



## THE NEED FOR COUNSELLING AMONGST UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF DELHI UNIVERSITY

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to understand the need for counseling amongst Undergraduate students of Delhi University. The sample of 92 students ( 1st year =33, 3rd year = 59 ) was selected using purposive sampling of age group 18- 22 years . The measure used was College Adjustment Scales (CAS) by Anton and Reed (1991).The result analysis indicates that first-year students primarily face academic and family-related challenges, while third-year students struggle with anxiety, substance abuse, interpersonal issues, and career concerns. To address these concerns of the undergraduate students, universities should enhance academic support, provide career guidance and mental health services. This comprehensive approach will help students overcome their specific difficulties effectively.

**KEYWORDS :** counseling , first year students , third year students , dimension .

### INTRODUCTION

Counseling is an intimate form of learning, and it demands a practitioner who is willing to be an authentic person in the therapeutic relationship. It is within the context of such person-to-person connection that the client experiences growth. The effectiveness of a counselor is directly related to his or her ability to establish and maintain an effective counseling relationship with clients .

Counseling is conducted with persons individually, in groups, and in families. Clients seen by counselors live and work in a wide variety of settings and in all strata of society. Their problems may require short-term or long-term interventions that focus on just one person or with multiple individuals who are related or not related to one another.

Counseling is diverse and multicultural. Counselors see clients with varied cultural backgrounds and at different ages and stages of life. Those from minority and majority cultures are helped in a variety of ways depending on their needs, which may include addressing larger societal issues, such as discrimination or prejudice.

As we grow up, we tend to face various kinds of difficulties in one's own lives . Attending college can be a stressful time for many students yet they do not seek professional help. This would lead to psychological distress and threaten their wellbeing. In spite of the implementation of counseling services in most public universities little has been done to assess the attitude, knowledge and perception of the professional counseling services among university students

A study done by Joan, Finson and Wilson (2021) which aimed at assessing the challenges that students face at the university that may require counseling. (reframe).This study was undertaken at Moi University College of Health Sciences in Uasin Gishu County. It adopted a cross sectional survey design based on a sample drawn from across the year of study of Moi university students at the college of health sciences. The target population was 1147 out of this, a sample size of 288 students were the informers in the research. Fisher's formula was used to get the sample size. The study used stratified sampling technique to select participants, where the year of study formed the strata. Proportionate sampling was used to distribute the sample between schools. The sample per school was further proportionately distributed between the levels of study (year of study). The method for this study was to

schedule interviews and the corresponding tool was to schedule questionnaires. Data were analyzed quantitatively using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were in the form of percentages and frequencies. Chi- Square was used to determine relationships between variables. The study found out that students of Moi University College of Health sciences were aware of professional counseling services offered at the university. The study concluded that students did not seek help because they felt capable of solving their own issues or getting help from their friends. It is recommended that the counseling department should be aware of the challenges facing students in order for them to advise accordingly. (small summary)

In another study done by Radhika Bhat, M.G. Mansuri, Anoop R. Markande on the need for guidance and counseling among University students of Kheda region(2020), Gujarat, India was explored. The introduction of guidance in our educational institutions is crucial because the changes taking place in the education system, in technology, and technology is not an exception to this if students are not adjusted with all these or ignorant about positive and negative benefits of scientific gifts, which affect their education and expose them to personal problems in development. The present study, i.e. the need for guidance and counseling was conducted among university students to examine the importance of guidance and counseling. This study included the students those who have got guidance and counseling and those who not obtained, but they need guidance. Questionnaire method was used to procure the students' expression, their wish to seek guidance either to choose their career or to solve personal problems. The work also showed subject-wise increase in need for psychological counseling as specific subjects' gender-based requirements were observed. This is reportedly the first study of counseling needs in university students of western Indian states which could have implication in maintenance of the mental health of susceptible students

### Need of Counseling for College Students

College can be a challenging time for many students, both academically and personally. In general, college counseling can provide students with a supportive and confidential environment to address their concerns and work towards a more fulfilling and successful college experience. It's safe to say that college students stress over more than just classes. There are plenty of benefits of counseling for college students. College is exciting, but it requires students to learn how to

adapt to various situations – from learning how to cope with very little sleep to meeting people from different walks of life to learning how to live on your own for the very first time. And all these changes have a significant impact on a student's overall well-being. This is why there are many common reasons for counseling, and it is something that should be embraced.

**Rationale of the Study**

For many students, college may be an academically and personally difficult period. On the whole, college counseling can offer students a safe space to express their worries in order to improve the quality and success of their college experience. Our current study on the need for counseling amongst undergraduate college students rightly reflects on the same. Moreover, students from only 1st and 3rd year of college were included in the sample to study the dynamics involved in a new start of college life and reaching to the end of the same journey, the emotions involved in both the period and what are the issues being faced and how they are being solved.

**Objectives**

- To study the need for counseling amongst Undergraduate students of Delhi University
- To study the difference in various dimensions of CAS as to see the difference between first year and third year students

**College Adjustment Scale**

The College Adjustment Scales (CAS) is an inventory for use by professionals who provide counseling services to college students. It was developed by Anton and Reed (1991). The CAS was developed to provide a rapid method of screening college counseling clients for common developmental and psychological problems (Grayson, 1989). Based on analyses of presenting problems in college counseling centers. The CAS scales provide measures of psychological distress, relationship conflict, low self-esteem, and academic and career choice difficulties. The nine CAS scales are:

**Anxiety (AN):** A measure of clinical anxiety, focusing on common affective, cognitive, and physiological symptoms.

**Depression (DP):** A measure of clinical depression, focusing on mood affective, cognitive, and physiological symptoms

**Suicidal Ideation (SI):** A measure of the extent of recent ideation reflecting suicide, including thoughts of suicide, hopelessness, and resignation

**Substance Abuse (SA):** A measure of the extent of disruption in interpersonal, social, academic, and vocational functioning as a result of substance use and abuse

**Self-esteem Problems (SE):** A measure of global self-esteem which taps negative self-evaluations and dissatisfaction with personal achievement

**Interpersonal Problems (IP):** A measure of the extent of problems in relating to others in the campus environment

**Family Problems (FP):** A measure of difficulties experienced in relationships with family members

**Academic Problems (AP):** A measure of the extent of problems related to academic performance

**Career Problems (CP):** A measure of the extent of problems related to career choice

**Reliability**

The reliability of a psychological tool such as the College Adjustment Scale (CAS) refers to the consistency of its measurements over time and across different groups of people. A reliable instrument should yield consistent results when used under the same conditions. The CAS has been found to have good reliability in various studies. For example, a study by Misra and McKean (2000) examined the reliability of the CAS with a sample of 308 undergraduate students and found high internal consistency reliability, as well as test-retest reliability over a two-week period. Another study by Wan et al. (2021) reported similarly high internal consistency

reliability in a sample of 838 college students. Moreover, the CAS has been translated into different languages, and studies examining the cross-cultural reliability of the scale have reported good reliability in different cultural contexts, such as China (Wan et al., 2021) and Turkey (Savasir & Sahin, 2012). Overall, the College Adjustment Scale has demonstrated good reliability across different samples and cultural contexts, indicating that it is a consistent and stable measure of college adjustment. However, as with any psychological tool, it is important to use the CAS in conjunction with other measures and to interpret its results in the context of a student's individual circumstances and experiences.

**Validity**

The validity of the CAS depends on the extent to which it measures what it claims to measure and accurately reflects a student's level of adjustment to college. Evidence for the convergent and discriminant validity of the CAS was examined in four validation studies (Reed, 1991). These studies were conducted on independent samples obtained at 33 counseling centers throughout the United States and utilized a multitrait-monomethod research design. Results showed that all CAS scales except Substance Abuse and Career Problems, had large positive correlations with the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI), Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) and Beck Hopelessness Scale (BHS). Correlations of the CAS Anxiety and Depression scales with the STAI, BDI and BHS were quite similar to correlations of the STAI, BDI and BHS with each other- STAI correlated 0.78 and 0.76 with the BDI and 0.57 and 0.56 with the BHS respectively. In the second study, the CAS Anxiety, Depression, Suicidal Ideation, Self-esteem Problems, Interpersonal Problems and Academic Problems were all correlated highly with Neuroticism and the majority of its facet scales in NEO- PI Neuroticism scale. The third study focused on examining the validity of the CAS Career Problems and Academic Problems scales. It was found that there was a positive correlation between CAS Career Problems and Academic Problems, and Career Decision Scale (CDS; Osipow, 1987), with its coefficients being 0.72 and 0.62 respectively.

**Method**

**Sample and Sampling Technique**

For the purpose of the study, purposive sampling was used. In purposive sampling, the researcher selects individuals that are believed to be representative of the population. Around 92 undergraduate students comprising both males and females from seventeen colleges under University of Delhi participated in the study.

**Procedure**

The items of the CAS are contained in a reusable item booklet. A debriefing was done with participants to make them feel secure while participating in the experiment. An Informed consent was taken before the conduction of the study. Confidentiality of the participants was also maintained. Debriefing was given at the end. Total 15 days were taken into consideration to collect the data. The researchers spent roughly 15 to 20 minutes with each participant

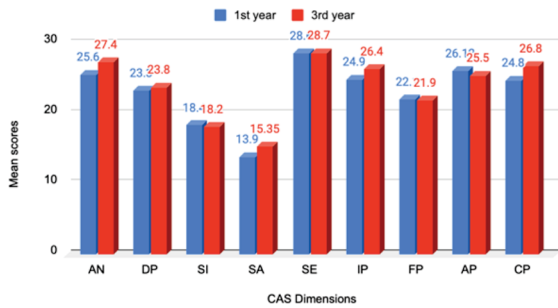
**RESULTS**

**Table 1: Depicting The Mean And Standard Deviation Of 1st And 3rd Year Students.**

| Dimensions | 1st year (n=33) |           | 3rd year (n=59) |           |
|------------|-----------------|-----------|-----------------|-----------|
|            | M (n=33)        | SD (n=33) | M (n=59)        | SD (n=59) |
| AN         | 25.6            | 8.7       | 27.4            | 8.5       |
| DP         | 23.3            | 7.2       | 23.8            | 7.5       |
| SI         | 18.4            | 6.4       | 18.2            | 7.01      |
| SA         | 13.9            | 3.7       | 15.35           | 4.37      |
| SE         | 28.6            | 8.1       | 28.7            | 6.9       |
| IP         | 24.9            | 7.4       | 26.4            | 6.6       |

|    |       |     |      |      |
|----|-------|-----|------|------|
| FP | 22.1  | 6.7 | 21.9 | 6.5  |
| AP | 26.12 | 6.1 | 25.5 | 6.33 |
| CP | 24.8  | 9.2 | 26.8 | 9.6  |

comparison between mean scores of 1st and 3rd year



Graph 1: Depicting Comparison Between Mean Scores 1st And 3rd Year

## DISCUSSION

The study was carried out on 92 undergraduate students of around 17 colleges across University of Delhi, out of which 33 students belong to 1st year and 59 students belong to 3rd year. The study was conducted to understand problem areas of young emerging adults by assessing college adjustment scale to them. The standard deviation, mean values, and *t* values for each dimension were computed, and the results were compared, in order to analyze and classify the problem dimension in terms of its prominence and to differentiate between first-year and third-year college students. Third-year students are, on average, more prone to experience difficulties in regard to each component, as shown by the SD scores and mean values.

Students of both years are seen to have a considerable amount of anxiety (AN), with 3rd year (27.4) scoring higher than 1st year (25.6). For the dimension of depression (DP), the scoring mean is slightly higher for students of 3rd year (23.8) as compared to students of 1st year (23.3).

In Suicidal Ideation (SI), the mean is slightly higher for the students of 1st year (18.4) as compared to the third year students (18.2). Students of third year (15.35) are high on Substance Abuse (SA) as opposed to first year students (13.9). For Self Esteem (SE), students of both years have scored quite similarly, with third year students (28.7) slightly higher than students of first year (28.6). It is to be noted that the dimension of SE is the one with the highest score amongst all the dimensions. For the dimension of Interpersonal (IP), the scoring mean is higher for 3rd year students which is (26.4) than the students of 1st year (24.9). For Family Problem (FP), the mean is slightly higher for the students of 1 year (22.1) than the 3rd year students (21.9). In the dimension Academic Problem (AP), the mean of first year students (26.12) is higher as compared to the 3rd year students (25.5). For the dimension of Career problem (CP), third year students scored higher (26.8) as compared to the first year students (24.8).

On the basis of the objective which was to study the need for counseling amongst Undergraduate students of Delhi University, the mean score in the SE dimension is the greatest, the most frequent problem experienced by third-year college students is low self-esteem. This may be due to the constant strain of academics, career choices, and general competition as many students are transitioning from the more organized - high school environment to the more open-ended and competitive world of college at this time in their lives. Numerous variables can contribute to third-year undergraduate students having trouble with poor self-esteem. For instance, they could feel inadequate or unworthy in comparison to their classmates, go through academic or

social failures, or feel pressure to do well in their studies or future careers. A Study On Self-Esteem Among The College Students was conducted by Maheswari and Maheswari (2016). The major findings of the study revealed that more than half of the students (52.5%) had Low Self-Esteem.

On the other side, among all the CAS characteristics, first-year students are also shown to have the highest levels of self-esteem issues. This finding could be explained by a dramatic change in lifestyle and immediate environment, as well as a quick transition from high school to college life. It takes time to acclimatize to unfamiliar surroundings and people, and a move of this magnitude may cause adjustment and self-esteem problems. First-year students may experience problems with self-esteem that are related to their academic success, interpersonal relationships, or sense of self. They could feel overburdened by the expectation to perform well in school, or they might be uneasy or apprehensive about making friends or fitting in with their peers.

Third-year students were found to be experiencing higher levels of anxiety (AN) as compared to first year students. This could be due to the pressures of academic expectations, social relationships, and future career goals. They may worry about not performing well enough, not being able to meet the expectations of others, or not being able to achieve their goals. On the other hand, first-year students may experience anxiety due to the challenges of adjusting to college life. They may worry about fitting in, making new friends, managing coursework, or living away from home for the first time. Additionally, they may experience anxiety related to social expectations, forming new relationships, or maintaining existing ones.

Students from both years are roughly moving at the same pace when it comes to depression (DP). When working with postsecondary students, mental health providers frequently identify depression (Marcotte, 2013). Although depression is more common during the developmental stage of emerging adulthood, the associated risk factors are less well understood than they are in adolescence (Ibrahim et al., 2013). Lack of emotional support (Needham, 2008; Wickrama, Wickrama, & Lott, 2009), encouragement of autonomy (Kins, Soenens, & Beyers, 2012), and hostility towards one's parents (Galambos, Barker, & Krahn, 2006) are also associated with the presence of depressive symptoms in college students. The presence of depressive symptoms in these students is the result of a simultaneous combination of multiple risk factors, whether sociodemographic, personal, family-related, or academic.

In Suicidal Ideation (SI), the mean is slightly higher for the students of 1st year as compared to the third year students. Students from both the groups are found to have suicidal thoughts ranging from a quick consideration to a detailed plan once in their lifetime, or on a routine, even daily basis for a short or long period. Suicide is the third leading cause of death among 15-to-24 year olds (Anderson & Smith, 2005) and the second leading cause of death among college students (Schwartz, 2006). In one of the multivariate analysis study of Levy and Deykin (1989) to develop a multi-dimensional model explaining college suicide ideation using Face-to-face interviews with 1,249 first-year college students. The results showed that an estimated 6% of first-year students at the particular university had current suicide ideation.

For the dimension of Substance Abuse (SA), third year students are facing higher than first year students in this dimension. In a study carried out in India the Prevalence of substance use was seen in 52.7% students who belonged to the age group 19 to 21 years (Gupta et al., 2013). With time being spent on the college campuses, third year students are more likely to come in contact with sources of psychoactive

substances, which might get them into trouble. Peer pressure could be another reason for falling into the trap of substance abuse. The fear of not fitting in into a certain group of friends might compel one to consume the same. Further the growing crisis related to career and professional life might bring the need to consume such substances in order to achieve any instant high. First year students on the other hand are more likely to process the transition and figuring out things. They might not have the exposure to such substances in an early stage.

The third year students are found to be higher for Interpersonal dimension (IP) as compared to the first year students. Third-year students may experience interpersonal problems such as difficulty in forming and maintaining relationships with peers, romantic partners or family members. They may struggle with issues such as communication, trust, or boundary setting. A study by Martin (2014), emphasized the substantial role that interpersonal relationships play in students' academic success and engagement and motivation.

In family problems (FP), the first year students score a higher mean as compared to the third year students. As they adjust to college life, first-year students may find it difficult to deal with changes in their family dynamics. They could be experiencing homesickness, missing their loved ones, or financial issues. As adolescents learn to manage their newfound freedom and forge their own identities, they may also struggle to communicate effectively with their loved ones.

The third year students score higher compared to the first year students in Career Problems (CP). Third-year students, on the cusp of graduation, may feel lost or confused about their professional futures. As a result, individuals may experience increased levels of tension and anxiety as they fret over their ability to enter the workforce successfully following graduation.

In the dimension Academic Problem (AP), the mean of first year students is higher as compared to the third year students. First-year college students may often face numerous academic problems as they adjust to the new challenges brought about by the pressure of assignments, tests, and other academic requirements. One of the primary difficulties stems from the overwhelming workload, where students find themselves juggling multiple assignments and projects simultaneously. The sheer volume of tasks, coupled with strict deadlines, can lead to feelings of stress and anxiety. Additionally, the transition from high school to college brings forth new expectations and academic standards, leaving students grappling with the need to adapt quickly. The increased level of independence required in college can also pose a challenge, as students must learn to manage their time effectively, set priorities, and maintain a disciplined study routine. Furthermore, the competitive environment may intensify the pressure to perform well, contributing to heightened levels of stress and self-doubt. Consequently, first-year college students often encounter difficulties in balancing their academic responsibilities with other aspects of their lives, such as socializing and personal well-being. It is crucial for educational institutions to provide adequate support systems, including counseling services and academic guidance, to help students navigate these challenges and foster a healthy academic experience.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of the study revealed that the most prominent common problem faced by the 1st and 3rd year undergraduate students of colleges across University of Delhi was self-esteem problems and in order to overcome such issues there are various effective psychological interventions that can contribute to improve self esteem in college students.

Further, the dimensions in which there were evident differences between the first year and third year students are Anxiety (AN), Substance Abuse (SA), Interpersonal Problems (IP) and Career Problems). The differences could be highly justified considering the present situations that a college student might have to face through his/her college life.

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