



Comparing Anxiety Levels: Male vs. Female College Students

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Abstract

The purpose of this casual comparative study was to investigate whether there is a significant difference in anxiety levels between male and female college students of a rural area named Adampur in Haryana, India. The present study has been carried out on a sample of 60 college students (Male and Female) with their age ranging between 17-21 years. The major instrument used in the present study was an anxiety test named Sinha's Comprehensive Anxiety Scale (SCAT) was developed by AKP Sinha and LNK Sinha in the year 1995. The scale contains 90 items. The subject were selected on the basis of random sampling. After collection of the data, statistical analysis has been done with the help of statistical tools of descriptive statistics and T-test. The findings of the study are indicative that there is an insignificant difference between anxiety levels of the two genders.

Key Words: Gender, Age and Anxiety.

Introduction

Anxiety is arguably an emotion that predates the evolution of man. Carl Jung, known for his work on personality and the collective unconscious, saw anxiety as a natural response to the unknown or unexplored aspects of the self. He believed that anxiety could be a catalyst for personal growth, prompting individuals to confront and integrate their unconscious thoughts and feelings. , Another pioneering figure in psychology, Sigmund Freud, viewed anxiety as a fundamental part of the human experience. He proposed that anxiety results from the conflict between the id (unconscious desires) and the superego (internalized moral standards). Freud identified three types of anxiety: reality anxiety (fear of real-world dangers), neurotic anxiety (fear of unconscious desires surfacing), and moral anxiety (fear of violating one's moral standards). These different perspectives of psychologists reflect the complexity of anxiety and how it can be understood by different psychological paradigms.

Anxiety is a prevalent psychological phenomena that is intricately explored in this research, which focuses on the divergent experiences of college students who are male and female. Anxiety, a pervasive emotional state, manifests in a variety of ways that need a deep understanding of the differences that cut beyond gender lines. Anxiety has increasingly grown into a prominent problem among college students in today's fast-paced academic environment. Anxiety frequently rises to the surface at the critical confluence of entering the maze-like halls of academia, combined with the unrelenting crucible of academic necessities and the crucible of personal transformation. The incidence and mode of anxiety greatly vary across the gender spectrum, despite the fact that it connotes a common thread connecting the experiential tapestry of students. The research's burning



question is does anxiety manifests itself differently in male and female college students. Anxiety takes on a variety of shapes and is an emotive landscape pulsating with fear and unease. Anxiety ensnares each mind with a custom-made design, from the nebulous shapes of generalized anxiety to the pinpricks of sharp triggers intertwined with academics or social encounters. Understanding how these expressions vary across the male and female tiers of the student stratum is crucial for customizing interventions and buttressing support structures.

The metrics of societal expectation, gender norms, and the unsettling crucibles unique to male and female students function as instrumental orchestrations that craft the symphony of anxiety. This academic research aims to find whether there exists any significant difference between the anxiety levels of male and female college students. I hope it enhances the larger conversation around the field of mental health in higher education.

Objective

To find if there is a significant difference between anxiety levels of male and female students.

Hypothesis

There is a significant difference between male and female students in terms of their anxiety level.

Literature Review

- Hankin, B. L., & Abramson, L. Y. (2001) in their research paper on “Development of gender differences in depression: An elaborated cognitive vulnerability-transactional stress theory” indicated that females often report higher levels of anxiety compared to males. This gender disparity in prevalence is consistent across different age groups, including college students.
- Annu S. (2020) in “A comparative study of anxiety in male and female students” found that that gender and age play significant role in the level of anxiety among students. Female students experiences significantly higher anxiety than male students group. It was also observed in her research that anxiety decreases with age.
- “Stigma and help seeking for mental health among college students” a research by Daniel Eisenberg, Marilyn F Downs, Ezra Golberstein, Kara Zivin (2020) showed that Cultural and societal factors contribute to the gendered experience of anxiety. Expectations related to traditional gender roles, socialization, and stigma associated with mental health can influence how anxiety is perceived and expressed
- Naceanceno, Kendall D., Capps, Sara K., Whittenburg, Rachel, and Ortiz, Alexis (2021) wrote a research paper named “A Comparison of Anxiety Levels Among College Students” in which they found significant differences in anxiety level scores between male and female college students. Similarly, their study provided evidence that there were significant differences in anxiety level scores between the majors of college students, specifically between education and STEM majors. However, it was determined that there was no significant difference in anxiety level scores among college students of different classifications or among college students based on the number of semester hours.

Methodology



Sample: The present study has been conducted on the sample of 60 college students (Girls and Boys) from F.G.M Government College, Adampur, Hisar, Haryana. The age of the participants ranged between 17-21 years.

Tool: Sinha’s Comprehensive anxiety test by L.N.K. Sinha and A.K.P. Sinha has been used for present study. This test contains 90 questions with 2 alternative answers (Yes/No).

Procedure: The above mentioned psychological test was administered to the selected subjects personally and they were asked to read carefully the instructions given in the questionnaire. Subjects were allowed to take their own time to complete the questionnaire. Scoring of this questionnaire was done accordingly to the instructions in their manuals and concerning books.

Limitations

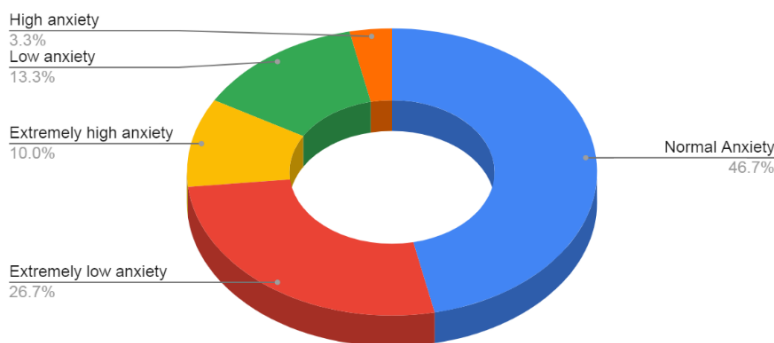
- This study is limited to 60 respondents. So findings and conclusion given on the basis of the study cannot be extrapolated to the entire student population.
- The result fully depends on the information given by the respondents which may be biased.

Result and Discussion

Gender	N	Level of anxiety									
		Extremely High		High		Normal		Low		Extremely Low	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Male	30	3	10	1	3.3	14	46.7	4	13.3	8	26.7
Female	30	10	33.3	0	0	9	30	3	10	8	26.7
Total	60	13	21.7	1	1.7	23	38.3	7	11.7	16	26.7

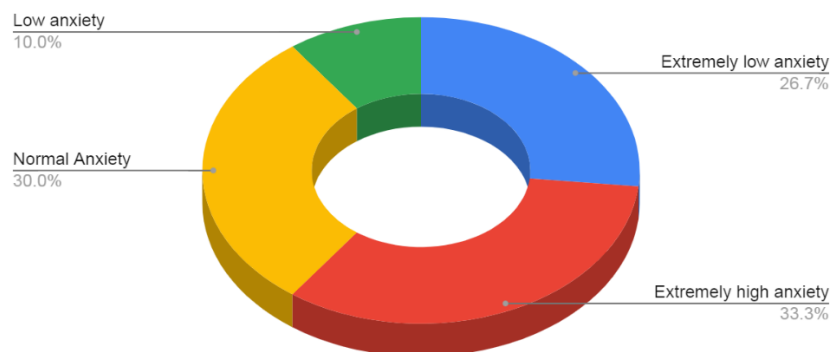
Table 1. Level of Anxiety in male and female students

Count of Level Of anxiety in male students

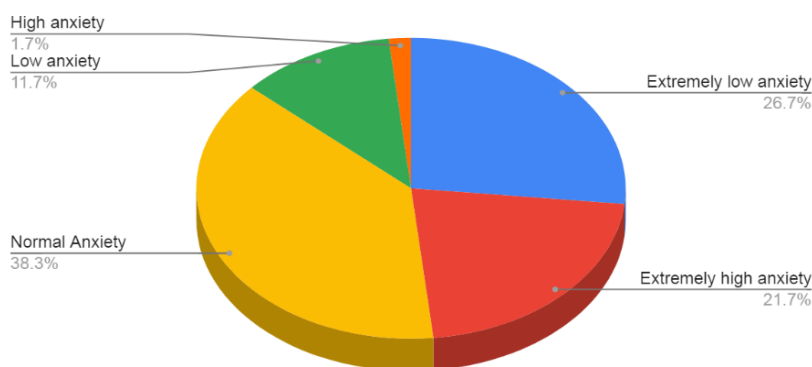




Count of Level of anxiety in female students



Count of Level of anxiety of complete sample



The data showed that:

(i) In the entire sample, 21.7% students showed extremely high anxiety, 1.7% of the sample had high anxiety level, and the majority of the students i.e. 38.3% exhibited normal level of anxiety. Low level of anxiety was noticed in 11.7% of the sample and 26.7% of the sample had extremely low anxiety.

(ii) In the sample of female students, the majority i.e. 33.3% showed extremely high anxiety, none of the females had high anxiety level, and 30% of the females exhibited normal level of anxiety. Low level of anxiety was noticed in 10.7% of the females and 26.7% of the females had extremely low anxiety.

(iii) In the sample of male students, 10% showed extremely high anxiety, 3.3% of the males had high anxiety level, and the majority i.e. 46.7% of the males exhibited normal level of anxiety. Low



level of anxiety was noticed in 13.3% of the females and 26.7% of the males had extremely low anxiety.

(iv) Highly extreme level of anxiety in females is much higher than in males. The difference is quite significant of 23.3%.

(v) High level of anxiety was witnessed more in males than in females.

(vi) Male students showed higher percentage (46.7%) of normal level of anxiety as compare to female students (30%).

(vii) Low level of anxiety was a little higher in males than females by 3.3%.

(viii) Both male and female students had the same level of extremely low level of anxiety

Group Statistics					
	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Anxiety	Male	30	28.0333	20.98683	3.83165
	Female	30	27.5667	17.33580	3.16507

Table 2. Mean, standard deviation on scores of the Male and Female students

Independent Sample Tests		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t- test for equality of mean	
		F	Sig.	t	df
Anxiety	Equal variances assumed	.109	.742	0.094	58
	Equal variances not assumed			0.094	56.003

Table 3. t-values on scores of the Male and Female students

The present study is comparative study of level of anxiety among government college students (male and female) of rural India. T-test has been used to study difference in anxiety levels among male and female students. The results of present study revealed that there is an insignificant difference in anxiety levels of both the genders. The mean score of females is 28.03 which is a little higher than males with a mean score of 27.56 and t-value for female and male is 0.09. Significant value is 0.742 and the degree of freedom is 58 and 56.003 respectively.

Conclusion

On the basis of the present research it can be said that female students experienced an insignificantly higher anxiety than male students. Thus, it can be concluded that gender doesn't play a major role in the level of anxiety among college students of rural background.

Future Research



The study was conducted from the students who belonged to a rural area and anxiety was not that prevalent among the students. Further research can be conducted in order to check whether there is a difference between anxiety levels of students of the city and the students who come from rural areas. Future studies could also research the differences among college students for other mental health disorders such as depression. Different anxiety levels can also be measured for female and male students of different states, cities, towns and villages and then comparison can be drawn between them. Additionally, future studies could be conducted to look for differences in anxiety levels among international college students in the India.

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