

Prevalence of Homesickness Among 1st Year University Students: It's Impact on Academic Performance (CGPA)

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ABSTRACT

This study measures the how common homesickness is among first-year university students and how it affects their academic performances. The study was carried out on 130 students who are aged between 17-22 years in Amity University, Bengaluru. In this study 33-item Homesickness Scale was used to gather the information. The result of the study revealed a moderate negative relationship that existed between homesickness and CGPA, ($r = -0.374$, $p < 0.001$, $df = 128$). This indicates that those students who experience the feeling of homesickness at a higher level will display lower performance in academics. This significant correlation shows that homesickness affects students in relation to their performance in academics because of emotional challenges such as stress, loneliness, and anxiety that prevent them from concentrating, staying motivated and participating in class. The results suggests the need for support programs, including peer mentorship, counselling, and socialization activities that help the student to overcome homesickness and get adjusted more effectively.

Keywords: *Prevalence, Homesickness Scale, Academic Performances, CGPA, First-year students, Emotional Challenges*

The meaning of the term, according to Oxford Dictionary, is 'the feeling of being sad because of being away from home and missing friends and family'. Starting college for new students is really exciting but it also brings its own set of challenges. It marks a significant step towards becoming more independent and explores new aspects of life. First-year students are usually caught between the excitement of a new environment and a quite feeling of missing back their home as they are trying to settle into a new place. After leaving the comfort zone of their place, family and old friends behind, they step into a landscape which is though packed with full of opportunities, which can sometimes feel lonely and weird.

Homesickness is generally characterized by feelings of anxiety, sadness, and discomfort due to separation from comfort of home (Oghenerhoro, 2020). Previous research has indicated that various psychological and physical health consequences of homesickness are possible. Students who feel homesick when they go to college might have trouble adjusting in at

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school. This can make it hard for them to make friends and perform well in academics. Students who are feeling homesickness in the new environment is like to face challenges psychologically, socially, academically and emotionally (Jain & Patel, 2020). Missing home isn't just a passing mood for lots of students; it's a big emotional obstacle that messes with nearly every aspect of their day. The separation from home can lead to reduce in motivation and make them feel exhausted mentally, which results in decline to focusing on academic work. These issues often spill into their grades, since homesickness can make it tough to focus, hard study habits, and lead to lower scores, piling on even more stress during this tough transition. Studies have shown that homesickness can lead to severe impact on academic motivation, lower class attendance, poor psychological well-being and reduce overall academic performances (Rajguru & Srivastava, 2020).

Research shows a great correlation between homesickness and lower academic achievements, especially for first-year students who are facing the challenges of college life. Homesickness which is a common emotion experienced among the students who are undergoing changes in terms of their environment has reflected to have an impact on academic achievement (Iloakasia , 2024).

Research looks into how common homesickness is and what sort of impact it has on first-year students, particularly how it messes with things like GPA. Studies show that homesickness, especially in students living in hostels, is really linked to more common physical problems like headaches and feeling dizzy, which probably comes from the stress messing with how our bodies usually work. Starting college can be super stressful cause of all the new responsibilities, the freedom you get, and missing family support, which often makes feelings of sadness, helplessness, and being disconnected even worse. The first years of college can be very hard for the students who have never been away from their home. Students are trying of making new friends and doing lot of academic work. This can make it more difficult for them. This is a problem for both bachelors and masters students. It is really hard for them to stay focused towards their achievement goals. This procrastination can really mess up how they study, finish assignments, and get ready for exams, and it's even more of a headache for students dealing with learning issues and those who struggle to keep up with what college wants from them (Moubeen, 2024).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A survey was conducted to measure the prevalence of homesickness and its impact on mental, emotional, and social well-being of university students. The study was conducted in this research among 225 university students from Ahmedabad who used to live either in hostels or paying guests. In the study the students were categorized into three groups: Comfort zone students (These students adjusted well in their new live), Resilient students (These Students faces a lot of difficulties but they cope and adjusted effectively) and Disillusioned students (These students struggled in their journey but they had confidence on their decision to move themselves away for better educational opportunities). The disillusioned students often find themselves unable to cope with the stressors of a new environment faced during the transition and they were emerged as the most vulnerable leads to face increased risk to their mental health and well-being. While universities in Ahmedabad provide the study notes as a counselling services that were passive in nature and were lacking the support framework to address homesickness effectively. The study highlights that the universities need to provide interventions including peer support and targeted counselling to aid students' adjustment and promote their academic achievements. (Jain & Patel, 2020).

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A study was investigated to measure the correlation between homesickness and academic achievement in mathematics. In this research the study was conducted on 50 secondary school students in Awka south local government area at Anambra state. In this study the Scale for Psychological Impact of Homesickness and the Mathematics Achievement Scale was used to collect the data. The result of the study found a negative correlation between the homesickness and academic achievements in mathematics. The study states that the students who feel more homesick will show bad performance in the mathematics. The students living in hostel or in paying guest will show lower academics achievements than those who live at home. This study further suggests providing the support to the students to overcome from the homesick so that they will perform well in their academics (Iloakasia, 2024).

The research was carried out to measure the impact of homesickness, depression and consciousness on the academic procrastination of the hosteller students. In this research the study was conducted on 150 hostel students. The study found the significant correlation between the homesickness and higher anxiety and stress. Conscientiousness was found highly correlated with gender and have increased impact on academic procrastination. The result of the study found the fact that the homesickness doesn't impact procrastination directly it is a depression that acts as a mediator in the relationships. The study highlights the implementation of Interventions to promote students' well-being and academic success (Moubeen, 2024).

A study was conducted on Parenting styles, coping strategies, and expression of homesickness. For this research the study was conducted among 670 first-year university students aged between 16 to 25 years old to examine how the parenting style influence homesickness and coping strategies. Studies showed that the students raised by authoritative or permissive parents have experienced more feelings of homesickness but they use more effective coping strategies like problem-solving or support-seeking which minimize the internalizing or externalizing problems to deal with homesickness. While the students raised by authoritarian or uninvolved parents experiences more internalizing or externalizing problems and they tend to use less effective coping strategies to deal with homesickness. The study emphasizes how a caring and supportive home setting is vital for understanding homesickness and finding ways to cope with the problem (Nijhof & Engels, 2007).

The main aim of conducting this research was to measure how homesickness, self-esteem, and college adjustment impacts students living in hostels. The study was conducted on 300 undergraduate and graduate students aged between 16 and 25 years. They concluded and stated that the students who were more attached to their home experienced low self-esteem and they had few positive emotions regarding their college experiences. While the students who disliked their new transition have negative emotions regarding their college experiences. Overall, the strong positive correlation between like and dislike of the new transition made the college life hard to adjust while the high self-esteem made it easier to adjust (Kinnaird 2023).

A cross-sectional study was conducted to explore homesickness among the first-year medical students from medical college in South India. In this research the study was conducted on the first year MBBS students studying at south Indian college to measure the prevalence of homesickness and factors that influence them. They conducted the study on 93 students residing in the hostel, aged 17-20. The study found that out of 93 students, 93.55% felt homesickness with 66.66% at moderate levels and the students whose family was situated more than 500 km away were likely to be homesick.

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Home sickness was highly prevalent among students and had a negative significant correlation between homesickness and academic performance (Nelson, 2018).

The present study was designed to investigate the relationship of stress, adjustment, and homesickness among university students. For this purpose, the study was conducted on 100 university students out of them 47 are males and 53 were females who were studying at lovely professional university, Punjab. The ages of these participants ranged from 18 to 25 years. The study indicated that the stress and adjustment are the key factors in a young adult's life. The result of the study found a positive relationship between stress and homesickness and negative relationship with adjustment and homesickness. Further the result indicates that there are no gender differences both the genders experiences similar levels of stress, homesickness, and adjustment challenge (Palai, 2016).

Research Objectives

- **OB 1:** To study the relationship between homesickness and academic Performance.
- **OB 2:** To examine how homesickness influences the academic performance of first-year university students.
- **OB 3:** To identify the psychological and behavioural effects of homesickness.
- **OB 4:** To explore potential strategies to overcome homesickness.
- **OB 5:** To provide recommendation of support programs at universities.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design

The research method that will be applied in this study is cross-sectional quantitative method. Pearson's correlational analysis aims to identify and calculating the relationship of homesickness and academic performance within the population. The study applied correlational analysis to measure the prevalence of homesickness cases among first-year Amity University, Bengaluru students and its influence on their academic performance. This study will allow to determine if a rise in homesickness relates to a decrease in academic performance. The statistical tool used within this study is the Pearson correlation, which helps to measure of how strong and in what direction the relationship is between these two variables.

Hypotheses

- H_1 : There is a significant relationship between homesickness and academic performance among first-year university students.
- H_0 : There is no significant relationship between homesickness and academic performance among first-year university students.

Population

The Population comprised of first year students who were studying at Amity University Bengaluru and were generally between ages 17-22 years in this study. Participants were living in two distinct modes, namely hostellers (students residing in university accommodations) and day scholars (students staying as paying guests).

Sample

The sample included of 130 students, of which 52 were females and 78 were males. Among them 12 were classified as day scholars and majorities of 118 students were hostellers residing on campus.

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Sampling Method

The sampling method used for this research is non-probability sampling technique called Snowball sampling.

Inclusion criteria

- Participants must be from first-year students at Amity University Bengaluru.
- Participants shall be residing in hostel or as paying guest.
- Participants must be voluntarily agreed to participate in the study by providing informed consent.
- Participants must be willing to provide their CGPA, as academic performance (CGPA) is a key variable in assessing the impact of homesickness.

Exclusion criteria

- Participants who were not in their first year were excluded.
- Participants living with their families were excluded as being with their families could significantly reduce the experience of homesickness compared to students living independently or in university accommodations.
- Participants who had prior experience living away from home (e.g., those who attended boarding school) were excluded as they may have developed coping strategies that could reduce the feeling of homesickness.
- Participants with incomplete responses especially on key measures such as the Homesickness Scale or academic performance CGPA were excluded.

Instrument

The "Homesickness Scale" (Archer et al., 1998) was the instrument used in collecting data for this study, a reliable tool created to examine both the psychological and physical symptoms of homesickness. It comprises 33 statements that explore both sides of homesickness: emotional pain, desire to live in familiar places, and the physical feelings people have while away from home. All these statements would be answered by the participants on a 5-point Likert scale. There are several choices: "Strongly Disagree," "Disagree," "Neutral," "Agree," and "Strongly Agree." The points are as follows: "Strongly Disagree" is 1 point, "Disagree" is 2 points, "Neutral" is 3 points, "Agree" is 4 points, and "Strongly Agree" is 5 points. Each participant chose that best expressed their feelings about homesickness at the time.

To calculate the homesickness score, we added up ratings of all statements given by 33 subjects. The scores, depending on the statements, may be as low as 12 or as high as 60. The more the number, the greater the homesickness and emotional distress caused by staying out of home. This scoring is highly suitable for examining how homesickness correlates with other variables, like CGPA.

The Homesickness Scale gives a valid and reliable assessment of measuring homesickness which helps us to understand how common and intense it is among first-year college students. It helps us analyze in what way homesickness might influence the academic performance of students and their whole experience at college.

Ethical Consideration

The participants were informed about the confidentiality of the study and their responses would be used only for research purposes. The participants were explained about the aim of

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the study. Informed consent was taken from each of the participants. Participation in the study was voluntary and no remuneration was provided. The participants were not subjected to any psychological or physical harm.

Data Collection

Data were collected at a single point in time using an online survey by creating Google Forms which included the 33 item Homesickness scale with other demographic questions to gather responses from students. The survey link was distributed to students via WhatsApp groups and other university social media platforms. Participants fill out a survey on their own time, which encourages more people to join in and helps ensure their answers are honest.

Data Analysis

The analysis of the data was done on the basis of quantitative method in this study, for that descriptive statistics were used to summarize characteristics of the sample including central tendency and variability for both total score and CGPA the mean, median, mode, range, and standard deviation were calculated to provide an overview of the data distribution. The Shapiro-Wilk test was conducted on both the total score and CGPA data to check if they followed a normal distribution.

A Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between total score and CGPA. All analyses were conducted using software Jamovi to ensure accurate and efficient statistical testing.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistic

Table 1 contains the descriptive statistic of the variables of the study. The total score of homesickness scale data was analysed. The results show that it has a mean of 92.1, a median of 90.0, and mode of 82.0. Analysis of this data suggests a comparatively symmetrical distribution of scores around the central tendency supported by a standard deviation of 16.6 indicating moderate variability. Scores ranged from a minimum of 52 to a maximum of 136. The Shapiro-Wilk test for normality provided a W statistic of 0.987 and a p-value of 0.274 which suggests that the total score of scale distribution does not significantly deviate from normality ($p > 0.05$).

Table 1 Descriptive statistics of the variables

Descriptive	Total score of HS	Total score of CGPA
N	130	130
Mean	92.1	7.00
Median	90.0	7.36
Mode	82.0	8.00
Standard deviation	16.6	1.48
Minimum	52	0.0600
Maximum	136	9.32
Shapiro-Wilk W	0.987	0.916
Shapiro-Wilk p	0.274	< .001

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The average of CGPA was 7.00 with median value of 7.36 and mode is 8.00 with some form of spread in the data since scores range from 0.06 to 9.32. The low minimum CGPA value of 0.06 may act as deviation distributing to this skewness. The Shapiro-Wilk test of CGPA resulted in a W statistic of 0.916 with a p-value less than 0.001 as significant from normality ($p < 0.05$).

Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis was carried out to check the association between the total score and CGPA. Table 2 represents the results of the analysis. The relationship was found to be statistically significant moderate negative correlation ($r = -0.374$, $p < 0.001$, $df = 128$) with an inverse type relationship between the two variables. So, higher the homesickness lower the CGPA value and vice versa. The significance was tested at the 0.05 level.

Table 2 Correlations between variables
Correlation Matrix

		Total score of HS	"What is your CGPA?"
Total score	Pearson's r	—	—
	df	—	—
	p-value	—	—
"What is your CGPA?"	Pearson's r	-0.374	—
	df	128	—
	p-value	< .001	—

($r = -0.374$, $p < 0.001$, $df = 128$)

DISCUSSION

Objective 1: To study the relationship between homesickness and academic Performance.

The Pearson correlation analysis shows a significant negative correlation between the total scores on the homesickness scale and CGPA among first-year students, $r = -0.374$, $p < 0.001$, $df = 128$. This result is important as far as understanding the impact of homesickness on performance at school is concerned. Students with higher homesickness scores are worse regarding CGPA scores. Since this correlation is statistically significant, it would, therefore, indicate that there is not just random coincidence between homesickness and academic performance.

While homesickness is not the only reason for changes that affect academic performance, it undoubtedly has a clear impact. Homesickness can give rise to some emotional challenges such as stress and lonely feelings, anxieties that may affect someone's ability to focus on study activities participate in class. These, they may seem less focused stay motivated or get involved in university activities, thus, usually end up with poor grades.

Objective 2: To examine how homesickness influences academic performance of first-year university students.

The study aims to analyze the effects of homesickness on the academic performance of first-year university students who are mostly sensitive to homesickness because of a recent change from the home environment into a new academic environment. The results will show that higher degrees of homesickness relate to lower cumulative grade point averages (CGPA) thus demonstrating that homesickness can be harmful in educational performance.

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The first-year students reported that feelings of loneliness, stress, and homesickness stole their mind away from academic activities, reduced their motivational levels, and impeded their participation in college academic tasks.

Objective 3: To identify the psychological and behavioral effects of homesickness.

This study shed light on how homesickness impacts the first-year university students' psychological and behavioral effect. All first-year university students, who suffered from homesickness, reported often feeling lonely, sad, anxious, and stressed, making it difficult for them to go through their daily lives. Some of the feelings are symptoms of depression, such as lack of energy, lacking motivation, and the inability to focus on academics. Many homesick students also felt cut off from their classmates which made their emotional struggles even worse and sometimes left them feeling powerless.

On the behavioral side, homesickness had a big impact on how students engaged in their studies and social life. Lots of homesick students get away from socializing and activities, held back from being part of campus events, which only make them feel their sense of loneliness. Students face academic behaviors that they often struggle with procrastinating, missing classes, and participating less in discussions, all of which could lead to poorer grades.

Objective 4: To explore potential strategies to overcome homesickness.

The research looked into how first-year students deal with homesickness and found different ways that work for them during the transition in their lives. Keeping up with family and friends from home was one popular method. Talking on the phone, video calls, and texting helped students feel connected, making it easier to cope with feelings of loneliness.

Another useful way was engaging in college social and extracurricular activities. Joined clubs, played sport or participated in study groups provided students with a very good opportunity to make new friends that make the persons fit better into their university. Most students reported that by focusing on their friendships as well as engaging in various activities they could shift attention away from homesickness and enjoy their time at university more.

Objective 5: To provide recommendation of support programs at universities.

To help first-year students who feel homesick universities can set up special programs. Some helpful are peer mentoring, better counselling services, and regular orientation activities to help students connect and feel like they belong. Workshops that teach self-care along with academic support and homesickness groups can give students useful tools to handle their feelings and adjustments.

Limitations

- The sample size used in this study was less as 130 sample was not that much enough to do the correlation the result could have led to the different conclusion also demographic wasn't enough as the study only considered a particular university, the study should have paid more attention towards other aspects like gender, region, religion, Personality traits. The reason that the study didn't paid attention to these aspects was due to lack in resources.
- Relying solely on CGPA since that cannot be only factor for academic performance as the students' other aspects like athletic skills, extra circular activities, co-circular

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activities, lack of absenteeism and leadership skills can also play fundamental role in academic performance.

- Error in Self-Reported data as the study was using answers from the Homesickness Scale that people provide about themselves there could be some problems with how they respond. Participants might not be completely honest about their feelings either saying they feel better than they do or the other way around due to wanting to please others or struggling to express what they truly feel. The responses that were collected can be under reported or over reported.

CONCLUSION

This study shows how homesickness affects first-year university students' academic performance and well-being. The results indicate that when students feel more homesick they tend to do worse in their studies. This may happen because being away from family or loved ones that can lead to feelings of loneliness, stress, and worry. Such a situation can cause an individual to lose enthusiasm and find it difficult to concentrate on classes and social life in general.

The study also notes some useful strategies for dealing with homesickness. Keeping in contact with family, college-level activities, and counselling services are a few of these helpful strategies. Universities need to have various support programs which may include peer mentoring, quality mental health resources, and social events that can better connect and settle the students in a different town.

By actively helping students cope with homesickness through these support systems, the universities may create a friendlier climate that supports first-year students in adjusting, succeeding academically, and building up strength. In general, the study emphasizes the strategic emotional and academic support for the success of the students who possibly undergo homesickness that can trigger their success and keep them in good academic performance.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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