

Assessment of Factors Influencing Stress and Well-Being Among College Students in Coimbatore

Dr. P. Sabarish¹, Abarnaa R²

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Statistics, PSG College of Arts & Science, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India.

²Teaching assistant, Department of Statistics, PSG College of Arts & Science, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India.

ABSTRACT

“Stress acts as an accelerator: it will push you either forward or backward, but you choose which direction.”

In the contemporary era, individuals frequently navigate circumstances laden with challenges and uncertainties, culminating in heightened **stress** levels. This study explores stress among college students, focusing on key stressors like academic pressure, financial constraints, future employment, and relationships. Data from students reveal peak stress levels among those aged 21–23, primarily driven by job-related and financial concerns, with female students reporting significantly higher stress. Post-awareness sessions, statistical analysis showed notable improvements in stress management. These findings align with **Sustainable Development Goal 3 (SDG 3)**, highlighting the importance of stress reduction strategies in enhancing mental health, academic success, and overall well-being.

Keywords: Sustainable Development Goal 3 (SDG 3), social pressures, mental health, stress reduction strategies, statistical analysis

INTRODUCTION

Stress is the body’s natural response to emotional or physical challenges, manifesting as tension, anxiety, or frustration, and while it can motivate individuals to meet demands, excessive stress negatively impacts mental and physical health. It can be categorized as acute (short-term), chronic (long-term), eustress (positive), distress (negative), or traumatic stress, each varying in duration and effect. Among students, common stressors include academic pressures, heavy workloads, financial concerns, relationship issues, and career uncertainties, all of which can lead to health problems, mental health issues like anxiety and depression, cognitive impairments, strained relationships, reduced productivity, and even substance abuse. Effective stress management is crucial for maintaining academic performance, mental well-being, and overall health, equipping students with coping skills that promote resilience and prepare them for future challenges. Coping strategies such as time management, self-care, mindfulness, social support, and positive thinking help reduce stress’s negative effects. Stress management also aligns with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3: Good Health and Well-being, as it promotes mental health, reduces health risks, enhances academic and personal

productivity, and fosters long-term well-being, contributing to the development of resilient individuals who can thrive in both personal and professional spheres.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This review synthesizes existing literature on stress management, elucidating analytical methodologies and methodological constraints while offering empirical insights into stressors, their ramifications, and effective coping mechanisms. A 2018 investigation at St. Alphonsa College identified academic pressure, future uncertainty, and interpersonal challenges as predominant stressors among students, advocating strategic interventions for mitigation. A 2017 international conference paper examined the physiological dimensions of stress, introducing remedial techniques such as yoga and Japanese finger stress relief. As explored by B. Bala Murugan (2007), organizational stress management revealed a conspicuous absence of formalized strategies in professional environments, emphasizing the imperative for structured counseling and awareness programs. Dr. Deepti Bhargava and Hemant Trivedi (2012) underscored academic evaluations, transitional life phases, and career-related anxieties as principal youth stressors, recommending conducive environments and outdoor engagement to ameliorate stress. A 2015 executive summary from Reliance Communication accentuated the necessity of equilibrium in stress management to sustain employee efficiency and preempt occupational burnout. Parallely, Bhavnagar University’s (2012) research established a direct correlation between occupational stress and job dissatisfaction among banking professionals, proposing targeted alleviation strategies. A 2014 study in the *Journal of Counseling Psychology* substantiated the efficacy of online interventions in enhancing present control, thereby mitigating stress, anxiety, and depression among college students. Collectively, these multidisciplinary studies provide a robust empirical foundation for comprehending stress management across educational, occupational, and psychological domains.

METHODOLOGY

OBJECTIVES: This study endeavours to the key factors triggering stress among students and evaluate their significance. It examines the correlation between stress levels and potential stressors while monitoring changes over time to assess the efficacy of stress management interventions and their impact on student well-being.

DATA COLLECTION: The data was collected via a Google Forms questionnaire shared through personal contacts, social media, and online forums. Although described as random sampling, the distribution method aligns more with convenience sampling, potentially limiting the generalizability of the results due to selection bias.

ANALYSIS

Table 1: Frequency Table for all the observation

Which causes the maximum level of stress? [FINANCIAL]					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Factors	Very High	47	38.8	38.8	38.8
	High	31	25.6	25.6	64.4
	Neutral	20	16.5	16.5	80.9
	Very Low	23	19	19	100
	Total	121	100	100	

Level Of Stress In “Future Plans”					
Factors	Very High	57	47.1	47.1	47.1
	High	31	25.6	25.6	72.7
	Neutral	23	19	19	91.7
	Very Low	10	8.3	8.3	100
	Total	121	100	100	
Have you satisfied with your managing those above stressors?					
Factors	Satisfied	34	28.1	28.1	28.1
	Not Satisfied	63	52.1	52.1	80.2
	Neutral	24	19.8	19.8	100
	Total	121	100	100	
How do you feel when things get out of control i.e., as you feel stressed?					
Factors	Overthinking	61	50.4	50.4	50.4
	Angry	13	10.7	10.7	61.2
	Self-motivation	20	16.5	16.5	77.7
	Find a solution with calmness	27	22.3	22.3	100
	Total	121	100	100	
Have you ever faced any challenges and social pressures as a college student?					
Factors	Yes	76	62.8	62.8	62.8
	No	45	37.2	37.2	100
	Total	121	100	100	
Age wise count of facing social pressures and challenges					
Factors	18-20	39	32.2	32.2	32.2
	21-23	69	57	57	89.3
	24-26	10	8.3	8.3	97.5
	27 & above	3	2.5	2.5	100
	Total	121	100	100	
Have you been satisfied with your managing those above stressors by the awareness program?					
Factors	satisfied	97	80.2	80.2	80.2
	Not satisfied	7	5.8	5.8	86
	Neutral	17	14	14	100
	Total	121	100	100	

Table 2: Association between the Age wise count of facing social pressures and challenges

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.749^a	3	.008
Likelihood Ratio	7.739	3	.052
Linear-by-Linear Association	.023	1	.879
N of Valid Cases	121		

Figure 1: Bar chart for facing social pressures

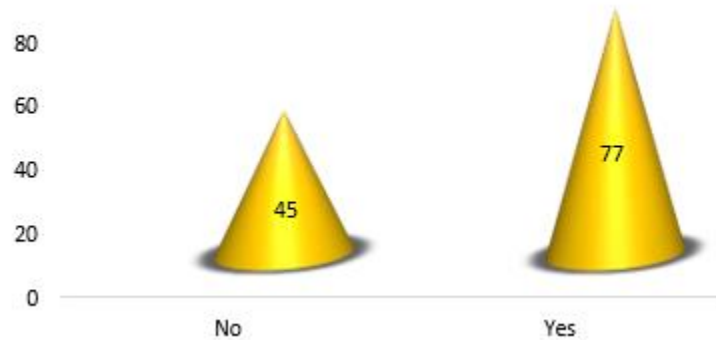


Table 3: Mean different for the level of stress in financial situation

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	9.262	1	9.262	4.382	.038
Within Groups	251.515	119	2.114		
Total	260.777	120			

Figure 2: Bar chart represents stress levels in financial according to gender

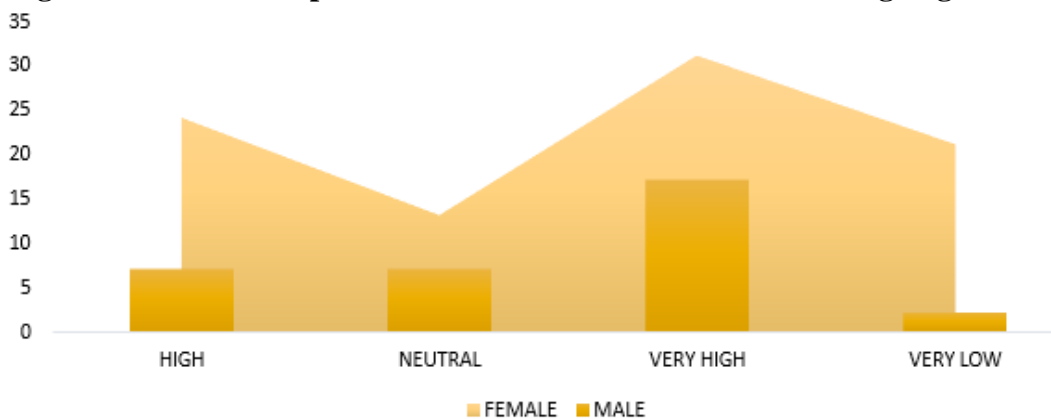


Table 4: Mean difference for the level of stress in future Plan

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	15.095	3	5.032	3.804	.012
Within Groups	154.773	117	1.323		
Total	169.868	120			

Figure 8: Age and Stress Level in Placements or Job Searching.

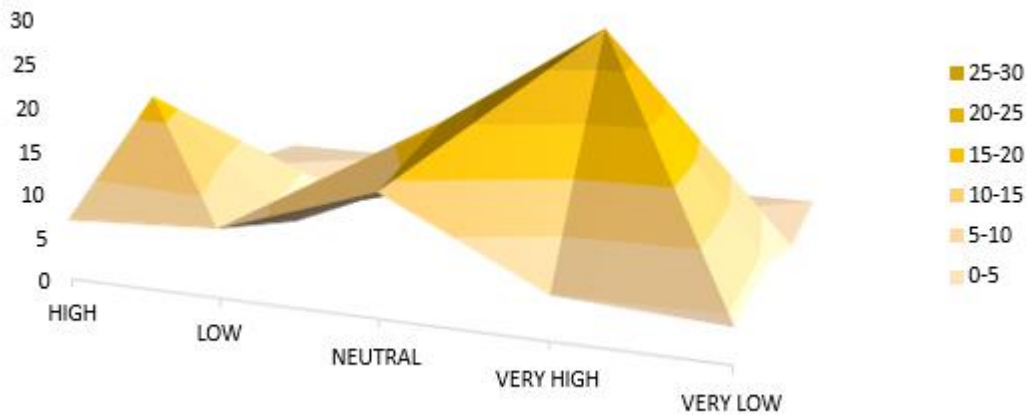


Table 5: Comparison of Stress level in Placements

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	29.332	3	9.777	5.930	.001
Within Groups	192.916	117	1.649		
Total	222.248	120			

Figure 3: Stress levels in plans according to age group

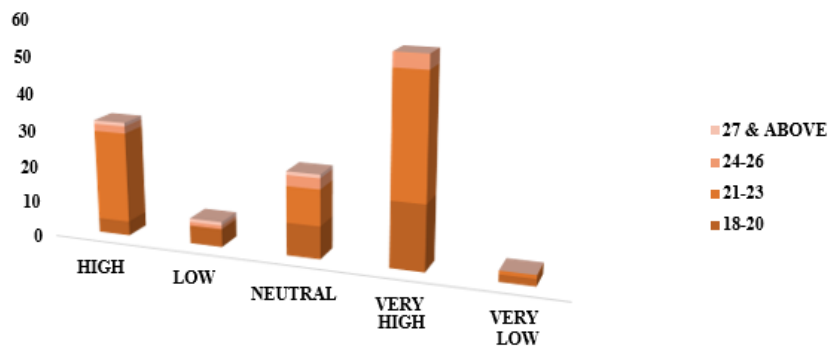


Figure 4: Overall feelings when things get out of control

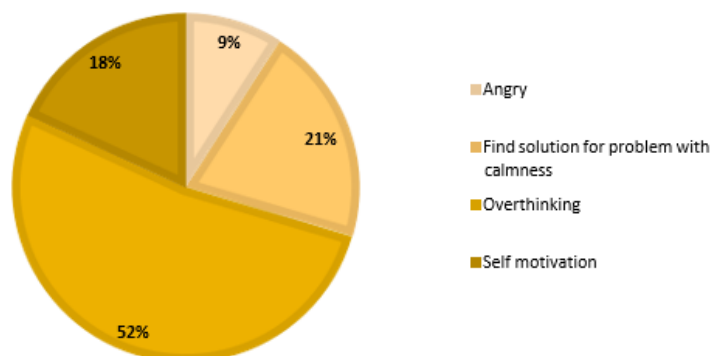


Figure 5: Gender-wise feelings when things get out of control

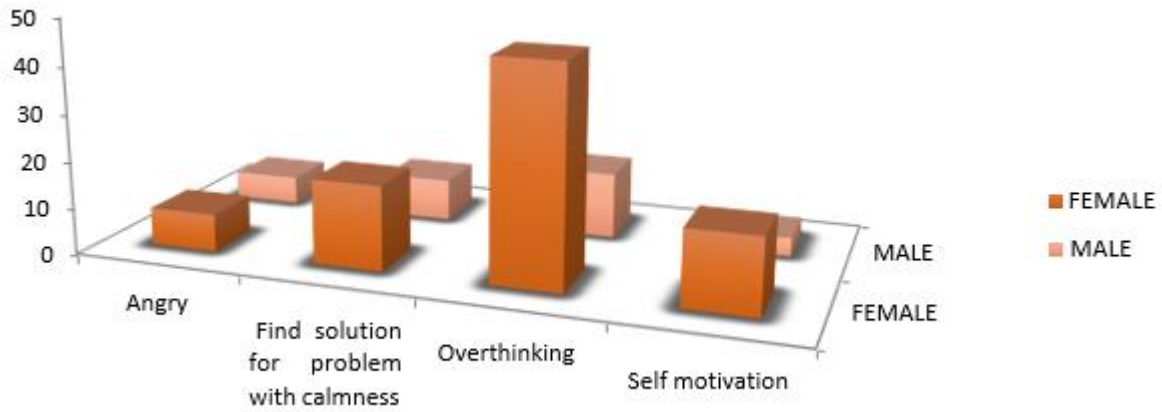


Figure 6: Before Awareness Program

BEFORE AWARENESS PROGRAM

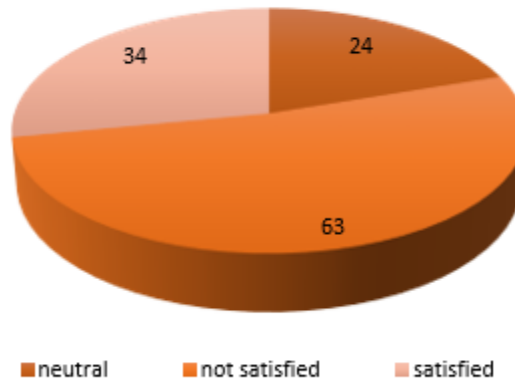


Figure 7: After Awareness Program

AFTER AWARENESS PROGRAM

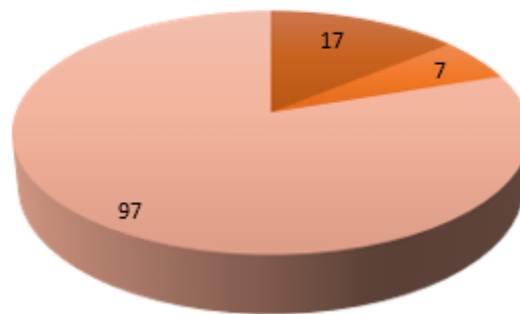


Table 6: Variation between before and after awareness program

Test Statistics	
Z	-5.283 ^b
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

INTERPRETATION

The findings reveal that future-related uncertainties pose the most significant stressor, with 72.7% of respondents experiencing either "Very High" or "High" levels of stress, closely followed by financial concerns at 64.4%. A substantial proportion (52.1%) express dissatisfaction with their ability to manage these stressors effectively, indicating a gap in coping mechanisms. When confronted with stress, overthinking emerges as the predominant response (50.4%), while only 22.3% adopt a composed, solution-oriented approach, and 16.5% rely on self-motivation. Social pressures also weigh heavily, with 62.8% of students acknowledging challenges, particularly in the 21-23 age group (57%), suggesting that stress levels peak during this transitional phase of higher education. Notably, awareness programs have demonstrated a high degree of efficacy, as 80.2% of participants report improved stress management through such interventions. The statistical analysis highlights that financial stress (Table 3, Figure 2) and uncertainty about future plans (Table 4, Figure 3) are predominant stressors, with 38.8% and 47.1% of students experiencing "very high" stress levels, respectively. A considerable proportion (52.1%) struggle with effective stress management, while 50.4% resort to overthinking when overwhelmed (Figure 4). Social pressures are particularly prevalent among the 21-23 age group (62.8%) (Table 2). Significant variations in stress levels exist concerning financial circumstances (Table 3), future aspirations (Table 4), and job placements (Table 5, Figure 8). However, an awareness program led to a substantial improvement in stress management efficacy, with satisfaction levels rising to 80.2% (Table 6, Figures 6 and 7). However, the persistent prevalence of stress-related dissatisfaction underscores the necessity for more comprehensive psychological support systems, fostering resilience through targeted stress-relief strategies, emotional intelligence training, and proactive mental health initiatives.

CONCLUSION

Our study underscores that 63% of college students grapple with social pressures, particularly those aged 21-23, where 57% experience stress linked to identity, relationships, finances, and future aspirations. Predominant stressors include financial instability, career ambiguity, and job pursuits, with 73.5% of females exhibiting heightened financial anxiety compared to males. Overthinking afflicts 50% of students, while 60% of those aged 21-23 report acute stress during campus placements. Coping strategy awareness programs have ameliorated stress management for 50% of participants. To mitigate these issues, integrating stress management into curricula and expanding access to counseling, peer support, and wellness initiatives is imperative for fostering resilience and holistic well-being.

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