

Research Paper

Perceived Stress, Neuroticism, and Sleep Quality: A Correlational Study Among First-Year College Students

Kashish Garg^{1*}, Dr. Pankaj Singh²

ABSTRACT

Background: This study focuses on the link between neuroticism, perceived stress, and sleep quality among first-year college students, with an emphasis on the psychological changes needed during the transition from high school to college. **Method:** For the study a total of 300 students (148 men and 152 females) aged 18 to 19 were recruited from the Delhi-NCR area using convenience sampling, and the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), the Sleep Quality Scale (SQS), and the Neuroticism subscale of the NEO Five-Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI) were used for data collection. The data were evaluated using Pearson's correlation coefficient in SPSS Version 20. **Results:** The study identified a considerable positive link between perceived stress and neuroticism, a moderately significant connection between perceived stress and poor sleep quality, and a modest but substantial positive connection was discovered between neuroticism and sleep quality, indicating a mild effect of personality on sleep disruptions. Female students reported much greater levels of neuroticism and felt stress than their male peers. **Conclusion:** The findings emphasize the psychological difficulties encountered during this transitional period and the importance of implementing targeted strategies particularly for female students who may be more vulnerable to these challenges.

Keywords: *Perceived Stress, Sleep Quality, Neuroticism, First-Year Students, Transition to College*

Transitioning from high school to college is an important developmental milestone that is frequently accompanied by significant psychological and emotional obstacles. First-year college students have a twofold adjustment, leaving behind familiar settings and social structures while entering a new academic and social context with more autonomy and expectations (Arnett, 2016; Cheung et al., 2020). This era of transition is exacerbated by the developmental pressures of emerging adulthood, a time of identity discovery, instability, and uncertainty (Kwan et al., 2021). This change has a significant psychological impact, altering emotional control, academic performance, and general mental health (Fond et al., 2020). Perceived stress is one of the most often mentioned concerns during this stage—the subjective assessment of life events as overpowering or uncontrolled (Cohen, 1983). According to research, over half of college students report high levels of stress during their first year, emphasizing the need of understanding the psychological

¹Student

²Assistant Professor

*Corresponding Author

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ramifications of this experience. Chronic stress depletes emotional and cognitive resources, leading to maladaptive coping methods, increased anxiety, and depressive symptoms if left untreated (Bruffaerts et al., 2018).

Another important element impacting college adjustment is neuroticism, a psychological characteristic marked by increased emotional sensitivity, anxiety, and mood instability (Allport, 1961). Students with high neuroticism see academic and social obligations as more dangerous, which increases stress and reduces their potential for efficient coping (Hoyt et al., 2021). Neuroticism has been related to physiological repercussions, such as disrupted sleep patterns, which further undermines students' resilience.

Sleep quality, in the meantime, is critical for cognitive performance, emotional balance, and physical health (APA, 2020). Disrupted or inadequate sleep not only indicates stress, but also contributes to it by reducing concentration, memory consolidation, and emotional stability (Hirshkowitz et al. 2015). Empirical research shows that inadequate sleep among college students reduces academic performance and increases sensitivity to mental health problems (Mirghani et al., 2015; Alqarni et al., 2018). This study advances on previous research by using an integrated method to investigate the linked dynamics of perceived stress, neuroticism, and sleep quality throughout the first year of college. Rather than addressing these elements in isolation, the current study highlights their joint effect on students' psychological experiences. Lee and Lin (2007) show that sleep problems promote emotional dysregulation. These findings emphasize the necessity for comprehensive mental health treatments that address both the emotional and physiological components of student life.

Neuroticism & Sleep

Personality is defined as an individual's distinct and permanent patterns of thoughts, feelings, and actions. Allport (1937) defines it as the dynamic structure inside the individual of psychophysical processes that establish typical patterns of behavior and cognition. Neuroticism is a major feature in the five-factor personality model, signifying an individual's tendency to feel persistent unpleasant emotions such as anxiety, impatience, melancholy, and emotional instability (Costa & McCrae, 1992). People with high neuroticism frequently demonstrate increased emotional reactivity and are more susceptible to stress, self-doubt, and mood swings. These features can have a substantial impact on many parts of their lives, including their mental health and sleep quality.

Research repeatedly shows a substantial link between neuroticism and sleep issues. Baglioni et al. (2011) found neuroticism as a strong predictor of insomnia symptoms, emphasizing its negative impact on sleep. Another study found that neuroticism is substantially associated with disturbed sleep patterns and difficulty reaching restful sleep, particularly in the context of cognitive-emotional hyperarousal. These studies emphasize the importance of neuroticism in determining sleep disruptions and contribute to a better understanding of individual variations in sleep health.

Perceived Stress

Perceived stress is an individual's subjective assessment of how stressful life conditions are, specifically how unpredictable, unmanageable, and overpowering they consider their life demands to be (Cohen, Kamarck, & Mermelstein, 1983). Unlike objective stressors, subjective stress is impacted by an individual's cognitive and emotional reactions to these

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stresses. This subjective view influences how a person responds to obstacles and their general well-being. Understanding perceived stress requires acknowledging that stress is not a universal sensation, but rather a very individualized and varied response to life's challenges. Swaminathan et al. (2016) found that first-year medical students experienced high levels of perceived stress, primarily due to academic and psychosocial factors, emphasizing the importance of early mental health interventions in high-pressure environments such as medical school. These findings highlight the importance of perceived stress on mental health, as well as the necessity for appropriate stress management measures.

Quality of Sleep

Sleep quality is an important part of general well-being, and it includes aspects such as sleep start, length, efficiency, disruptions, and the amount of daytime dysfunction (Buysse et al. 1989). It indicates an individual's contentment with their sleep, not just in terms of the amount of time they spend sleeping, but also in terms of how restorative that sleep is. Many people in today's fast-paced and stressful society suffer from poor sleep quality., which has a negative influence on their physical and mental health.

Sleep is not just a basic physiological requirement, but also necessary for overall health, emotional stability, and cognitive performance. The subjective experience of sleep quality encompasses the ease with which one falls asleep, the depth and regularity of sleep, and total restoration. According to research, higher sleep quality is connected to increased brain clarity, emotional stability, and general physical wellness. Thus, addressing sleep quality is critical for maintaining both mental and physical health.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The current study is aimed to present the relationship between Perceived Stress, Neuroticism, and Sleep Quality among first year college students. Thus, for this purpose an extensive review of research studies, which are directly or indirectly related to the variables of the study, was extensively reviewed.

Guruprakash et al. (2025) found that perceived stress was significantly associated with higher levels of psychopathology and burnout among medical postgraduate students. Female students reported higher perceived stress than males, highlighting the need for addressing stress management in medical training.

Arora et al. (2024) conducted a study among 120 young adults in Delhi NCR. The study found a significant positive correlation between perceived stress and sleep quality scores, indicating that higher levels of perceived stress were associated with poorer sleep quality. These results highlight the negative impact stress can have on sleep, emphasizing the need for effective stress management strategies to enhance overall well-being in young adults.

Quadflieg (2023) Conducted a study investigating association of personality traits, daily stress and quality of sleep among college students, particularly during exam periods. The study found that neuroticism was linked to poorer subjective sleep quality and overall stress levels. These results highlight a complex interplay between stress, sleep and personality emphasizing the importance of addressing stress management and sleep quality to enhance overall well-being.

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Gaur et al. (2021) Conducted a study on 100 young adult participants investigating how sleep quality influences personality traits of young adults, using NEO-FFI and Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI). The study revealed a positive correlation between the scores of PSQI and NEO-FFI indicating that individuals with poor sleep quality exhibit higher levels of neuroticism.

Sarang et al. (2019) Conducted a study analysing the relationship between neuroticism and sleep quality among 30 female nursing staff aged 22 to 53 years. The study found that nurses with poor sleep quality had significantly higher neuroticism scores compared to those with good sleep, indicating that individuals with higher neurotic tendencies are more likely to experience sleep disturbances.

Rathi et al. (2018) examined the association between neuroticism and sleep quality among medical students in a cross-sectional study. The study included 166 participants aged between 18 and 25 years. Findings revealed that students with poor sleep quality exhibited higher levels of neuroticism compared to those with good sleep. The study suggests that emotional instability plays a key role in sleep disturbances among young adults pursuing medical education.

METHODOLOGY

Objectives

- To Assess the amount to which perceived stress is positively connected with sleep quality issues among first-year college students
- To explore the association between perceived stress and neuroticism among first-year college students.
- Figure out the nature and severity of the relationship between neuroticism and sleep quality issues among first-year college students.
- To investigate gender differences in neuroticism and Perceived Stress levels among first-year college students. With a particular emphasis on determining if female students had considerably higher neuroticism and perceived stress than their male counterparts.

Hypotheses

- H1: There will be a significant positive correlation between perceived stress and sleep quality difficulties among first-year college students.
- H2: There will be a significant positive correlation between perceived stress and neuroticism among first-year college students.
- H3: There will be a significant positive correlation between Neuroticism and sleep difficulties among 1st year college students.
- H4: Female students will exhibit significantly higher levels of neuroticism and Perceived stress compared to male students.

Inclusion Criteria

Non-professional first year college students' ages ranging from 18-19 years will be considered.

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Exclusion Criteria

Married or Individuals having a history of mental problems, documented sleep disorders, or those receiving ongoing psychological therapy will not be considered.

Sample Design & Sample size

This quantitative study included 300 first-year college students, 152 girls and 148 boys, all aged 18 to 19 years. Participants were chosen using the convenience sample approach, with a focus on students in their first year of undergraduate studies, to investigate how the transition from school to college affects their levels of perceived stress, neuroticism, and sleep quality.

Instruments

Three measures were used for the current study:

1. Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen, 1994):

Cohen developed the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), a commonly used psychological measure for assessing the degree to which people experience stressful circumstances in their life. This 10-item scale assesses how unpredictable, unmanageable, and overburdened people view their daily situations. Respondents score each item on a five-point Likert scale, from "almost never" to "very often," allowing researchers to assess subjective stress levels during the previous month.

To evaluate stress levels, scores between 0 and 13 are classified as low felt stress, 14 to 26 as moderate stress, and 27-40 as severe perceived stress. The scale has good psychometric features, including adequate internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha =.71 or above), as well as strong test-retest reliability and construct validity. The PSS is widely used in clinical and research settings to monitor stress and assess the efficacy of stress-reduction programs due to its simplicity, convenience of administration, and high reliability.

2. NEO-FFI (Neuroticism subscale):

Costa and McCrae created the NEO Five-Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI), a brief 60-item self-report measure designed to examine the Big Five characteristics of personality: neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. Each item is assessed on a 5-point Likert scale, from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"), providing for a rapid yet reliable assessment of personality characteristics.

The NEO-FFI's Neuroticism subscale consists of 12 items created primarily to assess emotional instability and the proclivity to feel negative emotions such as anxiety, despair, self-consciousness, and vulnerability. Higher scores on this subscale suggest a greater susceptibility to psychological discomfort and mood swings.

3. Sleep Quality Scale:

Sleep Quality Scale (SQS) is a comprehensive 28-item self-report questionnaire for assessing several aspects of sleep quality. It has been validated for use with people aged 18 to 59, and responses are measured using a four-point Likert scale. Higher total scores on the scale reflect more severe sleep-related difficulties, with a possible score range of 0 to 84.

The SQS shows high contemporaneous validity by showing a substantial connection with the Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI). Furthermore, it has strong psychometric features, with a test-retest reliability value of 0.81 over a two-week period and a Cronbach's alpha of

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0.92, showing great internal consistency. Its comprehensive coverage of sleep components makes it a viable tool for assessing sleep disorders in both clinical and research settings.

Procedure

For the purpose of the current study the participants completed a battery of self-administered instruments in the following order: the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10) to assess stress levels, the Neuroticism subscale of the NEO-FFI to measure emotional stability, and the Sleep Quality Scale (SQS) to assess sleep disturbances. Each student got clear, uniform instructions and enough time to complete the surveys, with the research staff available to answer any questions.

Data Analysis

The data collected for the study was analysed using the SPSS 20. For the interpretation Descriptive Statistics like mean and Standard Deviation were also utilised. Pearson's correlation along with t-test was also used to establish the association between Neuroticism, Perceived Stress and Sleep Quality and to finally, investigate the gender difference among the variables.

RESULT

Table:1 Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
PSS Score	300	8	32	20.88	4.337
Neuroticism Score	300	8	48	25.35	5.429
SQS Score	300	16	80	39.16	11.045
Valid N (listwise)	300				

A sample of 300 first-year college students was studied using descriptive statistics to determine sleep quality, subjective stress, and neuroticism. The results showed that the mean felt Stress Scale (PSS) score was 20.88 (SD = 4.34), with values ranging from 8 to 32, indicating moderate levels of felt stress among the group. The Neuroticism score, as measured by the NEO-FFI, was 25.35 (SD = 5.43), ranging from 8 to 48, indicating that participants showed a considerable propensity toward emotional instability. The Sleep Quality Scale (SQS) scores varied from 16 to 80, with a mean of 39.16 (SD = 11.05), demonstrating wide variation in sleep quality, with many students suffering disruptions to various degrees.

Table: 2 Correlational analyses assessing the relationships between Perceived Stress and Neuroticism.

		PSS Score	Neuroticism Score
PSS Score	Pearson Correlation	1	.558**
	Sig. (2-Tailed)		.000
	N	300	300

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		PSS Score	Neuroticism Score
Neuroticism Scores	Pearson Correlation	.558**	1
	Sig. (2-Tailed)	.000	
	N	300	300

Table 2 shows the findings of a Pearson correlation study of first-year college students' reported stress and neuroticism. Based on a sample size of 300 participants, the research found a moderate positive connection ($r = .558$, $p < .001$) between PSS and neuroticism scores. This suggests that higher levels of perceived stress are connected with higher levels of neurotic behavior. The significance level ($p = .000$) indicates that the association is not coincidental and is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table: 3 Correlational analyses assessing the relationships between Neuroticism and Quality of Sleep.

		SQS Score	Neuroticism Score
SQS Score	Pearson Correlation	1	.208**
	Sig. (2-Tailed)		.000
	N	300	300
Neuroticism	Pearson Correlation	.208**	1
	Sig. (2-Tailed)	.000	
	N	300	300

Table 3 displays the findings of a Pearson's correlation analysis used to determine the link between neuroticism and sleep quality among first-year college students. The research found a statistically significant positive association between neuroticism scores and SQS (Sleep Quality Scale) scores ($r(298) = .208$, $p < .001$). Given that higher SQS scores predict lower sleep quality, this study implies that students with higher degrees of neuroticism have more sleep disruptions. While statistically significant, the connection has a small effect size based on standard criteria (Cohen, 1983), showing a minor but substantial link between emotional instability and poor sleep quality in the sample ($N = 300$).

Table: 4 Correlational analyses assessing the relationships between Perceived Stress and Quality of Sleep.

		PSS Score	SQS Score
PSS Score	Pearson Correlation	1	.268**
	Sig. (2-Tailed)		.000
	N	300	300

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		PSS Score	SQS Score
SQS Score	Pearson Correlation	.268**	1
	Sig. (2-Tailed)	.000	
	N	300	300

Table 4 illustrates the Pearson correlation coefficients used to investigate the link between perceived stress (PSS Score) and sleep quality (SQS Score) among first-year college students. A study of 300 individuals found a substantial positive association ($r = .268$, $p < .001$) between felt stress and sleep disruptions. This shows that when perceived stress levels rise, students report lower sleep quality.

Table:5 Descriptive Statistics of Independent Samples T-Test

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
PSS Score	1	152	22.71	3.454	.280
	2	148	19.01	4.360	.358
Neuroticism Score	1	152	26.95	4.519	.367
	2	148	23.71	5.798	.447
SQS Score	1	152	39.78	11.406	.925
	2	148	38.53	10.663	.877

Table:6 Independent Samples T-Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-Test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. 2-tailed	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Diff.	95% Confidence Interval of the Diff.	
									Lower	Upper
PSS Scores	Equal Variances assumed	10.185	.002	8.167	298	.000	3.704	.454	2.811	4.596
	Equal Variances not assumed			8.142	279.805	.000	3.704	.455	2.808	4.599

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Neuroticism Score	Equal Variance assumed	3.320	.069	5.403	298	.000	3.238	.599	2.058	4.417
	Equal Variance not assumed			5.385	277.721	.000	3.238	.601	2.054	4.422
SQS Score	Equal Variance assumed	.272	.602	.985	298	.326	1.256	1.276	-1.254	3.766
	Equal Variance not assumed			.985	297.512	.325	1.256	1.274	-1.252	3.764

The independent samples t-test assessing gender differences in experienced stress, neuroticism, and sleep quality showed significant differences in perceived stress and neuroticism but not in sleep quality. Females reported more felt stress ($M = 22.71$, $SD = 3.45$) than men ($M = 19.01$, $SD = 4.36$), with a significant mean difference ($t(279.8) = 8.14$, $p < .001$). Females scored substantially higher on neuroticism ($M = 26.95$, $SD = 4.52$) compared to males ($M = 23.71$, $SD = 5.80$), $t(298) = 5.40$, $p < .001$. Sleep quality did not differ significantly across genders ($t(298) = 0.99$, $p = .326$). The Levene's Test revealed uneven variances for experienced stress ($F = 10.185$, $p = .002$). This lowered the effective degrees of freedom ($df = 279.8$ vs. 298) but maintained the result's significance ($p < .001$), assuring solid findings despite heteroscedasticity. Equal variances enabled conventional t-tests for neuroticism ($F = 3.320$, $p = .069$) and sleep quality ($F = 0.272$, $p = .602$), confirming the considerable neuroticism gap and the non-significant sleep quality result. These findings emphasize the need of assessing variance homogeneity to maintain scientific rigor when analyzing group differences.

DISCUSSION

The primary objective of this study was to investigate the relationship between neuroticism, perceived stress, and sleep quality among first-year college students, a critical period distinguished by multiple psychological and environmental obstacles. This study delved at how these characteristics, notably neuroticism and perceived stress, affect sleep patterns during this important phase of transition. To investigate these relationships, data from 300 first-year students (152 females and 148 males) from the Delhi-NCR region were analyzed using three well-known psychological tools: the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), the Neuroticism subscale of the NEO Five-Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI), and the Sleep Quality Scale (SQS).

The results supported the first hypothesis (H1), which proposed a positive relationship between perceived stress and sleep problems. A significant connection ($r = .268$; $p < .001$) was found between perceived stress and sleep quality, suggesting that greater stress levels are linked to lower sleep quality. This finding complements previous studies highlighting the

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harmful impact of chronic stress on sleep, which is typically caused by increased physiological arousal and disturbance of the body's sleep regulation system (Rebello et al., 2018). Rebello's study, performed among first-year medical students, found a clear link between academic and psychological pressures and poor sleep quality. The modest impact size highlights that stress not only affects mental health, but it also has a physical, disruptive influence on sleep patterns, worsening anxiety and stress. Notably, the level of perceived stress appears to have a direct affect on sleep quality, with increased stress associated with worse sleep efficiency and total restfulness.

The study found a strong positive association ($r = .558$, $p < .001$) between neuroticism and perceived stress, supporting the second hypothesis (H2). This moderate but significant link highlights the significance that neuroticism plays in determining how people perceive and respond to stress. Students with higher neuroticism, which is defined by emotional instability and increased susceptibility to stress, reported much more felt stress. This conclusion supports previous research indicating that those with high neuroticism are more prone to interpret difficulties as threats, exacerbating perceived stress. Furthermore, this conclusion is consistent with the findings of Simanjuntak and Ko (2021), who discovered a similar positive link between neuroticism and felt stress among Indonesian migrant workers. Overall, these results point to neuroticism as a key determinant in emotional reactivity and stress sensitivity. Neurotic persons' heightened stress levels may serve as a forerunner to a variety of emotional disorders, exacerbating feelings of worry, restlessness, and difficulty sleeping.

The third hypothesis (H3), which proposed a positive relationship between neuroticism and sleep problems, was similarly confirmed by data. There was a significant association ($r = .208$, $p < .001$), but it was weaker than the one between perceived stress and sleep quality. This data implies that neuroticism has an effect on sleep quality, although it is less significant than perceived stress. Neurotic people are more prone to have interrupted sleep because of their increased emotional instability and tendency to ruminate (Souza & Faro, 2024).

This finding is consistent with previous research, such as that of Souza and Faro (2024), who found neuroticism as the best predictor of sleep disruptions among Brazilian adults, particularly in those with significant emotional instability. The current findings support these conclusions by demonstrating that neuroticism's influence on sleep quality is enhanced by its relationship with high stress levels. Thus, while neuroticism contributes to sleep disruptions, it does so largely by mediating stress, emphasizing the interconnectivity of these psychological variables.

The fourth hypothesis (H4), which predicted that female students would report greater degrees of neuroticism than male students, was supported by data. Female students reported considerably greater levels of perceived stress ($M = 22.71$, $SD = 3.45$) than male students ($M = 19.01$, $SD = 4.36$), with a statistically significant difference ($t(279.8) = 8.14$, $p < .001$). Female students had substantially higher neuroticism scores ($M = 26.95$, $SD = 4.52$) compared to male students ($M = 23.71$, $SD = 5.80$), with a t -value of $t(298) = 5.40$ ($p < .001$). These gender differences remained statistically significant even after controlling for uneven variations in perceived stress levels (Levene's Test: $F = 10.185$, $p = .002$).

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This conclusion is consistent with the findings of Das Gupta et al. (2021), who discovered that females tend to score higher on neuroticism, implying that they may be more prone to emotional reactivity and stress, particularly during the transition to college. These findings emphasize the need of measuring variance homogeneity in group comparisons to maintain scientific rigor. While stress and neuroticism differed substantially by gender, sleep quality did not ($t(298) = 0.99, p = .326$), indicating that while emotional and cognitive variables may differ, real sleep problems are felt identically.

The descriptive data indicated moderate levels of subjective stress ($M = 20.88, SD = 4.34$) and neuroticism ($M = 25.35, SD = 5.43$) in the sample, indicating that first-year students in this research faced significant psychological strain. A significant proportion of students experienced sleep interruptions, with a mean Sleep Quality Scale (SQS) score of 39.16 ($SD = 11.05$). This score indicates high heterogeneity in sleep quality throughout the sample, suggesting that many students struggle with sleep during this transition phase. Despite variations in stress and neuroticism, the lack of substantial gender differences in sleep quality implies that therapies to improve sleep should be used universally, with a focus on gender-specific emotional regulation measures.

Gender differences were also investigated, and female students reported substantially greater levels of perceived stress ($M = 22.71, SD = 3.45$) and neuroticism ($M = 26.95, SD = 4.52$) than male students ($M = 19.01, SD = 4.36; M = 23.71, SD = 5.80$). Independent samples *t*-tests revealed statistically significant differences between perceived stress ($t(279.8) = 8.14, p < .001$) and neuroticism ($t(298) = 5.40, p < .001$). Notably, the difference in felt stress remained significant even after accounting for uneven variances, as demonstrated by Levene's Test for Equality of Variances ($F = 10.185, p = .002$).

Female students may be more prone to emotional instability and stress, leading to sleep disruptions ($p < .001$). However, there were no significant gender variations in sleep quality, with both male ($M = 38.53, SD = 10.66$) and female ($M = 39.78, SD = 11.41$) students reporting equal mean SQS scores. This shows that, while females may experience higher levels of stress and neuroticism, these characteristics do not appear to result in much lower sleep quality than males. The data suggest that, while female students are more emotionally sensitive, their coping mechanisms or external support networks may reduce the harmful impacts on sleep. These results are consistent with previous research on the links between neuroticism, stress, and sleep quality. Souza and Faro (2024) found that neuroticism was the strongest predictor of poor sleep quality among Brazilian adults, particularly those who were emotionally unstable. Similarly, Das Gupta et al. (2021) discovered that neuroticism was substantially associated with lower sleep quality in young adults, lending confirmation to the current study's findings.

Additionally, Rebello et al. (2018) found a robust link between felt stress and poor sleep quality, particularly among first-year medical students, which is consistent with the current study. Furthermore, Deshpande et al. (2023) discovered a substantial link between stress and sleep quality among housewives, demonstrating the findings' broad application across many groups, including first-year students. Tananuvat et al. (2022) found that neuroticism increases perceived stress, particularly among individuals with dry eye illness, which supports the findings of this study. The findings of this study highlight the interdependence of these variables and emphasizes the importance of comprehensive mental health therapies that address both emotional and physiological issues.

CONCLUSION

Based on the current study and the results, it may be concluded that Neuroticism, Quality of Sleep and Perceived Stress have an association among first year college students with girls exhibiting more stress and emotional disturbances. Hence, the major findings of the study are supporting the formulated hypotheses.

Limitations of the Study

The current study has the following limitations:

- All data were gathered via self-report questionnaires, which may have introduced biases or subjective interpretation of questions.
- The participants were all first-year college students from the Delhi-NCR region, which limited the sample's cultural and socioeconomic variety.
- The study did not involve a clinical screening or diagnostic examination to detect people with pre-existing mental health disorders.

Directions for Future Research

To improve on the current findings, future research may use a longitudinal design to track changes in neuroticism, stress perception, and sleep quality over time. Tracking these factors over academic semesters or critical transitional times (e.g., examinations, relocation, or adjustment to college life) might aid in establishing temporal sequences and probable causal relationships. Expanding the sample to include students from various academic areas, universities, and cultural backgrounds throughout India might improve the results' representativeness and generalizability.

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Conflict of Interest

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