



EDUCATION, MENTAL HEALTH AND STRESS COPING STRATEGIES OF HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC SITUATION

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ABSTRACT

An attempt was made to study the college students' mental health during the covid-19 pandemic situation in Tamilnadu with the aim a timely assessment of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of college students. Students mental health in higher education has been an increasing in concern normally. The COVID-19 pandemic situation has brought this population into viceversa focus. Conducted a surveys with 250 students at public university in the state of Tamilnadu, India. The results were, out of 250 students 150 (60%) indicated increased stress due to Covid-19 lockdown, 175/250, 70% indicated change of food habits and timings, 180/250, 72% indicated change of sleeping times and 120/250, 48% indicated no destruction in the progress of education.

To cope with stress the higher education students have sought support from others and helped themselves by adopting coping mechanisms according to their level of stress.

Due to the long-lasting pandemic situation and vulnerable measures such as lockdown and stay-at-home orders, the COVID-19 pandemic brings negative impacts on higher education. The findings of our study highlight the urgent need to develop interventions and preventive strategies to address the mental health of higher education students.

KEYWORDS : Covid-19, Higher Education, Education. Mental Health

INTRODUCTION:

Education is the process by which people acquire knowledge, skills, habits, values and attitudes. Education involves both the teaching and learning, some times people learn by teaching themselves, in which psychology plays a vital role in education to helping the students in process of learning. Mental health awareness is an important issue for all educators, who are often the first line of defense for their students. Education professionals have recognized the impact that a student's mental health has on learning and achievement, and they realize that there's a great deal that can be done to help students with mental health issues. As a high school teacher with more than 23 years of experience, I welcome the fact that mental health awareness is finally becoming an important part of a school's function and curriculum.

Education: Education is both the act of teaching knowledge to others and the act of receiving knowledge from someone else. Education also refers to the knowledge received through schooling or instruction and to the institution of teaching as a whole.

Mental Health:

Mental health refers to cognitive, behavioral, and emotional well-being. It is all about how people think, feel, and behave. People sometimes use the term "mental health" to mean the absence of a mental disorder. Mental health can affect daily living, relationships, and physical health.

Role of mental health on education of students:

The current generation of youth are experiencing the highest rates of mental health issues ever seen and Marginalized youth experience even higher rates of mental health concerns due to the intersection of several factors including violence, and poverty.

Mental health challenges are often pervasive, impacting many developmental outcomes. Poor mental health can have several detrimental effects on children and youth. Not only can it impact academic performance and success, but it may also interfere with social relationships and physical health.

Students who suffer from mental illnesses are at greater risk for adult onset physical health problems such as heart disease, diabetes, and cancer. They are also more likely to be

involved in the criminal justice system. There is no health without mental health. That is, if our youth are not mentally well, they will not be physically well and their ability to positively impact our society will be impaired. Despite an increase in the availability of mental health resources such as counselling and various treatment options, rates of mental health issues such as anxiety and depression continue to rise.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought into focus the mental health of various affected populations. It is known that the prevalence of epidemics accentuates or creates new stressors including fear and worry for oneself or loved ones, constraints on physical movement and social activities due to quarantine, and sudden and radical lifestyle changes. A recent review of virus outbreaks and pandemics documented stressors such as infection fears, frustration, boredom, inadequate supplies, inadequate information, financial loss, and stigma.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The study was designed to pursue the following objectives,

1. To find out whether there is any significant difference among higher education students in their education, mental health and stress coping strategies based on their gender and discipline of study.
2. To find out whether there is any significant relationship between education and mental health of higher education students.

Hypotheses of the study:

The following hypotheses were formulated for testing in the study;

1. There is no significant difference between higher education students in their education, mental health and stress coping strategies based on their gender and discipline of study.
2. There is no significant relationship between education and mental health of higher education students

Method of study:

A systematic survey method was applied with the purpose of assessing the education and mental health status of higher education students. In addition, the survey aimed to capture the ways that students have been coping with the stress associated with the pandemic situation. First the study assesses participants' education, mental health and stress coping strategies scale (2020), it consists of 40 statements with five point rating scale comprises the dimensions of education,

mental health and stress coping strategies

Population and sample size of the study:

Population of the present study were higher education students (University Students) Tamilnadu, India. A sample of 250 students was selected by using simple random sampling (Technique).

Data Analysis:

First, descriptive statistics were compiled to describe participants' demographics (gender and discipline of study)

Testing of hypotheses and results:

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference between higher education students in their education, mental health and stress coping strategies based on their gender and discipline of study.

Table 1 shows the mean, S.D differences and t-values of education and mental health and stress coping strategies of higher education students.

Variable	Gender	N	M	S.D	t'. value @ 0.05 lev	Significance
Education	Male	120	14.20	5.04	14.87	Significant
	Female	130	19.41	9.58		
Mental Health	Male	120	21.06	8.11	21.60	Significant
	Female	130	19.04	8.59		
Stress coping strategies	Male	120	21.58	5.45	21.94	Significant
	Female	130	19.85	7.16		
Education	Arts and Humanities	140	13.79	8.9	15.02	Significant
	Science	110	19.23	11.75		
Mental Health	Arts and Humanities	140	22.12	10.63	22.83	Significant
	Science	110	20.36	8.97		
Stress coping strategies	Arts and Humanities	140	18.45	6.41	18.72	Significant
	Science	110	20.67	5.45		

The above table 1 shows that the calculated t values are greater than the tabulated 't' value of 1.96 at 0.05 level. Therefore the null hypothesis is rejected. It can be inferred that "There is significant difference between higher education students in their education, mental health and stress coping strategies based on their gender and discipline of study".

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant relationship between education and mental health of higher education students

Table 2 showing the correlation between education and mental health of higher education students

Variable	N	r'	Significance
Education	250	0.625	Not Significant at 0.05 level
Mental Health	250		

The above table 3 shows that the calculated 'r' value 0.625 is greater than the tabulated 'r' value of 0.113 at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore the null hypothesis "There is no significant relationship between education and mental health of higher education students" is rejected; it can be inferred that "There is significant relationship between education and mental health of higher education students".

Major findings of the study:

There is significant difference between higher education students in their education, mental health and stress coping strategies based on their gender and discipline of study

There is significant relationship between education and

mental health of higher education students

CONCLUSION:

In all the above comparisons, the results indicate that there is significant difference between higher education students in their education, mental health and stress coping strategies based on their gender and discipline of study and there is significant relationship between education and mental health of higher education students.

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