are behaviors or ideas that are repeated to stop worrying or prevent harm (Jawed 2021).

METHODOLOGY

Aim of the Study

This study aimed to investigate and compare the emotional regulation and obsessive-compulsive thought of day scholars and hostellers.

Variables

The variables in this study were obsessive-compulsive thoughts and emotional regulation. Accommodation type, number of years staying in a hostel, gender, locality, and family type are considered demographic variables.

Objectives

- To assess the level of obsessive-compulsive thoughts and emotional regulation among Day Scholars and hostellers.
- To assess the relationship between obsessive-compulsive thoughts and emotional regulation among day scholars and hostellers.
- To measure the level of obsessive-compulsive thoughts and emotional regulation with regard to socio-demographic details.

Hypotheses

In accordance with the objectives of the study, the following hypotheses were formulated:

- H1: There will be a significant relationship between obsessive thoughts and emotional regulation among Day Scholars and hostellers.
- H2: There will be a significant difference in obsessive thoughts with regard to accommodation type.

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- H3: There will be a significant difference in emotional regulation with regard to accommodation type.
- H4: There will be a significant difference in obsessive thoughts with regard to the number of years staying in the hostel.
- H5: There will be a significant difference in emotional regulation with regard to the number of years staying in the hostel.
- H6: There will be a significant difference in obsessive thoughts with regard to gender.
- H7: There will be a significant difference in emotional regulation with regard to gender.
- H8: There will be a significant difference in obsessive thoughts with regard to locality.
- H9: There will be a significant difference in emotional regulation with regard to locality.
- H10: There will be a significant difference in obsessive thoughts with regard to family type.
- H11: There will be a significant difference in emotional regulation with regard to family type.

Research Design

In this study, an ex post facto research design was used. Data were collected using a convenient sampling technique with 141 participants. This study investigated how day scholars and hostelers regulate their emotions and obsessive-compulsive thoughts. This study sheds light on the significant differences between day scholars and hostelers on obsessive-compulsive thoughts and emotional regulation, in addition to examining the demographic variables (gender, location, number of years staying in a hostel, type of accommodation, and number of years staying in a family).

Tools Used

- **Obsessive-Compulsive Inventory-Revised:** In 2002, Foa et al. developed the Obsessive-Compulsive Inventory-Revised. A self-report tool called OCI-R is used to assess obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) symptoms. According to Foa, Kozak, Salkovskis, Coles, and Amir (1998), it is a shorter version of the OCD. Using a 5-point Likert scale, the participants assessed each of the 18 questions. This scale measures OCD symptoms using six subscales: washing, checking, neutralizing, obsessive ordering, and hoarding. In addition, the OCI-R can be used as a screening tool to monitor the efficacy of therapy or to assist in the diagnosis of OCD and hoarding disorder. Adults and teenagers (16 years of age and older; Piqueras et al., 2009) can use the scale. The score is generated by adding the item scores. There is a range of possible scores from 0 to 72. The average score for OCD patients was 28.0 (SD = 13.53). Scores at or above the 21 cutoff threshold indicate a high likelihood of OCD. A higher score denotes more severe symptoms of OCD. These things have a total score that ranges from 0 to 60. A cutoff score of 12 was used with 82% sensitivity and 83% specificity to determine whether an OCD diagnosis was possible. OCI-R Cronbach's alphas for both components were high ($r = .92$ for OCD and $.94$ for hoarding disorder), according to Wootton et al. (2015).
- **Emotional Regulation Questionnaire:** Gross and John developed the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire in 2003. The Emotional Regulation Questionnaire was designed to assess individual differences in the frequency of two emotion

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management strategies: cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression. The purpose of the 10-item test was to assess respondents' tendency to regulate their emotions by (1) expressive suppression or (2) cognitive reappraisal. From 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), participants rated each item on a 7-point Likert-type scale. Reverse scoring is not applied. The items can be classified into two categories: reappraisal items (numbers 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, and 10) and suppression items (numbers 2, 4, 6, and 9). The average alpha reliability for reappraisal and suppression was .79 and .73, respectively. The test-retest reliability over a 3-month period was .69 for both measures. The validity of the criteria and incremental measures was determined.

Data Analysis

Table 1: Relationship between obsessive thoughts and emotional regulation

| Variables | Emotional Regulation |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| Obsessive Thoughts | .334** |

** The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Pearson's correlation between obsessive thoughts and emotional regulation is shown in Table 1. The correlation was highly significant ($p < .01$), and there was a positive correlation between an increase in emotional regulation and an increase in obsessive thinking, and vice versa. As a result, hypothesis 1 has been supported. A previous research investigation revealed that hostellers frequently have to rely on themselves because they are not at their family's house or familiar surroundings (Gupta, 2020).

Table 2: Differences in Obsessive Thoughts with Regard to Accommodation Type

| Obsessive Thoughts | Mean | SD | "t" value | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|--------------------|-------|--------|-----------|-----------------|
| Day Scholar | 25.43 | 12.853 | 2.275 | .024 |
| Hosteller | 30.56 | 12.746 | | |

The independent t-test of the differences in compulsive thoughts between day scholars and hostellers is shown in Table 2. Day scholars have a mean value of 25.43, whereas hostellers have a mean value of 30.56. There is a significant difference in obsessive thoughts concerning the type of accommodation, as the observed differences are statistically significant at .01 level. Thus, hypothesis 2 is supported. Furthermore, compared with the overall mean value of obsessive thoughts, research indicates that hostellers have higher levels of obsessive thoughts than day scholars.

Table 3: Differences in Emotional Regulation with Regard to Accommodation Type

| Emotional Regulation | Mean | SD | "t" value | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|----------------------|-------|--------|-----------|-----------------|
| Day Scholar | 45.22 | 11.591 | .310 | .757 |
| Hosteller | 45.80 | 8.550 | | |

The independent t-test of the differences in emotional regulation between the Day Scholar and Hosteller is presented in Table 3. Day Scholar's mean value is 45.22, whereas Hosteller's mean value is 45.80. There appears to be no discernible difference between the means of these observed values, which suggests that people's ability to control their emotions is not significantly impacted by the type of accommodation. Thus, hypothesis 3 is not supported. Previous research revealed that because hostellers struggle with self-regulation of their emotions, they may be more emotionally mature than day scholars

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(Sowmyashree & Sreenivas, 2019). Sunny et al. (2018) revealed that hostellers might have greater emotional intelligence than day scholars.

Table 4: Differences in Obsessive Thoughts with Regard to the Number of Years Staying in a Hostel

| Obsessive Thoughts | Mean | SD | “t” value | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|--------------------|-------|--------|-----------|-----------------|
| Less than 3 years | 26.11 | 12.402 | 2.266 | .027 |
| More than 3 years | 32.97 | 11.237 | | |

The independent t-test of the differences in obsessive thoughts between those who remain in hostels for longer than three years and those who stay for shorter periods is presented in Table 4. Participants staying in hostels for less than three years had a mean value of 26.11, whereas those staying longer than three years had a mean value of 32.97. There was a statistical difference in obsessive thoughts regarding the number of years stayed in hostels, as the observed differences were statistically significant at .05 level. Thus, hypothesis 4 is supported. Furthermore, compared with hostellers who stay for less than three years, the study indicates that those who stay for longer than three years have higher levels of obsessive thoughts.

Table 5: Differences in Emotional Regulation with Regard to the Number of Years Staying in a Hostel

| Emotional Regulation | Mean | SD | “t” value | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|----------------------|-------|-------|-----------|-----------------|
| Less than 3 years | 45.04 | 7.676 | -1.387 | .171 |
| More than 3 years | 47.94 | 8.522 | | |

The independent t-test of the emotional regulation differences between participants who stayed in hostels for more than three years and those who stayed for shorter periods is presented in Table 5. Participants who stayed in hostels for less than three years had a mean value of 45.04, whereas those who stayed in hostels for more than three years had a mean value of 47.94. The observed differences demonstrated that the number of years spent in hostels had no discernible impact on emotional regulation. Thus, hypothesis 5 is not supported. Furthermore, compared with those who stay for less than three years, research indicates that those who stay for longer than three years have somewhat greater levels of emotional regulation.

Table 6: Gender Differences in Obsessive Thoughts

| Obsessive Thoughts | Mean | SD | “t” value | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|--------------------|-------|--------|-----------|-----------------|
| Male | 27.15 | 14.793 | -.086 | .932 |
| Female | 27.34 | 11.247 | | |

Gender differences in obsessive thinking using the independent t-test are shown in Table 6. The results indicate that there was no statistically significant difference in the means of the male and female participants, with mean values of 27.15 and 27.34, respectively. There was no discernible gender difference in obsessive thought patterns based on the lack of differences in these observed values. Therefore, Hypothesis 6 is not supported.

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Table 7: Gender Differences in Emotional Regulation

| Emotional Regulation | Mean | SD | “t” value | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|----------------------|-------|--------|-----------|-----------------|
| Male | 45.30 | 11.581 | | |
| Female | 45.54 | 9.673 | -.135 | .893 |

The independent t-test results for gender differences in emotional regulation are presented in Table 7. The mean values for male and female were 45.30 and 45.54, respectively. There was no significant gender difference in emotional regulation because the observed values were constant. Thus, hypothesis 7 is not supported.

Table 8: Differences in Obsessive Thoughts with Regard to Locality

| Obsessive Thoughts | Mean | SD | “t” value | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|--------------------|-------|--------|-----------|-----------------|
| Urban | 25.15 | 13.098 | | |
| Rural | 31.86 | 11.661 | -2.913 | .004 |

The independent t-test of differences in obsessive thoughts concerning locality is presented in Table 8. In urban areas, the mean value is 25.15, but in rural areas, it is 31.86. The statistical significance of these observed differences at 0.01 level represents a highly significant difference in obsessive thoughts regarding locality. Therefore, hypothesis 8 is supported. Furthermore, compared with the overall mean value of obsessive thoughts, the study indicates that hostellers exhibited more obsessive thoughts than day scholars.

Table 9: Differences in Emotional Regulation with Regard to Locality

| Emotional Regulation | Mean | SD | “t” value | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|----------------------|-------|--------|-----------|-----------------|
| Urban | 45.23 | 11.378 | | |
| Rural | 45.86 | 8.685 | -.330 | .742 |

The independent t-test of differences in emotional regulation concerning locality is presented in Table 9. In a rural area, the mean value is 45.86, whereas in an urban area, it is 45.23. There was no significant difference in emotional regulation based on locality, as the mean of these measured values remained constant. Thus, hypothesis 9 is not supported.

Table 10: Differences in Obsessive Thoughts with Regard to Family Type

| Obsessive Thoughts | Mean | SD | “t” value | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|--------------------|-------|--------|-----------|-----------------|
| Nuclear Family | 27.94 | 13.259 | | |
| Joint Family | 23.70 | 11.206 | 1.438 | .153 |

The independent t-test showed the difference in obsessive thoughts concerning family type, presented in Table 10. A joined family’s mean value is 23.70, whereas the mean value for a nuclear family is 27.94. Based on the mean of these observed values, there was no statistically significant difference in obsessive thoughts associated with family type. Thus, hypothesis 10 is not supported.

Table 11: Differences in Emotional Regulation with Regard to Family Type

| Emotional Regulation | Mean | SD | “t” value | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|----------------------|-------|--------|-----------|-----------------|
| Nuclear Family | 45.27 | 10.698 | | |
| Joint Family | 46.22 | 10.171 | -.391 | .696 |

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The independent t-test of differences in emotional regulation concerning family type is presented in Table 11. The results indicate that the nuclear family has a mean value of 45.23 and the combined family has a mean value of 45.86. The observed mean value does not differ significantly, but family type has little effect on an individual's ability to regulate their emotions. Thus, hypothesis 11 is not supported.

Major Findings

- Obsessive thoughts and emotional regulation have a significantly positive relationship.
- Hostelers have more obsessive thoughts than day scholars.
- There was no significant difference in emotional regulation between the day's scholars and hostelers.
- Hostelers who stayed more than three years in hostels had more obsessive thoughts than those who stayed less than three years in hostels.
- There was no significant difference in emotional regulation between hostellers who stayed in hostels for less than three years and those who stayed in hostels for more than three years.
- No gender difference was observed in obsessive thoughts.
- No gender difference was observed in emotional regulation.
- Rural people have more obsessive thoughts than urban people.
- Rural and urban populations have no significant differences in emotional regulation.
- No difference was observed in obsessive thoughts between the nuclear and joint families.
- No difference was observed in emotional regulation between nuclear and joint families.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study show a statistically significant positive relationship between emotional regulation and obsessive thoughts. This study offers some of the first insights into the important but little-studied impacts on obsessive thought and emotional regulation of gender, place of living, family structure, duration of stay in hostels, and type of accommodation.

Limitation

- The sample population was limited to the Chennai district.
- The sample size is minimal.
- Participants might not express their precise responses because regulating emotion and obsessive thoughts are subjective topics.

Recommendations of the Study

- It may be necessary to conduct similar studies with different sample groups to generalize the research findings.
- The only participants in this study were day students and hostelers. It will eventually focus on working people and married couples.
- There is a possibility of expanding geographically.
- A qualitative study can be conducted to evaluate the most effective techniques for handling emotions.

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- Research should be conducted on adjustment style, attachment behavior, resilience, and coping skills, in addition to obsessive thoughts and emotional regulation.
- To investigate hostellers' subjective well-being and quality of life, a longitudinal study could be initiated.

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Conflict of Interest

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