

# A Study of Socio-Psychological Stressors among College Students of Greater Chennai

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## Abstract

The study titled 'A Study of Socio-Psychological Stressors among College Students of Greater Chennai' addresses the common stressors that college students deal with in today's competitive world. The Study examines the different social and psychological issues with academic stress being one of the most important ones. The main objectives of the study are to assess the level of stressors among different academic levels (UG, PG, and Ph.D. students) and to explore potential differences in stress levels between female and male students. The study aims to analyse the perceived stress levels among college students, identify common stressors, and understand the impact of stress on students' lives. Data was collected through a questionnaire survey method, with a sample size of 60 students selected via simple random sampling from two colleges in Chennai City. The survey aims to aid in counselling management by determining stress levels among students and identifying reasons for high stress levels, with the study findings of reducing or eliminating stress. The collected data were analysed using percentage analysis and mean score ranking techniques. The result shows that the main stressors are family pressure, interpersonal difficulties and, future uncertainty, and academic workload. To help students effectively manage their stress and help create a supportive academic environment, the research highlights the significance of customized interventions and counselling services.

**Keywords:** Socio-Psychological Stress, College Students, Chennai, Academic Challenges, Mental Health.

## 1. Introduction

Mental Health Issues faced by College students are Depression-According to recent studies, one in five college students suffer from some sort of recurring feelings of self-loathing and immense sadness. Stress and Anxiety- Rigorous college curriculum brings along with a huge amount of stress. According to qualitative and quantitative studies, the level to which students are involved in both academic and extra-curricular activities is also indicative of their psychological well-being and suffering. The various social, developmental, and intellectual obstacles mould the brains of these late teens as they try to achieve their goals (Carpi, M. *et. al.* 2022)

The attention towards growing student's mental health, many cases of psychological stress frequently remain unnoticed or unaddressed, leading to long-term emotional or academic consequences. Therefore, this study aims to explore the sources, effects, and coping mechanisms associated with psychological stress among students from Queen Mary's College and Presidency College. By understanding the patterns

of stress in this Population, the study seeks to inform future interventions and promote a more supportive academic environment.

## 2. Literature Background

There are studies have explained about a study of socio psychological stressors among college students of Greater Chennai. A brief review is worthwhile concerning to highlight what has already has been done in the field and highlights the socio-economic and structural factors influencing educational outcomes.

According to Beiter *et al.* (2015), there is a clear understanding that stress, depression, and anxiety, are common among college students and are often associated with social isolation, academic workload, and financial strain. The study emphasized how important it is for colleges to prioritize mental health support services to effectively address these escalating issues.

According to Ross, Niebling, and Heckert (1999), university student's main stressors are time management, academic overload, and test anxiety. Their results highlight the necessity of focused workshops and faculty awareness of students' welfare.

Kumar and Bhukar's (2013) study of stress levels among Indian college students found that most of the stressors were school-related, especially tests, and expectations for grades. They also found that students used both good and bad ways to deal with stress, which shows how important it is to have organized stress management programs.

Gokul and Jayalakshmi (2016) did a study in Chennai to see how much mental stress students in different professional courses like engineering, medicine, dentistry, law, and MBA, were under. The study found that students in medical and dental programs were the most stressed out because they had too much work and were afraid of failing and did not know what they wanted to do with their lives. Family pressure, emotional instability, and money worries were also factors that played a role. The results show that school and colleges really need counselling services and organized ways to deal with stress.

## 3. Aim

The main of the study is to analyse the social and psychological stressors faced by college students in Greater Chennai.

## 4. Objectives

1. To assess the Socio-Psychological stressors among college students of Queen Mary's College and Presidency college.
2. To understand the Male and Female student's connection between academic life and mental health, including factors like part-time jobs and academic workload.
3. To identify the common symptoms of stress such as anxiety, depression or physical health issues.
4. To provide recommendations that can help colleges improve student support systems.

## 5. Sampling Design

The present study selected students of Queen Mary's College and Presidency College for the research work. The researcher has used the convenient random sampling for the study. The researcher has selected a sample of total 60 students 30 males and 30 females equally. The purpose of the research was explained to the students and their informed consent was obtained.

## 6. Methodology

The present study used a quantitative cross-sectional survey design to examine psychological stress among college students of Greater Chennai. A structured with well framed questionnaire was used to conduct this study through Google Forms and distributed to students from Queen Mary's College and Presidency College. The survey included questions on socio-demographic details, academic stressors, psychological stress types (intrapersonal, interpersonal, and environmental), effects of stress, and coping mechanisms. Data was collected using Microsoft Excel; the researcher has used the following tools, descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages), inferential methods (Chi-square tests, cross-tabulations) and multivariate visualizations.

## 7. Results and Discussion

### 7.1. Descriptive Statistics

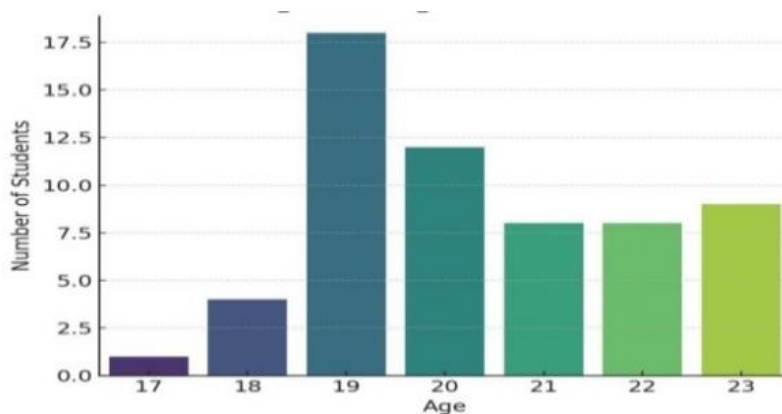
Frequency and percentage for gender, educational level, part-time job status and stress types etc. have been considered.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics**

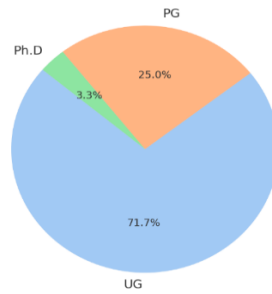
Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Institution Name	Queen Mary's College	30	50.0%
Institution Name	Presidency College	30	50.0%
Gender	Female	30	50.0%
Gender	Male	30	50.0%
Course	UG	43	71.7%
Course	PG	15	25.0%
Course	Ph.D	2	3.3%
Part-Time Job	No	50	83.3%
Part-Time Job	Yes	10	16.7%

There are equal numbers of male and female students in the sample are evenly split with 50% male and 50% female students. This equitable distribution contributes to the fairness and objectivity of gender-related analysis remains fair and unbiased.

### 7.2. Age Distribution and Course Classification



**Figure 1: Age Distribution**

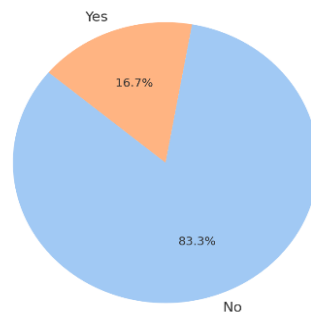


**Figure 2: Course Classification**

Age Distribution shows that majority of respondents (30%) are 19 years old, followed by 20-year-olds (20%) and others between 17 to 23 years. This confirms the participants mostly belong to the typical undergraduate and early Postgraduate student age group. The Course Classification shows that the 71.7% of the students are pursuing undergraduate degree, while 25% are pursuing postgraduate degrees, and only 3.3% are pursuing Ph.D. scholars. The concentration in UG courses suggests a strong undergraduate population, which is helpful for examining trends in early academic life.

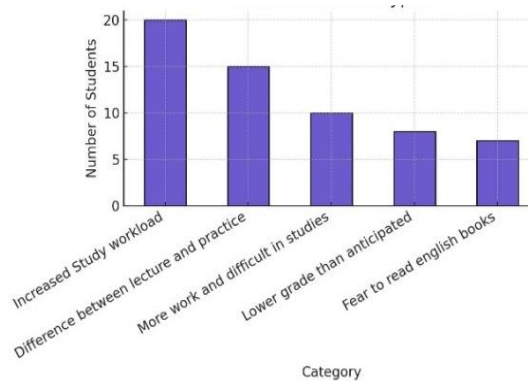
**7.3. Part-time job status and academic stress types**

Part-Time Job Status shows that most people (83.3%) are not working part-time and only 16.7% are working alongside with their studies. This allows us to explore if time management or job pressure contributes to academic stress in the working group. Academic Stress Types shows the different kinds of academic stress that the students deal with.



**Figure 3: Part- time job status**

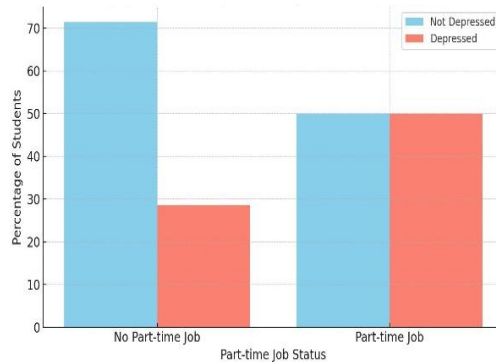
The most common reason given was an increased study workload (33.3%) followed by lecture-practical mismatch (25%) and difficulty with studies (16.7%). This suggests that academic problems with structure and content are major source of stress.



**Figure 4: Academic Stress Types**

#### 7.4. Univariate analysis:

Every respondent acknowledged dealing with academic stress in various forms. Increased study workload (33.3%), followed by differences between lecture and practical content (25%), trouble managing workload (16.7%), lower grades (13.3%), and fear of reading English materials (11.7%) were other significant stressors. Portion of the student population 31.7% reported feeling mentally depressed. This implies that almost one-third of the participants are dealing with mental health issues, which may be brought on by stressors in their Personal, Social or Academic lives. At the time of the survey, the remaining 66.7% reported they were not feeling depressed.



**Figure 5: Mental Depression by Part-Time Job Status**

#### 7.5. Bivariate analysis

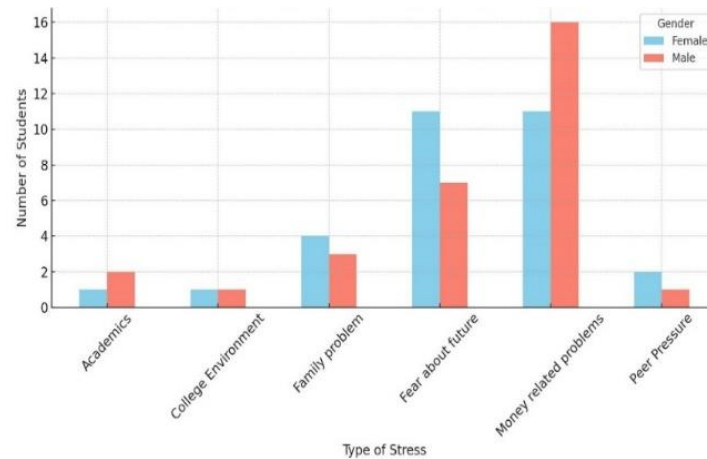
##### Gender vs Mental Depression

The associations between gender, academic stress, and sources of stress, age, part time employment status, and sources of stress with mental depression and reported stress levels were investigated using a bivariate analysis. Moderate differences in psychological distress were indicated by the slightly higher rate of depression (36.7%) among female students compared to males (27.6%). Academic stress is significantly different for UG and PG students.

Research Question	Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$ )	p-value	Significance
Gender vs. Depression	-	-	Females (36.7%) > Males (27.6%)
Academic Stress by Course Level (UG vs. PG)	11.81	0.018	Significant ( $p < 0.05$ )
Part-Time Jobs vs. Depression	1.51	0.219	Not Significant ( $p > 0.05$ )
Age vs. Stress Levels	7.31	0.837	Not Significant ( $p > 0.05$ )
Stress Type vs. Gender	2.62	0.758	Not Significant ( $p > 0.05$ )

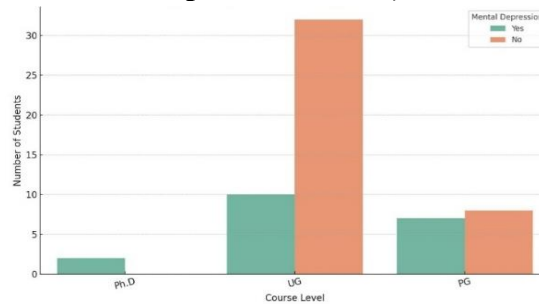
**Table 2: Bivariate Analysis (Male and Female)**

The Chi-Square test results reveal that academic stress significantly differs between UG and PG students ( $p = 0.018$ ), while no significant relationships were found between part-time job status and depression ( $p = 0.219$ ), age and stress levels ( $p = 0.837$ ), or gender and stress sources ( $p = 0.758$ ). These findings highlight variations in stress and depression by academic factors but no notable demographic influences.



**Figure 6: Type of Stress Reported by Gender**

### 7.6. Multivariate analysis (Course level Depression Status)

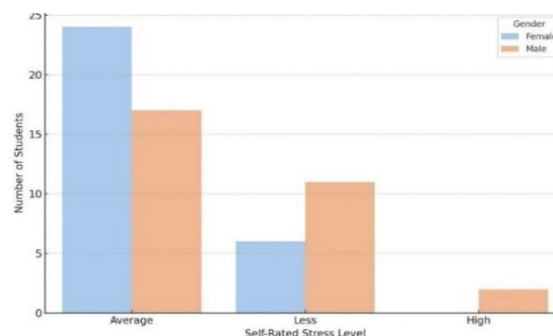


**Figure 7: Course Level Depression Status**

The prevalence of mental depression in UG and Ph.D. students based on the chart compared to PG and Ph.D. students, UG students reported depression at a comparatively higher rate. Mental depression is less common among PG students. Although they are less common, Ph.D students do exhibit some symptoms of depression. The relationship between academic performance and mental health is examined in this diagram, which suggests that workload, transition stress, or a lack of coping mechanism may be the main causes of academic pressure at the UG level.

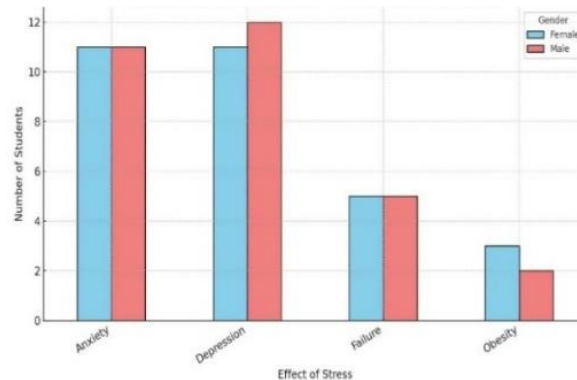
### 7.7. Comparative Analysis

The most common effect is anxiety which is marginally more noticeable in female students than in male students. Male students exhibit significantly higher levels of anger and loneliness. Males are also more likely to report being obese. Given that men report more externalized outcomes (anger) and women report more internalized (anxiety). This comparison suggests that gender may have an impact on how stress presents itself.



**Figure 8: Comparative Analysis – Effect of Stress by Gender**

## 7.8. Visualization



**Figure 9: Visualization of Stress Level by Gender**

The category of moderate stress had the highest numbers reported by both sexes. Compared to men, women exhibit a marginally higher propensity to describe their stress as severe. For both genders, the at least amount of stress is reported. This visualization supports the interpretation that stress is a significant concern among students regardless of gender, with subtle variations in self-perception external ones.

## 8. Recommendation

- Provide counselling services to colleges ought to have easily accessible, student-friendly mental health counselling centres where qualified experts can offer students in distress early intervention, stress management skills, and emotional support.
- Include stress management courses in the curriculum to foster resilience from the start, student orientation or elective program should include workshop or short courses on time management, mindfulness, exam anxiety and health coping mechanism.
- Encourage the formation of peer support groups it is possible to normalize emotional difficulties and lessen the stigma associated with asking for help by facilitating student-led group where peers can exchange stories and solutions in secure environment.
- Enhance communication between teacher and student. Teacher should receive training on how to spot stress in their students and offer academic support or accommodations when necessary. An understanding classroom atmosphere can ease stress and promote asking for assistants.
- Deal with academic and institutional stressors to make sure they are not unnecessarily adding to student's stress, institutions should examine their attendance policies, workload distribution, examination patterns.
- Provide Support for Working Students. Who work part time should be given flexible schedules and extra academic support because they are more likely to experience high level of stress and burnout.
- Use mental health campaigns to increase awareness to encourage psychological well-being as a crucial component of student success, regular mental health awareness weeks, seminar and educational materials should be implemented.

## 9. Conclusion

This research shows the important light on the growing problem of psychological stress in college students and the various ways it impacts both their academic and personal lives. The findings indicate that the majority of the students are dealing moderate to high levels of stress, frequently associated with

interpersonal relationship problems, personal hardships, and academic pressure often due to academic pressure, Undergraduate students and those balancing studies with part-time jobs is evidently the most at risk. Males were more likely to express anger or loneliness, while females reported higher levels of anxiety. These differences show that student stress is complex and needs to be addressed from multiple angles. Overall, this research emphasizes how important it is for colleges to take student mental health seriously. Providing an access to counselling, stress-relief programs and creating more understanding and flexible learning environment can make a big difference in helping students manage their stress and succeed in both their studies and personal lives.

## 10. References

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