

STRESS AND DEPRESSION AMONG POST GRADUATE STUDENTS

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Abstract- Stress and depression can both be caused by life events and medical conditions. The one difference is that stress can be caused by pleasant events such as a promotion or marriage, while depression is associated with unwelcome events like financial difficulties or death. Life for many young people is a painful tug of war filled with mixed messages and conflicting demands from parents, teachers, coaches, employers, friends and oneself. The objective of this research was to study the relationship between stress and depression among post graduate students. Another objective was to study the effect of gender on stress and depression among post graduate students. The size of the sample was 51(27 male and 24 female). Beck's Depression Inventory and Hari's Stress inventory was used to measure the level of depression and stress among post graduate students. It was found that stress and depression among male students was higher as compared to their female counterparts. The correlation analysis states that as stress increases the level of depression also increases among male and female post graduate students. Gender had a significant effect upon the depression level of male and female post graduate students.

Index Terms- stress, depression, gender, students

I. INTRODUCTION

Stress among college students, leaving home for the first time and going away for school can be very difficult for some people. In many cases for college freshman this is their first time being away from their home and parents. Many times they get home sick and want to isolate themselves. They have to get into a new routine of going to school, and change can be very difficult. It is definitely hard to get into the swing of college. They have to navigate through classes in a new format while living away from all the comforts of parents. A college student's life usually consists of attending classes, long hours of studying, working at a job (sometimes), and having a social life.

Some students work at a job or study harder than others, but they are all trying to get degrees so maybe one day they will have meaningful and significant lives. It is a constant struggle for everyone who is trying desperately to make him or herself into a success. And every college student wants to be involved with something in order to further their education, or just have fun. There are lots of new opportunities out there. The struggle consists of demands on time, financial pressures, parental pressure and conflicts, interpersonal conflicts, managing freedom, peer and academic pressure and the transitional period to a new academic environment. All of these factors combined

can cause emotional disturbances and one of the most common is stress.

For most students, college is the first experience living away from home, family and friends. When things become difficult, their support system (including family and friends) may be miles away and their surroundings unfamiliar. This may bring feelings of homesickness, loneliness and isolation. Many students find college more academically demanding than they anticipated and feel stressed or anxious about not performing well. Petersen says, "Type A personalities or perfectionists, and are prone to these types of worries. They are often more likely to experience significant depressive symptoms because of negative self talk as a result of perceived failures."

Like any new life change, such as starting a job, college students have to negotiate an entirely new social network. Petersen says, "Teenagers spend years negotiating and establishing a social network in middle school and high school. All of a sudden, they are forced to do that all over again. These pressures can trigger or exacerbate symptoms of depression." The added pressure of greater exposure to drugs and alcohol can also play a role. On college campuses, much of social life involves alcohol and/or drug use. For someone who is at risk for or already depressed, substance use may serve to exacerbate risk or symptoms and serve as a means to self-medicate and avoid his/her personal problems.

Stress and depression can both be caused by life events and medical conditions. The one difference is that stress can be caused by pleasant events such as a promotion or marriage, while depression is associated with unwelcome events like financial difficulties or death. Stress and depression share some similar behavioral symptoms, including social isolation, increased or decreased eating, sleep disturbances and potential drug abuse. Facing repeated stress and the negative mindset of depression can result in feelings of helplessness.

A cause-and-effect relationship exists between stress and depression. Struggling with unrelenting stress increases the potential for depression. On the flip side, depression lowers the ability to cope, and any small daily challenge may trigger unusually high stress. Ongoing stress results in continuously elevated levels of biochemical, and that leads to medical conditions, including depression. Causes of female and male depression and anxiety might be quite different from each other. It is not known for sure if stress affects men and women differently. Generally, as the two genders often operate in different social contexts, both tend to develop different emotional dispositions and personality traits. Accordingly, their responses and coping mechanisms to stress situations vary.

II. OBJECTIVES

Objectives of the present study could be stated as follows:

1. To study the relationship between stress and depression among post graduate students.
2. To study the effect of gender on stress and depression among post graduate students.

III. METHOD

Sample

The sample was selected by using random sampling method. The sample consisted of 51 post graduate students within the age bracket of 20-22 from various post graduate departments of Ravenshaw University. Out of 51 post graduate students 27 were male and 24 were female.

Instruments

1. *Beck Depression Inventory*

The Beck Depression Inventory (BDI-II) is a 21-item self-report instrument intended to assess the existence and severity of symptoms of depression as listed in the American Psychiatric Association’s Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders Fourth Edition (DSM-IV; 1994). It is specifically designed to determine presence and severity of symptoms of depression. Each of the 21 items corresponding to a symptom of depression is summed to give a single score for the BDI-II. There is a four-point scale for each item ranging from 0 to 3. On two items (16 and 18) there are seven options to indicate either an increase or decrease of appetite and sleep. Cut score guidelines for the BDI-II are given with the recommendations that thresholds be adjusted based on the characteristics of the sample, and the purpose for use of the BDI-II. Total score of 0-13 is considered minimal range, 14-19 is mild, 20-28 is moderate, and 29-63 is severe. The reliability coefficient is 0.92.

2. *Hari Stress Inventory*

Hari Stress Inventory is a tool to measure the amount of stress you experience in daily life. The inventory consists of 66 items which is to be scored in a five point scale. The five options for each item were I Agree Fully, I agree, I Cannot Say, I Disagree, and I Totally Disagree. Test-retest coefficient of correlation was found to be 0.79. Item 2, 4, 6, 8, 11, 13, 14, 16, 17, 31, 43, 44, 46, 48, 49, 60, 64, 65 are reversed score items and rest are positive scored items.

Procedure

As indicated earlier, post graduate students from various departments were randomly sampled and selected for data collection. A good rapport was established between the investigator and respondent. The instructions of each part of the questionnaires were adequately explained and care was taken to ensure that they understood the questionnaire. Each participant was requested to respond to each item in the questionnaire freely and frankly without any hesitation. Each participant was asked to clarify for understanding before they attempted to respond. The participants were instructed to finish the entire questionnaire in a time of maximum one hour. Data was collected from 51 university students to assess stress and depression. Out of 51 students 27 were male and 24 were female. Each participants were administered both the questionnaire individually. They were asked to give a tick mark (✓) on the appropriate box. Strict confidentiality was ensured. The study was conducted in compliance with ‘Ethical’ principles or moral manner.

IV. RESULT

Table –I: Descriptive Statistics

DVs	Gender	N	Mean	SD
Stress	Male	27	193.0370	19.0798
	Female	24	186.1667	26.0228
	Total	51	189.8093	22.6451
Depression	Male	27	24.2222	10.2931
	Female	24	15.7083	6.5573
	Total	51	20.2157	9.6588

Table I shows the stress score for male is higher (193.03) as compared to the stress score of female (186.16). So male are more stressed than female. It also revealed that depression score for male is higher (24.22) as compared to the depression score of females (15.70). Male are more stressed as compared to female. Females show low level of depression as compared to males. Male are more stressed and more depressed as compared to their female counterparts.

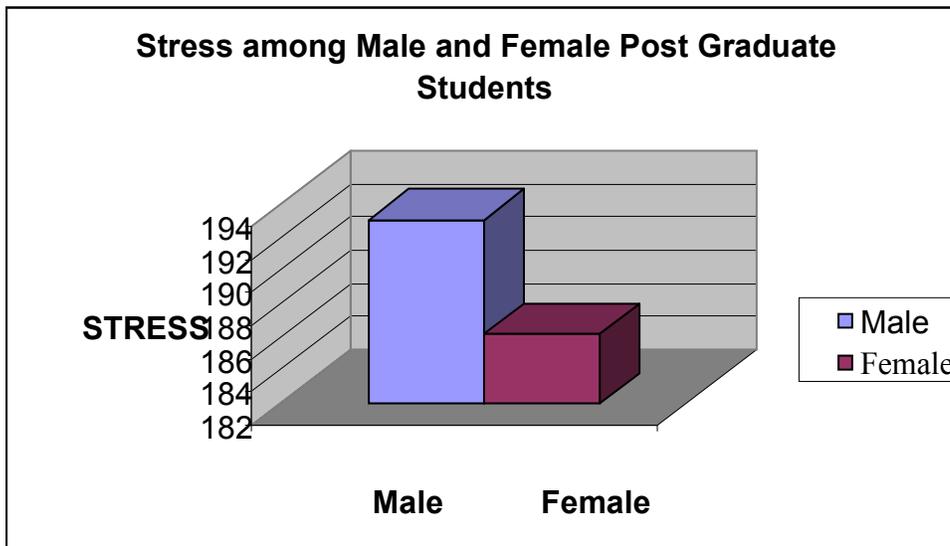


Figure I: Bar diagram showing stress among male and female postgraduate students. The above figure indicates that males are more stressed as compared to their female counterparts.

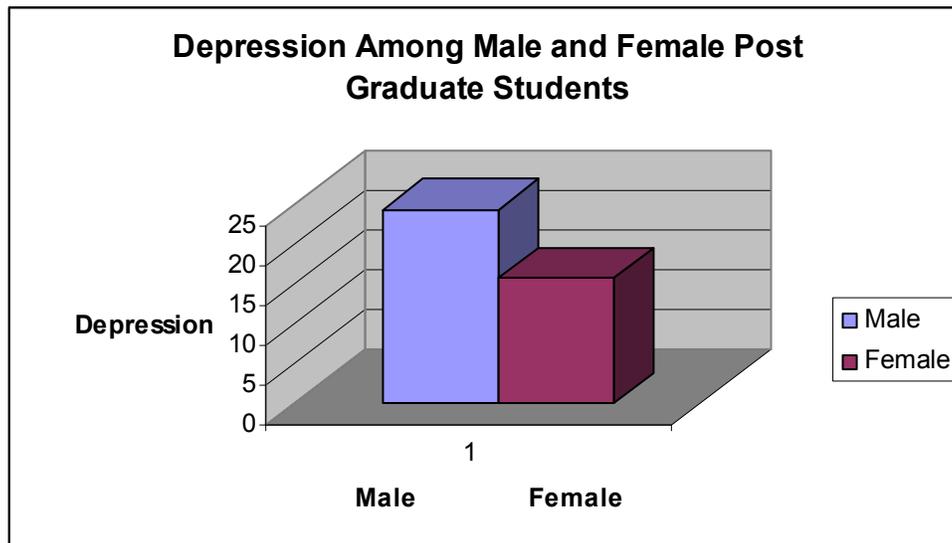


Figure II: Bar diagram showing depression among male and female postgraduate students. The above figure indicates that males are more depressed as compared to their female counterparts.

Table –II: Correlation Analysis

Variables	Stress	Depression
Stress	1.000	.330*
Depression	.330*	1.000

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level.

Table –II revealed that there exist a positive correlation between stress and depression. The correlation coefficient between stress and depression is 0.330. The obtained correlation of coefficient is significant at the 0.05 level of significance. So, as the level of stress increases the level of depression also increases among post graduate students. High level of stress is related with high level of depression. A student with high level of depression is more stressed and vice versa.

Table III
ANOVA showing the effect of Gender on Stress and Depression

Dependent Variable	Source of Variation	Sum Squares	ofdf	Mean Square	F	Sig.
STRESS	Between Groups	599.743	1	599.743	1.174	.284
	Within Groups	25040.296	49	511.026		
	Total	25640.039	50			
DEPRESSION	Between Groups	921.002	1	921.002	12.055	.000
	Within Groups	3743.625	49	76.401		
	Total	4664.627	50			

Table III showed that the effect of gender upon stress is not significant, $F(1, 49) = 1.174, p = .284$. So there is no difference between post graduate male and female students with regard to their score on stress. Post graduate males and females experience same level of stress. The effect of gender upon depression is significant, $F(1, 49) = 12.055, p = .000$. There exist a significant difference between post graduate male and post graduate female with regard to their scores on depression. Post graduate males are more depressed (Mean=24.2222) than females (Mean=15.7083).

V. DISCUSSION

This section is organized around the research question posed in chapter III. In particular it relates the result and implication.

Major Findings

1. There is no significant difference among male and female with regard to their stress score.
2. There exists a significant difference among male and female with regard to their scores on depression.
3. There exist a positive significant relationship between stress and depression.
4. Male post graduate students are more depressed than female post graduate students.

Post graduate male students experience same level of stress as post graduate female experience. So both male and female experience same level of stress and equally adjust with their life. As stress increases the level of depression also increases among post graduate students. Both male and cope and adjust in their life in a same way. Post graduate male are more depressed than post graduate females. Male post graduate students are more depressed as compared to female postgraduate students. Positive relationship between stress and depression indicates as stress increases the level of depression also increases.

Men generally have a hard time dealing with the stigma of depression. They are more likely to deal with their symptoms with by drinking alcohol or abusing drugs, and/or pursue other risky behavior. Many men avoid talking about depressed feelings to friends or family. Male depression often goes undiagnosed. Men with depression often aren't diagnosed, for several reasons. Possible reasons behind male depression includes failure to recognize depression, fatigue, irritability, neglecting signs and symptoms, employment, lack of purpose in life, substance addiction and emphasis on self-control. So men should practice healthy coping skills rather than automatically turning to alcohol. So they need to set realistic goals and

prioritize tasks. They should seek emotional support from friends and family members. Understanding how men in our society are brought up to behave is particularly important in identifying and treating their depression. Depression in men often can be traced to cultural expectations. Men are supposed to be successful. They should rein in their emotions. They must be in control. These cultural expectations can mask some of the true symptoms of depression.

VI. CONCLUSION

Gender as a factor does not influence the level of stress rather it influence the level of depression among male and female students. The study was only restricted to the factor of gender. Attempt should be made to include factor such as emotional intelligence along with gender to know the difference between male and female undergraduate students with regard to stress and depression.

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