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Factors Influencing the Mental Health of College Students in India

Amaan Iqbal Ibrahim
Student
BSc Psychology with Business Management
Dubai, UAE (United Arab Emirates)
amaanii.official@gmail.com

ABSTRACT
Maintaining positive mental health is an extremely important aspect of a college student's life on campus. In order to ensure optimal conditions for honing mental wellbeing, it is thus important to be aware of the various underlying factors affecting the mental health of the college students. The purpose of this study was to find such factors and establish the correlation and predictive significance amongst them.
The researcher conducted the study by surveying 104 college students in India, ranging from all forms of courses of study and year of study via a self-administered questionnaire. The researcher ensured adequate diversity in respondents was present in order to eradicate selection bias.
Approximately 67% of respondents reported that they experience stress and anxiety during their time on campus to an extent that it affects their mental wellbeing. The factors surveyed in the study were familial emotional support, perception of campus environment and peers, adaptability, academic workload, self-care, self-esteem, and inter-personal skills. All factors except for adaptability showed significant correlation with mental health. Regression analysis showed that a positive perception of campus environment and a supportive friend group, patterns of self-care, sufficient sleep, and leisure as well as improved inter-personal skills could predict a positive mental health for the college students.
The researcher's findings can be incorporated into implemented facilities and services by both families and educational institutions in order to create and nurture a conducive environment for students to thrive academically and mentally, as well.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The field of mental health is an extremely complex terrain encompassing a multitude of variables and unique attributes. Whereas certain aspects may be ubiquitous, most of the human psyche remains unfathomably mysterious. In this study, the scholar intends to consolidate multiple factors that definitively influence the mental health of collegiate level students in India. In a culturewhere scholastic brilliance is the foremost priority, awareness of such factors and the intensity with which they affect the students(Gokhan Bas, 2020), can aid colleges and organizations devoted to offering mental health services to ensure that they take researched and result oriented approach to solving the issues of students. In a study by Aref-Adib et al, 2016; it was found that there was a widespread increase in the amount of Online Mental Health Information Seeking Behavior (OMHISB), which further highlights that the population is actively aware of their mental health and are attempting to reach out to keep it in check.

In accordance with a study by Jiang Y et al, 2022; students tended to be measurably happier, ergo experienced a more improved mental state, when there was increased familial affection, social presence, and better physical health. This proves that the mental health of an individual can directly be maintained by ensuring that surrounding factors are tuned to the optimal levels.

In a meta-analysis study conducted by Mofatteh M in 2020, "Risk factors associated with stress, anxiety, and depression among university undergraduate students", a complex relationship was found between the following risk factors and SAD in university undergraduate students: -

- Personality type
- Lack of social engagement
- Infrequent family visits
- Excessive internet and social media usage

- Stigma associated with mental health
- Belonging to minority groups
- Low self-esteem/self confidence
- Inadequate physical activity
- Loneliness
- Underlying mental health condition
- Low family income
- Workload pressure
- Studying in a foreign language
- Being bullied by staff
- Gender
- Tobacco, drug, and alcohol usage
- Eating disorders
- Childhood poverty
- Inadequate financial support from university
- Lack if social support network
- Inadequate sleep
- Exams and assessments
- Sexual victimization
- Subject proficiency
- Wrong expectations
- Feeling guilt from making mistakes
- Year of study
- Age
- Unfamiliar environment
- Underlying physical condition

The meta-analytical study concluded that novel approaches to both destigmatize mental health issues and increasing participation in college activities were necessary. This was supplemented by their finding that in a Beck Depression Inventory survey conducted in developed European countries, about 8% of the population were dealing with declining mental health.

A. Rationale

The researcher's interest in this topic arises from his experience as a student of the Indian Education System for over 17 years. He found that in the vapid race for scholastic accomplishments, students were forced to forsake the simplest of activities which contribute to maintaining mental health in formative years (Viviane et al, 2016). In addition, students were noticed experiencing shorter, insufficient sleep cycles (Geethu M et al, 2019)and a supplemented rise in anxiety due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The researcher noticed that there was a noted rise in students pursuing collegiate-level education in India with mental health issues or online mental health information seeking behavior. It was worth noting that several factors which would otherwise tend to be overlooked, did play a role in the fluctuating mental health of these students. Thus, a look into the main factors seemed warranted. Such awareness could lead to students employing methods to keep their mental health in check as well as educational institutions in India setting up facilities and services to support the same. For any educational institution should be producing well-rounded humans, rather than mere academically inclined ones.

B. Research Gap

Although there has been a plethora of studies into the factors affecting mental health, the test population and factors looked into largely vary. Furthermore, focus on factors like self-esteem and self-care as predictors of mental health were not as ubiquitous as one would imagine. Students in India tend to have a more unique cultural standpoint with respect to education. And thus, studies taking such factors into consideration were required.

C. Significance of the Study

Although there have been several studies conducted into this topic, a scarce few have been conducted by students. The researcher believes that this would present a unique perspective into what affects the mental health of college students in India. Furthermore, such an insight would have multiple benefits: -

- For students: - Awareness of the main factors can help them employ methods to assess their mental health, thus ensuring measurably higher levels of happiness and fulfilment throughout their courses.

- For teachers and institutions: - Establishing facilities and services to support the students based on the results of this study would provide a healthy campus environment, enticing more students to enroll with them.

D. Research Questions

The following are the research questions for which the researcher shall try to find answers with the help of this study: -

1. Is there a relation between course of study, associated workload and the mental health of college students in India?
2. Is there a relation between students' self-esteem and the mental health of college students in India?
3. Is there a relation between sleep, self-care and physical health and the mental health of college students in India?
4. Is there a relation between interpersonal skills and the mental health of college students in India?
5. Is there a relation between students' perception of campus environment and friend circles and their mental health?
6. Is there a relation between adaptabilityand the mental health of college students in India?
7. Is there a relation betweensupport received from familiesand the mental health of college students in India?

E. Limitations

The scope of this study was limited due to certain factors beyond the control of the researcher: -

- Although mental health awareness is rising, it is unfortunately still considered a taboo topic in certain parts of the world including India. This invariably could lead to students being hesitant or uncomfortable sharing details pertaining to their mental health.
- Time constraints.
- As most educational institutions in India prefer to not discuss mental health, access to resources like academic records and attendance records were restricted for the researcher.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This study revolves around the central term of mental health. However, this very term has several definitions.

Laurie A Manwellet al, 2015; found that 46% of respondents preferred the definition of mental health as per the Public Health Agency of Canada, which states that mental health is, "the capacity of each and all of us to feel, think, and act in ways that enhance our ability to enjoy life and deal with the challenges we face", while only 20% preferred the definition as per the World Health Organization, which states that mental health is, "a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community". Throughout these varying definitions, the common factor is the fact that mental health is necessary to serve as a functional member of society.

In a study titled, "Factors That Affect Students' Mental Health: A Study at Taylor's University School of Hospitality, Tourism and Culinary Arts Final Year Students," by Shantini T and Rui B (2015), questionnaires were distributed to 201 final year students, and the results were as follows: -

- "The respondents, who are students of SHTCA, felt a significant level of frustration, pressure and stress from changes as well as a heavy academic workload."

They stated how in 2006, the Ministry of Health reported an overall prevalence of 11.2% for mental health issues among Malaysian adults. This was further proven by Garlow et al. (2008), where 84% of the students with suicidal tendencies and 85% of moderate to severe cases of declined mental health were not receiving any form of psychiatric treatment. Furthermore, they cited Bean and Hammer (2006) and their study, "Perceived Stress Levels in University of Washington PharmD Students," where they found that 55% students end up having to choose between subjects, often ignoring one in order to sufficiently prepare for another, leading to 42.5% students reporting moderate level of stress and 27% of students reporting unmanageable levels of stress. The final survey they conducted, they found that the pressure was mainly due to the deadlines for assignments and keeping up to their own self-imposed expectations, which often tended to be unrealistic. In an open-ended question about how students dealt with stress, majority of the students opted for light exercise, music, hobbies etc. Under regression analysis, they further found that pressure (30.3%), frustration (6.9%) and changes caused due to interpersonal relationships (3.4%) were predictive factors for mental health.

In a study titled, "Factors Associated with Self-Esteem, Resilience, Mental Health and Psychological Self-Care Among University Students in Northern Thailand," by Nisarat A et al (2021), a cross-sectional survey of 729 undergraduates was conducted by self-administering a questionnaire.It was found that 82% of the

respondents had mental health problems and they concluded that gender, disease, physical health, relationships with friends and family were associated factors affecting mental health, self-esteem, and psychological self-care among the university students.

In a study conducted by Bovier et al (2004) titled, "Perceived stress, internal resources, and social support as determinants of mental health among young adults," 1257 students answered questionnaires which underwent bivariate analysis. It was thus found that mental health was negatively associated with stress and positively associated with social support, thus highlighting both stress and social support as crucial factors influencing the mental health of university students.

In a study titled, "Stress, Depression, and Anxiety among Undergraduate Nursing Students," conducted by Wanda M and Carla Shapiro (2012), they postulated that declining mental health with occurrence of stress and anxiety could interfere with learning, affect academic performance, and negatively influence clinical performance. 437 participants from a mid-western Canadian undergraduate nursing program completed the Depression Anxiety Stress Scales and it was found that academic pressure, fear of obtaining poor grades, lack of social support, problems with university staff and perceived unfamiliarity of the new campus environment were risk factors of lower mental health.

In a meta-analysis conducted by Rebecca Erschens et al (2018), titled "Professional burnout among medical students: Systematic literature review and meta-analysis", it was revealed that high academic workload, pressure, and career concerns were repetitive predictors for the development of mental health disorders like stress and anxiety. They found that the prevalence rates for professional burnout ranged from 7.0% to 75.2%.

In a study conducted by Hafen et al (2006) titled "Predictors of depression and anxiety in first-year veterinary students: a preliminary report," 93 students enrolled at Kansas State University were evaluated in a cross-sectional investigation with regards to depression and anxiety. They found that the recurring predictors of depression and anxiety in said students included homesickness, physical health, and unclear instructor expectations. Results showed that 32% of the respondents were suffering from mental health issues. They found that 16.4% and 21.5% of their general population were experiencing moderate to severe mental health issues.

In a literature review conducted by Hunt et al (2010) titled, "Mental health problems and help-seeking behavior among college students" it was found that financial constraints, lack of social interaction, and perceived worries with regards to adapting to campus life were associated with declining mental health among university students.

In a retrospective survey study conducted by Ishii et al (2018) titled, "What kind of factors affect the academic outcomes of university students with mental disorders? A retrospective study based on medical records," 573 undergraduate students from the Tsukuba University in Japan were surveyed on the major risk factors of stress and anxiety. It was found that pressure of scoring well and gender were the major risk predictors.

In a study titled, "Exploring the implications of a self-care assignment to foster undergraduate nursing student mental health: Finding from a survey research study,"conducted by Jenkins et al (2019), a 16-question survey was subjected to 89 participants from mixed universities in Canada and it was thus found that a lack of self-care along with unhealthy lifestyles were the predominant risk factors for stress and anxiety among the students.

In a study conducted by Kawase et al (2008) titled, "Variables associated with the need for support in mental health check-up of new undergraduate students," 8,287 first-year students at Tokyo university were surveyed via a questionnaire. It was found that in the given population, self-esteem/personality type, social isolation/absenteeism, fear of obtaining poor grades and poor proficiency in the subjects were strong indicators of mental health issues.

In a study conducted by Kitzrow in 2003, titled "The Mental Health Needs of Today's College Students: Challenges and Recommendations," it was discovered that an increased workload resulting in increased academic pressure as well as a lack of adequate counselling service causes mental health difficulties among students.85% of the center directors reported an increase in severe mental health issues, including self-injure incidents (51%), eating disorders (38%) etc.

In a study conducted by Lee et al (2012) titled, "Mental Health and Coping Strategies among Medical Students," 384 medical students in Korea were surveyed and it was discovered that reports of stress and anxiety of the students was associated with high academic workload, pressures about academic career, year of study and lack of self-esteem.They found that third year students underwent the most stress ($p=0.000$) and had the most cases of moderate to severe mental health issues.

While up until this point, the scholar could observe a veritable link between the course of study and mental health issues of college students, a study by Macaskill in 2012 titled, "The mental health of university students in the United Kingdom",analyzing the responses of 1,197 undergraduate students in the United Kingdom, found that, the year of study as well as pressure were found to influence the mental health of the student population.

Another study by Michalec and Keyes (2013), titled "A multidimensional perspective of the mental health of preclinical medical students," had 237 pre-clinical medical students undergo a survey which resulted in the discovery of lack of social activity and involvement to be a rising risk factor for stress and anxiety.

A study by Ratanasiripong (2018) titled, "Mental Health and Well-Being of University Students in Okinawa," involved a cross-sectional survey of 441 students in 3 Japanese universities. It found that a lower socioeconomic status of the family and a lack of self-esteem along with an elevated academic workload were strong predictors of mental health issues among students. They found that out of over 3 million cases for anxiety, resulting in a rise in suicidal tendencies, 41% were related directly to mental health.

A study conducted by Scholz et al (2016) titled, "Risk factors for mental disorders develop early in German students of dentistry" surveyed 163 students of dentistry in Germany and they found that academic workload and a lack of social engagement were elevated risk factors of stress and anxiety.

A study conducted by Sprung and Rogers (2020) titled, "Work-life balance as a predictor of college student anxiety and depression" involved a cross-sectional survey of 111 respondents from several private American universities and found that a lack of balance between academic and social life causes formation of stress and anxiety amongst these students.

Stallman (2010) in the study, "Psychological distress in university students: A comparison with general population data", surveyed 6,479 undergraduate students from universities in Australia and found that academic workload and gender were high predictors of mental health issues in the given student population.

Terebessy et al (2016) in their study, "Medical students' health behaviour and self-reported mental health status by their country of origin: a cross-sectional study", surveyed 1,683 medical students, both Hungarian and non-Hungarian, studying in Hungary and found that there was a direct correlation between a lack of sufficient physical activity and lower mental health and wellbeing among students.

Thomas et al (2020) in his study, "Student Loneliness: The Role of Social Media Through Life Transitions," surveyed 510 first year undergraduate students in the United Kingdom and found a rising prevalence of loneliness as an associated risk factor forlow mental health.

Usher and Curran (2019) in their study, "Predicting Australia's university students' mental health status", conducted a cross-sectional study of 2,326 students in Australian universities and found that gender, age, low levels of physical activity and low self-esteem were risk factors associated with SAD.

Vaughn et al (2016), in their study titled, "College student mental health and quality of workplace relationships," surveyed 170 part-time employed students in colleges in the United States of America and found that a lack of social support as well as problems with peer/friend groups caused mental health problems for the students.

Zeng et al (2019) in their meta-analysis titled, "Prevalence of mental health problems among medical students in China: a meta-analysis," discovered that out of 30,817 Chinese medical students, the perceived difficulty of the subject and subsequent workload were related indicators of rising mental health issues.

Hood C O et al (2019) in their study titled, "Family factors and depressive symptoms among college students: Understanding the role of self-compassion," found that in their survey of 365 university students, poor family support and increased family unpredictability have been related to depressive symptoms.

Khallad Y and Fares Jabr in their 2016 study titled, "Effects of perceived social support and family demands on college students' mental well-being: A cross-cultural investigation," found that in their 2 samples of Jordanian and Turkish college students, multiple regression analyses showed that perceived support from family was a better predictor for mental well-being.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND MODEL

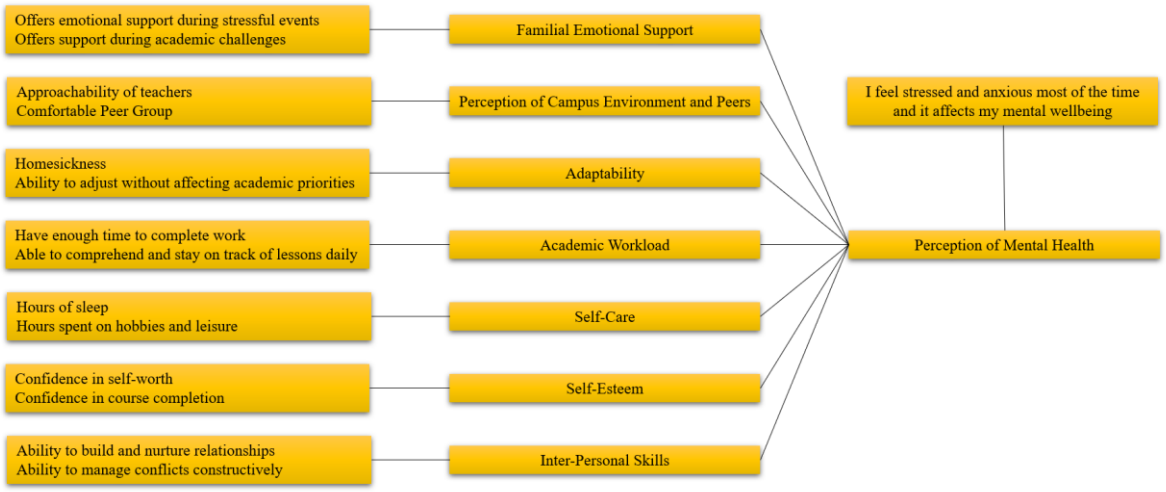
Based on the literature reviewed, the researcher has thus identified 7 factors influencing the mental health of college students: -

a. Familial Emotional Support
b. Perception of Campus Environment and Peers
c. Adaptability
d. Academic Workload
e. Self-Care
f. Self-Esteem
g. Inter-Personal Skills

These shall be the independent variables in this study.

As the term 'mental health' is very wide-ranging and covers a broad variety of conditions which would need to be diagnosed, the perception of one's own mental health requires definition. Hence the dependent variable in this case would be whether the student experiences stress and anxiety to a degree which affects their mental wellbeing.

The survey consisted of 20 questions in total. Responses to questions under each element were marked in 5-point Likert scale. The questionnaire (attached in appendix) was administered via Google Forms to students partaking in various courses in colleges in India. The student population varied in year of study as well. 104 students partook in the survey. Care has been taken to avoid students who fall below 18years.The students were informed that their responses to the survey would be strictly confidential, and their names would remain anonymous. The results from the survey were tabulated. Data was analyzed with SPSS.



3.1. Model Constructed by Author

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

A Google Form questionnaire was developed and administered among college students in India in order to collect primary data for the research. The survey contained 20 questions in total, including questions pertaining to the sample population's demographics. Respondents involved students pursuing science, commerce and arts and humanities courses. Students engaged inFirst year, Intermediate yearsand final years of study were included in the survey.

4.1. Reliability of the Data

The scholar employed Cronbach Alpha test (presented in the table below) to check the reliability of the data.Thus, a reliability score of 0.747was revealed, verifying reliability for further tests and analysis as it is greater than the acceptable standard (0.7).

Scale: All Variables

Case Processing Summary			
		N	%
Cases	Valid	104	100.0
	Excluded[a]	0	.0
	Total	104	100.0
a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.			

Table 4.1.a.

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.747	19

Table 4.1.b.

4.2. Normality of Distribution

Before conducting the data analysis, it is paramount to check the normality of the distribution. Results obtained have been presented in the tables below (4.2.a., 4.2.b.) The values for Skewness and Kurtosis SE are within the accepted range of +1.96 and -1.96. Thus, data pertaining to the chosen variables are normally distributed.

Descriptives[a]

	2. My friend group makes me feel accepted, comfortable, and less stressed.			Statistic	Std. Error
I feel stressed and anxious most of the time and it affects my mental wellbeing.	2	Mean		4.13	.295
		95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	3.43	
			Upper Bound	4.82	
		5% Trimmed Mean		4.14	
		Median		4.00	
		Variance		.696	
		Std. Deviation		.835	
		Minimum		3	
		Maximum		5	
		Range		2	
		Interquartile Range		2	
		Skewness		-.277	.752
		Kurtosis		-1.392	1.481
	3	Mean		3.80	.236
		95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	3.31	
			Upper Bound	4.29	
		5% Trimmed Mean		3.89	
		Median		4.00	
		Variance		1.116	
		Std. Deviation		1.056	
		Minimum		1	
		Maximum		5	
		Range		4	
		Interquartile Range		2	
		Skewness		-1.048	.512
		Kurtosis		1.334	.992
	4	Mean		4.22	.145
		95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	3.93	
			Upper Bound	4.51	
		5% Trimmed Mean		4.30	
		Median		5.00	
		Variance		.949	
		Std. Deviation		.974	
		Minimum		2	
		Maximum		5	
		Range		3	
		Interquartile Range		1	
		Skewness		-1.089	.354
		Kurtosis		.169	.695
	5	Mean		3.30	.226

		95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	2.84	
			Upper Bound	3.76	
		5% Trimmed Mean		3.33	
		Median		3.00	
		Variance		1.528	
		Std. Deviation		1.236	
		Minimum		1	
		Maximum		5	
		Range		4	
		Interquartile Range		1	
		Skewness		-.268	.427
		Kurtosis		-.661	.833

a. I feel stressed and anxious most of the time and it affects my mental wellbeing. is constant when 2. My friend group makes me feel accepted, comfortable, and less stressed. = 1. It has been omitted.

Table 4.2.a

Descriptives[a]					
	2. I am able to understand and stay on track of all lessons taken on a daily basis.			Statistic	Std. Error
I feel stressed and anxious most of the time and it affects my mental wellbeing.	1	Mean		4.08	.239
		95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	3.56	
			Upper Bound	4.60	
		5% Trimmed Mean		4.14	
		Median		4.00	
		Variance		.744	
		Std. Deviation		.862	
		Minimum		2	
		Maximum		5	
		Range		3	
		Interquartile Range		1	
		Skewness		-1.085	.616
		Kurtosis		1.772	1.191
	2	Mean		4.13	.155
		95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	3.82	
			Upper Bound	4.44	
		5% Trimmed Mean		4.24	
		Median		5.00	
		Variance		1.271	
		Std. Deviation		1.127	
		Minimum		1	
		Maximum		5	
		Range		4	

		Interquartile Range		1	
		Skewness		-1.274	.327
		Kurtosis		.833	.644
	3	Mean		3.44	.209
		95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	3.01	
			Upper Bound	3.87	
		5% Trimmed Mean		3.48	
		Median		3.00	
		Variance		1.090	
		Std. Deviation		1.044	
		Minimum		1	
		Maximum		5	
		Range		4	
		Interquartile Range		1	
		Skewness		-.305	.464
		Kurtosis		-.119	.902
	4	Mean		3.33	.333
		95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	2.60	
			Upper Bound	4.07	
		5% Trimmed Mean		3.37	
		Median		3.00	
		Variance		1.333	
		Std. Deviation		1.155	
		Minimum		1	
		Maximum		5	
		Range		4	
		Interquartile Range		1	
		Skewness		-.362	.637
		Kurtosis		.300	1.232

a. I feel stressed and anxious most of the time and it affects my mental wellbeing. is constant when 2. I am able to understand and stay on track of all lessons taken on a daily basis. = 5. It has been omitted.

Table 4.2.b

4.3. Statistical Analysis : Anova

Stress and anxiety as self-reported by students have been collected and tabulated. The results of the same are presented in the following tables.

4.3.1. Gender wise distribution of Stress and Anxiety

Descriptives

I feel stressed and anxious most of the time and it affects my mental wellbeing.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
1	41	4.54	.869	.136	4.26	4.81	1	5

2	63	3.41	1.042	.131	3.15	3.68	1	5
Total	104	3.86	1.118	.110	3.64	4.07	1	5

ANOVA

I feel stressed and anxious most of the time and it affects my mental wellbeing.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	31.372	1	31.372	32.831	.000
Within Groups	97.465	102	.956		
Total	128.837	103			

P value for ANOVA 0.000. Significant at 5% level.

4.3.2. Age Wise Distribution of Stress and Anxiety

Descriptives

I feel stressed and anxious most of the time and it affects my mental wellbeing.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
1	39	3.51	1.144	.183	3.14	3.88	1	5
2	36	3.89	1.116	.186	3.51	4.27	1	5
3	25	4.20	1.000	.200	3.79	4.61	2	5
4	4	4.75	.500	.250	3.95	5.55	4	5
Total	104	3.86	1.118	.110	3.64	4.07	1	5

ANOVA

I feel stressed and anxious most of the time and it affects my mental wellbeing.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	10.787	3	3.596	3.046	.032
Within Groups	118.049	100	1.180		
Total	128.837	103			

P value for ANOVA 0.032. Significant at 5% level.

4.3.3. Course Wise Distribution of Stress and Anxiety

Descriptives

I feel stressed and anxious most of the time and it affects my mental wellbeing.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
1	85	3.80	1.100	.119	3.56	4.04	1	5
2	7	4.71	.756	.286	4.02	5.41	3	5
3	12	3.75	1.288	.372	2.93	4.57	1	5
Total	104	3.86	1.118	.110	3.64	4.07	1	5

ANOVA

I feel stressed and anxious most of the time and it affects my mental wellbeing.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	5.558	2	2.779	2.277	.108
Within Groups	123.279	101	1.221		
Total	128.837	103			

P value for ANOVA 0.108. Not significant at 5% level.

4.3.4. Year Wise Analysis of Stress and Anxiety

Descriptives

I feel stressed and anxious most of the time and it affects my mental wellbeing.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
1	25	3.48	1.262	.252	2.96	4.00	1	5
2	60	3.90	1.085	.140	3.62	4.18	1	5
3	19	4.21	.918	.211	3.77	4.65	2	5
Total	104	3.86	1.118	.110	3.64	4.07	1	5

ANOVA

I feel stressed and anxious most of the time and it affects my mental wellbeing.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	6.039	2	3.019	2.483	.089
Within Groups	122.798	101	1.216		
Total	128.837	103			

P value for ANOVA 0.089. Not significant at 5% level.

From the above tables, it can thus be deduced thatgender wise, male students have reported to experience stress and anxiety more than female students. The differences in gender wise distribution of stress and anxiety show statistical significance as P value for ANOVA 0.031. Significant at 5% level.

It was further found that age wise, the older group of students (24-26) have reported to experience stress and anxiety more than relatively younger students. The differences in age wise distribution of stress and anxiety show statistical significance as P value for ANOVA 0.032. Significant at 5% level.

Course wise and year wise distributions indicated no statistical significance as observed from the P value.

4.4. Correlation

The researcher examined the correlation between the dependent variables –self reported stress and anxiety of students and the independent variables –familial emotional support, academic workload, interpersonal skills, self-care, self-esteem, perception of campus environment and peers and adaptability. Spearman's coefficient of correlation between the variables have been calculated and presented.

The tables below indicate that there existsignificant negative correlations between the students' familial emotional support, perception of campus environment and peers, adaptability, academic workload, self-care, self-esteem, and interpersonal skills. Thus, the better the familial emotional support, the student's perception of campus environment and peers, adaptability, academic workload, self-care, self-esteem, and interpersonal skills, the better the self-reported mental health of the college student respondents.

Correlations

			I feel stressed and anxious most of the time and it affects my mental wellbeing.	MeanFamilySupport	MeanCampusEnvironment	MeanAdaptability	MeanWorkload	MeanSelfcare	MeanSelfesteem	MeanInterpersonalskills
Spearman's rho	I feel stressed and anxious most of the time and it affects my mental wellbeing.	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.572**	-.609**	-.195*	-.420**	-.673**	-.660**	-.678**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.048	.000	.000	.000	.000
		N	104	104	104	104	104	104	104	104
	MeanFamilySupport	Correlation Coefficient	-.572**	1.000	.400**	.225*	.303**	.472**	.600**	.548**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.021	.002	.000	.000	.000
		N	104	104	104	104	104	104	104	104

	MeanCampusEnvironment	Correlation Coefficient	-.609**	.400**	1.000	.122	.262**	.444**	.467**	.627**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.216	.007	.000	.000	.000
		N	104	104	104	104	104	104	104	104
	MeanAdaptability	Correlation Coefficient	-.195*	.225*	.122	1.000	.279**	.212*	.221*	.215*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.048	.021	.216	.	.004	.031	.024	.028
		N	104	104	104	104	104	104	104	104
	MeanWorkload	Correlation Coefficient	-.420**	.303**	.262**	.279**	1.000	.408**	.418**	.330**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.002	.007	.004	.	.000	.000	.001
		N	104	104	104	104	104	104	104	104
	MeanSelfcare	Correlation Coefficient	-.673**	.472**	.444**	.212*	.408**	1.000	.505**	.519**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.031	.000	.	.000	.000
		N	104	104	104	104	104	104	104	104
	MeanSelfesteem	Correlation Coefficient	-.660**	.600**	.467**	.221*	.418**	.505**	1.000	.751**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.024	.000	.000	.	.000
		N	104	104	104	104	104	104	104	104
	MeanInterpersonalskills	Correlation Coefficient	-.678**	.548**	.627**	.215*	.330**	.519**	.751**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.028	.001	.000	.000	.
		N	104	104	104	104	104	104	104	104

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.4.a

4.5. Regression

The regression analysis to examine the predictive significance of the independent variables (familial emotional support, academic workload, interpersonal skills, self-care, self-esteem, perception of campus environment and peers and adaptability) on the dependent variable (self-reported stress and anxiety of college students) is found in the tables below.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.801[a]	.641	.615	.694

a. Predictors: (Constant), MeanInterpersonalskills, MeanAdaptability, MeanWorkload, MeanFamilySupport, MeanCampusEnvironment, MeanSelfcare, MeanSelfesteem

Table 4.5.a.

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	82.601	7	11.800	24.501	.000[b]
	Residual	46.236	96	.482		
	Total	128.837	103			

a. Dependent Variable: I feel stressed and anxious most of the time and it affects my mental wellbeing.

b. Predictors: (Constant), MeanInterpersonalskills, MeanAdaptability, MeanWorkload, MeanFamilySupport, MeanCampusEnvironment, MeanSelfcare, MeanSelfesteem

Table 4.5.b.

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	7.257	.475		15.282	.000
	MeanFamilySupport	-.016	.075	-.018	-.221	.826
	MeanCampusEnvironment	-.261	.110	-.186	-2.371	.020

	MeanAdaptability	.043	.126	.022	.343	.733
	MeanWorkload	-.028	.102	-.020	-.276	.783
	MeanSelfcare	-.388	.083	-.373	-4.673	.000
	MeanSelfesteem	-.185	.104	-.176	-1.782	.078
	MeanInterpersonalskills	-.279	.125	-.231	-2.226	.028
a. Dependent Variable: I feel stressed and anxious most of the time and it affects my mental wellbeing.						

Table 4.5.c.

The above tables indicate that among the independent variables, Perception of Campus Environment and Peers, Self-Care and Inter-Personal Skills statistically significantly predict the dependent variable – students' self-reported stress and anxiety (mental health) at P less than 0.05.

V. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The UN's Sustainable Development Goals are a series of 17 goals aiming to build a brighter future. Of the 17, Goal 3 is 'Good Health and Wellbeing'. The UN defines health as, "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." Furthermore, the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights clearly states that it "is the right of everyone to enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health." This further solidifies the fact that elevated levels of mental wellbeing are extremely important to ensure the achievement of the UN's Goals for a brighter future. Installing facilities to safeguard and enhance the mental health at a grassroots level for the part of the population about to enter the work force is thus paramount.

The researcher is confident that if educational institutions, students, and families establish and utilize facilities in line with the recommendations of studies, there will be noticeable enhancement in the mental health of students.

The researcher had begun the study with 7 factors in mind, which were supported by the findings in the literature review. After surveying the responses of 104 students, a recurring pattern in the effect of the factors were noticed. Correlation and Regression analysis found the following:-

1. **Familial Emotional Support**

It was found in the regression analysis that although the existence of familial emotional support was strongly correlated to all other factors and the stress/anxiety students experience, it was not a predictive factor for said anxiety and stress in the surveyed population. This points to the fact that the students in the survey demonstrate a sense of independence wherein they are able to conduct their studies and coscholastic experiences on their own. This finding is in line with a study conducted by Tores and Solberg (2001) titled, "Role of Self-Efficacy, Stress, Social Integration, and Family Support in Latino College Student Persistence and Health" where they found that students who reported stronger availability of family support also reported strong self-efficacy. Their study evaluated a model of college outcomes, wherein one such outcome was stress.

2. Perception of Campus Environment and Peers

It was found that there was a strong correlation between the student's perception of campus environment and their peers with all other factors except for adaptability. This goes to show that as long as one has an amicable campus environment with warm and approachable teachers as well as a supportive friend group, they will also statistically have higher interpersonal skills, better handle on their academic workload, higher self-esteem, and better methods of self-care. Regression analysis pointed to the fact that the student's perception of campus environment and their peers has a predictive relation to the mental health of students. This finding is in line with a study conducted by Fink titled, "Flourishing: Exploring Predictors of Mental Health Within the College Environment," where the researcher conducted a survey to measure the mental health of 2,612 college students with factors like alcohol use and campus environment. Multiple regression analysis pointed to the conclusion that supportive college environments fostered students flourishing. In another study conducted by Kiessling et al (2020) titled, "The Long-Run Effects of Peers on Mental Health", they surveyed how peers affect a student's mental health and their findings were as thus, "we find that increasing students' relative ranks in their cohorts by one standard deviation improves their mental health by 6% of a standard deviation conditional on own ability." This is in line with the researcher's own finding that the perception of a student's peers and campus environment can affect their mental health.

3. Adaptability

It was found that adaptability had a strong correlation with all factors except the student's perception of their campus environment and their peers. This points to the fact that a student, if more adaptable to their college environment and academics, would also statistically tend to have a higher self-esteem, would spend sufficient

time on self-care and physical health, would show greater levels of interpersonal amicability and would be able to manage their academic workloads proficiently. However, it was found through regression analysis that adaptability did not show a statistically predictive effect on the mental health of the surveyed students. Thus, adaptability does not play a direct role in determining whether a student is experiencing stress.This finding is in line with a study conducted by Ji and Zheng titled, "The influence of physical exercise on college students' mental health and social adaptability from the cognitive perspective" where they surveyed students to study the correlations between mental health and social adaptability, along with physical health. They found that the correlation between mental health and social adaptability as a function of physical exercise pointed to the fact that students with better social adaptability had higher levels of mental health.

4. Academic Workload

It was found that the academic workload of students, regardless of year of study or course of study, was still an exceptionally strong correlated factor with respect to the remaining 6 factors. It also had a high correlation with the mental health of the surveyed students. This points to the fact that a student who has better control of their academic workload and is able to stay on track of topics taught on a daily basis, will also tend to statistically have stronger familial support, a better sense of adaptability, stronger interpersonal skills, self-esteem, and a larger drive for self-care. They would also tend to have a positive perception of their campus environment and their peers.However, it was found via regression analysis that there was no predictive significance between academic workload and the mental health of the surveyed students. Thus, academic workload does not directly influence the mental health of students. This finding is in line with a study conducted by Yang et al. (2021) titled, "College students' stress and health in the COVID-19 pandemic: The role of academic workload, separation from school, and fears of contagion", where they studied the effect of 3 stressors, including academic workload on the mental health of college students. They thus found that out of the 867 students they surveyed, Academic workload, separation from school, and fear of contagion, were all positively correlated with perceived stress ($r = .152$, $p < .01$; $r = .207$, $p < .01$; $r = .133$, $p < 0.01$, respectively).Their results showed that academic workload played a key role in the mental health of college students.

5. Self-Care

It was found that self-care (i.e.: having sufficient number of hours dedicated to sleep as well as sufficient time to relax and enjoy leisurely activities) had a high degree of correlation with all other factors as well as the mental wellbeing of the surveyed students. This points to the fact that as long as a student is able to spend enough time on rest as well as practicing hobbies and leisurely activities, they will statistically find that they have a positive perception of their campus environment and their peers. They will also experience a higher self-esteem, stronger interpersonal skills, a better control of their academic workload, and will be more adaptable to their college environment. Through regression analysis, it was further found that self-care had a predictive significance on the mental health of the surveyed students. Thus, it can be deduced that as long as the student is able to ensure they allot slots of time to sufficient sleep and adequate time for leisurely activities, the students will experience less stress and anxiety. This finding is in line with a study conducted by Benedetto et al. (2019) titled, "A Cluster Analysis of Sleep Quality, Self-Care Behaviors, and Mental Health Risk in Australian University Students" where they surveyed 355 Australian university students and their self-care methods and quality. They found that 62% of the respondents had poor self-care and subsequently poor mental health.

6. Self-Esteem

It was found that self-esteem had a high degree of correlation with all other factors as well as the mental health of the surveyed students. This points to the fact that as long as a student maintains confidence in their capabilities and their self-worth, they will also statistically find themselves engaging in better self-care practices, having better hold on their academic workload, better perception of their campus environment and peers, better interpersonal skills and more adaptable to college life. Additionally, they also statistically have higher levels of familial emotional support. In regression analysis, it was found that the self-esteem of the surveyed college students had no direct predictive link to the mental health of said students.

7. Inter-personal Skills

It was found that inter-personal skills (the ability of the student to create, maintain and nurture relationships as well as resolve conflicts constructively) had a high degree of correlation with all other factors as well as the mental health of the students in the survey. This verifies that as long as students hone their skills so as to make sure they are able to nurture healthy relationships with fellow students, teachers and staff as well as partake in civil discourse to resolve conflicts, they will not only have better mental health, but also have greater self-esteem, better self-care patterns, stronger control over their academic workload, will be more adaptable to their college life and environment, and have a more positive perception of their campus environment and peers. It is also supplemented by the statistical fact that they will experience greater emotional support from their families.

Regression analysis points to the conclusion that there is an undeniable predictive relation between a student's inter-personal skills and their mental health. In summation, it can be deduced that as long as a student is amicable and ensures that they hone their inter-personal skills, they will have to face less stress and anxiety. This find is in line with a study conducted by Erozkan titled, "The Effect of Communication Skills and Interpersonal Problem-Solving Skills on Social Self-Efficacy" where he found that in a group of 494 respondents, communication skills and interpersonal problem-solving skills had a predictive significant correlation with the mental health and self-efficacy of the respondents.

From the above findings we can thus arrive at the following conclusions:-

- Of the 7 preliminary factors, the study revealed that perception of campus environment and peers, self-care and inter-personal skills have statistical predictive significance with the mental health of the college students surveyed.
- The remaining factors, although highly significant in correlation, are not predictive factors of mental health.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

With respect to the findings of the study conducted, the researcher believes that the implementation of the following recommendations will bring about considerable change in terms of the mental health of college students in India.

1. Familial Emotional Support

- Mediated mentoring sessions conducted during course inductions for families with students wherein they can be educated on mental health and how important familial emotional support can be.
- Establishing activities such as Parental Visit Day during the college year for family to visit the students at campus and speak to teachers in order to ensure proper communication and transparency, leading to trust and further familial support.

2. Perception of Campus Environment and Peers

- Establishing "Welcome Week" facilities wherein students get the opportunities to meet and interact with fellow students and staff.
- Sensitivity training for teaching staff to make sure they are able to establish rapport with the students.
- Establishing services to make sure at-risk students are given special attention to maintain their mental health.
- Tightening restrictions on ragging to ensure students do not have to encounter uncomfortable or even frightening experiences with senior batches.
- Keeping reasonable curfew hours so as to not give the students the impression of being confined on campus.

3. Adaptability

- Guided seminars to train students on transitioning from school to college life.
- Gradual and organic progression in volume of portions taught to help the students stay on track and get used to academic schedules.
- One-on-one mentorship sessions for students experiencing homesickness.
- Cultural and art-based programs to help students adjust better to college life.
- Sessions to instruct students about responsible expenditure and keeping track of finances.

4. Academic Workload

- Providing resource material beforehand in order to help students prepare for examinations months prior.
- Training to be given to students on the proper format of answering in examinations.
- Conducting doubt-clearing sessions at least once a week to ensure proper imbibing of topics covered.
- Stress-relieving sessions and activities to be conducted closer to examinations.
- Training students to create well-paced study schedules.

5. **Self-Care**

- Creating and maintaining sports facilities, gyms, and athletic fields on campus to ensure students get the opportunity and resources to maintain their physical health.
- Permitting the creation and function of interest-based clubs on campus with weekly sessions and multitudes of programs to help students hone their talents and hobbies.
- Ensuring students are given adequate time to exit the campus or accommodations for leisurely activities.
- Pacing the syllabus such that students are able to both keep on track of topics taken on a daily basis, as well as ensure that they get sufficient sleep daily.

6. Self-Esteem

- Conducting motivational workshops to help boost student confidence.
- Making sure that there are widespread facilities for students to speak to certified professionals and that said facilities are advertised such that students know when and how to access them.
- Celebrating students for all manners of achievements, regardless of whether said achievements are scholastic or co-scholastic.
- Training the teaching staff to ensure that they only share constructive criticism which can help the students build their capabilities.
- Teachers must avoid creating comparisons within a batch as it results in unhealthy competition and lower self-esteem.

7. Inter-Personal Skills

- Conducting workshops by motivational speakers and public speaking coaches to help students train in effective communication and conflict resolution.
- Students must learn to practice positive assertion to ensure amicable civil discourses.
- Seminars on emotional quotient and sensitivity training for students.
- Providing opportunities for students to partake in public speaking and debate.

In order to ensure that there is efficient and measurable enhancement in the mental health of college students in India, it is paramount that the recommended implementations are employed in full proportion. It is not sufficient to practice improvements in just one factor. Maintaining strong awareness of all 7 surveyed factors are important to ensure measurably better mental health for college students in India.

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APPENDIX

Questionnaire

Dear Respondent,

Let me first thank you for taking time out to fill this questionnaire. Your support is much appreciated.

I, Amaan Iqbal Ibrahim, as part of my ongoing research in the field of Mental Health, request you to kindly fill in the following questionnaire. Your answers shall help me explore the factors influencing the mental health of college students in India. The responses shall be kept highly confidential and shall not be shared/published/revealed anywhere. You do not have to reveal your identity or your college's name. Kindly

answer every question by selecting the appropriate cell that accurately represents your opinion on each of the statements.
This survey would not take longer than 10 minutes, and your participation is highly appreciated.

Yours Faithfully

Amaan Iqbal Ibrahim

Please tick the appropriate box: -

I. Gender
- Male
- Female
- Other…

II. Age
- 18-20
- 20-22
- 22-24
- 24-26

III. Course of study:
- Science Stream
- Commerce Stream
- Arts and Humanities Stream

IV. Year of study:
- 1st Year
- Intermediate Years
- Final Year

A. Familial Emotional Support

Please select an option for each statement:

1. My family supports me emotionally when I face challenges as a student.
- Strongly Agree (5)
- Agree (4)
- Neither Agree or Disagree (3)
- Disagree (2)
- Strongly Disagree (1)

2. My family supports me when I face academic challenges.
- Strongly Agree (5)
- Agree (4)
- Neither Agree or Disagree (3)
- Disagree (2)
- Strongly Disagree (1)

B. Perception of Campus Environment and Peers

Please select an option for each statement:

1. My teachers are friendly, warm, and supportive.
- Strongly Agree (5)
- Agree (4)
- Neither Agree or Disagree (3)
- Disagree (2)
- Strongly Disagree (1)

2. My friend group makes me feel accepted, comfortable, and less stressed.
- Strongly Agree (5)
- Agree (4)
- Neither Agree or Disagree (3)

- Disagree (2)
- Strongly Disagree (1)

C. Adaptability

Please select an option for each statement:

1. I experience homesickness during my stay at the hostel.
- Strongly Agree (5)
- Agree (4)
- Neither Agree or Disagree (3)
- Disagree (2)
- Strongly Disagree (1)

2. I have been able to adjust easily to college life.
- Strongly Agree (5)
- Agree (4)
- Neither Agree or Disagree (3)
- Disagree (2)
- Strongly Disagree (1)

D. Academic Workload

Please select an option for each statement:

1. I have enough time to complete academic work assigned by my teachers in class.
- Strongly Agree (5)
- Agree (4)
- Neither Agree or Disagree (3)
- Disagree (2)
- Strongly Disagree (1)

2. I am able to understand and stay on track of all lessons taken on a daily basis.
- Strongly Agree (5)
- Agree (4)
- Neither Agree or Disagree (3)
- Disagree (2)
- Strongly Disagree (1)

E. Self-Care

Please select an option for each statement:

1. I am able to sleep for a sufficient amount of hours every night.
- Strongly Agree (5)
- Agree (4)
- Neither Agree or Disagree (3)
- Disagree (2)
- Strongly Disagree (1)

2. I am able to spend enough time on my hobbies and other activities after studying.
- Strongly Agree (5)
- Agree (4)
- Neither Agree or Disagree (3)
- Disagree (2)
- Strongly Disagree (1)

F. Self-Esteem

Please select an option for each statement:

1. I feel confident in my ability to complete my course successfully.
- Strongly Agree (5)

- Agree (4)
- Neither Agree or Disagree (3)
- Disagree (2)
- Strongly Disagree (1)

2. I feel confident with my identity and my self-worth.
- Strongly Agree (5)
- Agree (4)
- Neither Agree or Disagree (3)
- Disagree (2)
- Strongly Disagree (1)

G. Inter-Personal Skills

Please select an option for each statement:

1. I am able to build and nurture relationships with friends, faculty, and staff.
- Strongly Agree (5)
- Agree (4)
- Neither Agree or Disagree (3)
- Disagree (2)
- Strongly Disagree (1)

2. I am able to manage and resolve conflicts constructively.
- Strongly Agree (5)
- Agree (4)
- Neither Agree or Disagree (3)
- Disagree (2)
- Strongly Disagree (1)

I feel stressed and anxious most of the time and it affects my mental wellbeing.
- Strongly Agree (5)
- Agree (4)
- Neither Agree or Disagree (3)
- Disagree (2)
- Strongly Disagree (1)

Any additional remarks you would like to share: