

PREVALENCE AND EFFECTS OF PSYCHOSOMATIC ISSUES ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF UNDERGRADUATES

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this study was to investigate the relationship between psychological issues and academic achievement among students at University of Okara. This study has focused on issues like depression, anxiety, stress, low self-esteem, peer pressure and lack of motivation. The data was collected from 388 students through a structured questionnaire. The findings specified that higher levels of psychological issues were associated with poorer academic outcomes. The research revealed a strong link between respondent's socio-economic status and psychological issues affecting academic performance. The results further indicated that feeling that one has nothing to look forward to ($\beta = -0.197, p < 0.001$) and feeling close to panic or panic attacks ($\beta = -0.180, p = 0.001$) are significantly associated with socioeconomic status. *The results indicated that the feeling of having nothing to look forward to has a statistically significant positive impact on CGPA ($\beta = 0.067, p = 0.047$).* The study emphasizes the importance of addressing psychological well-being in university settings to enhance students' academic success.

Keywords: Psychological Issues, Academic Performance, Mental Health, Well being

INTRODUCTION

As the world becomes more demanding students are facing an increasing number of psychological challenges that can negatively impact on their academic performance. Sometimes students feel anxious, upset, or under pressure. It can be hard for them to focus and do well in their Academic life. Recent studies indicates that a rising number of students are experiencing obstacles related to their mental health. Experiencing excessive concern for academic performance, isolating oneself, facing financial challenges, or encountering domestic conflicts may indicate an increased likelihood of psychological issues. (Stallman, 2010; Beiter et al., 2015).

Psychological problems can adversely impact a student's academic abilities, leading to subpar performance in university. The difficulty in remembering, focusing, and making sound choices can arise from feelings of anxiousness. (Eysenck &

Derakshan, 2011). Depression can lead to diminished motivation, reduced interest in activities and an inability to concentrate on studying (Stewart-Brown et al., 2019). Stress can make it harder to do well in school, make it difficult to manage time, and make it harder to finish schoolwork. (Levecque et al., 2017). Low self-esteem can lead to a lack of confidence in one's abilities and a fear of failure (Liu et al., 2018). A study by Centre for Addiction and Mental Health CAMH in 2018 found that among undergraduate students, depression and anxiety were the most commonly reported mental health concerns. According to the WHO (2021) approximately one in four people globally will experience a mental health disorder at some point in their lives. Global mental health condition among students is a growing concern with increasing numbers of student worldwide reporting symptoms of anxiety, depression and other mental health problems.

According to a survey by the American College Health Association (2021), 41.6% of college students reported feeling "so depressed that it was difficult to function" in the past year and 65.5% reported feeling overwhelming anxiety.

In Pakistan, the situation is particularly concerning with a large number of students experiencing psychological issues. According to a report by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) around 44% of students in Pakistani universities experience psychological distress with depression being the most commonly reported issue (HEC, 2018). A recent study conducted in Pakistani universities found that over 60% of undergraduate student's experienced psychological issues such as anxiety, depression and stress (Khalid et al., 2021). The current study aimed to analysis the prevalence of psychological issues among students and how these issues effect academic performance as well as analyze the possible factors as socio-economic status which can cause of psychological issues and low academic achievements.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Psychological issues arise from a combination of environmental, personal and behavioral factor (Albert Bandura, 1977). The WHO 2021 report talks about things that can affect mental health. The analysis considers aspects such as the functioning of society, the environment and elements related to our own being. The Research studies indicates that undergraduate students are particularly susceptible to experiencing psychological issues due to various factors including academic pressures, social isolation, financial difficulties and the transition to university life (Bayram & Bilgel, 2008; Ibrahim, Kelly & Adams, 2013).

Psychological issues can have a significant impact on students' academic performance and overall well-being. Study suggests that students experiencing psychological issues may have difficulty concentrating, retaining information and completing tasks. Students in their undergraduate years who struggled with mental health issues, such as prolonged sadness and excessive worry, exhibited lower academic performance and had a higher tendency to drop out before completing their studies compared to their peers (Credé et al., 2010; Stallman, 2010). In addition, psychological problems can cause

people to miss school or work, feel less interested in what they're doing, and perform poorly in school (Alvarez & Whitehead, 2018; Vaez & Laflamme, 2008).

The report of American College Health Association ACHA (2021) provides the mental health status of college students in the United States including factors of mental health issues help-seeking behaviors and risk and protective factors. The 2021 report released by WHO addresses aspects that can influence our mental state. Illustrations of such elements may involve the environment we live in, the people we are surrounded by and our own individual life encounters. National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI 2021) provides information on the impact of depression and anxiety on college students including common triggers and risk factors. It also provides tips for managing these conditions and seeking help when needed.

Psychological issues are a range of mental health disorders that can significantly affect individuals' thoughts, feelings and behaviors. The American Psychological Association (APA) states that people may have issues like feeling sad, worried, or overwhelmed, especially after going through something scary (APA, 2021). Many students around the world are going through mental health problems for various reasons. There are several reasons why people might feel stressed or sad. Some of these reasons are because they have big goals for school, they feel lonely, they worry about money, or they are treated badly because of their mental health issues. Because of this, lots of universities and organizations worldwide are starting to provide services and programs for mental health to help with these problems.

The most common psychological issues in students are as follows

- Anxiety and stress: psychological issues like feeling worried or overwhelmed can make students feel very awful, both mentally and physically. This can make it difficult for them to do normal activities. This can make them feel very overwhelmed, exhausted, and drained.
- Depression: When students feel depressed, they can make other people feel very sad, hopeless, and uninterested in things they used to enjoy. This might make you to feel lonely, not want to be with other

people and have difficulty concentrating and staying motivated.

- Self-esteem and self-worth: psychological issues can make students feel and think differently about themselves and how important they are. Students who don't feel confident might struggle with thinking positive thoughts about themselves. They might doubt their abilities and feel like they're not good enough or deserving of good things. This can make it hard for them to feel sure of themselves and do well in school.
- Social and interpersonal relationships: psychological problems can make it hard for students to make friends and get along with others. Students who feel worried or nervous in social situations or have trouble getting along with others may have a hard time making and keeping good friendships. This can make them feel lonely and unhappy.
- Physical health: Ultimately, your thoughts can affect how your body experiences sensations. If someone feels stressed or worried for a long time, it can make their body feel bad. They might get headaches, tight muscles, and have trouble with their stomach. Students who show these signs may have difficulty concentrating on their school work, which can lead to lower grades. Overall, problems with mental health can greatly affect students' ability to do well in school and handle everyday activities.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

This study aimed to explore the impact of psychological issues on the academic performance of undergraduate students in university of Okara. The main focus was on determining the prevalence of psychological issues among students. The target population of this study was exclusively students from the University of Okara. The target population was chosen from all enrolled students. The study included students from different faculties and academic levels. This study used a quantitative research design. The study was descriptive in nature and cross-sectional data was collected at a single point in time. The variables in the study were measured by using standardized measures. The study employed a simple random sampling and probability technique to select the sample from the target population. As the study was quantitative in nature, the data for this study were collected through a physical survey. Data were collected using a

structured questionnaire. The data collected were analyzed using statistical software such as SPSS version 23 and JASP version 0.17.2.1. Descriptive statistics, such as frequencies and multiple regression analysis were used to summarize the data.

RESULTS & FINDINGS

Table. 1
Frequency and percentage distribution of psychological issues

Psychological issues	Agree	Disagree
Feelings of hopeless and downhearted	78.9%	21.1%
Scared and afraid without reason	81.1%	18.9%
Panic attacks	74.2%	25.8%
Unable to relax	70.4%	29.6%
Life is meaningless	65.8%	34.2%
Sad or unhappy without reason	78.3%	21.7%
Trouble sleeping or sleeping too much	76.3%	23.7%
Lost appetite or overeating	73.3%	26.7%

Table no 1 indicate the prevalence of psychological issues i.e. depression, anxiety and stress measured by a scale DASS-21 Which shows the higher percentage of stress , anxiety and depression among students by asking specific questions about their psychological or mental health. Table shows higher percentage of students were agree as they faced psychological issues.

Table 2
Relationship between Psychological Issues and Socio Economic Status

Predictors	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
(Constant)					
	.918	.272		0.735	.000
I felt downhearted and hopeless	.097	.054	.097	.805	.072
I felt that I had nothing to look forward to	.209	.056	-.197	3.719	.000
I felt I was close to panic or panic attacks	.194	.057	-.180	3.416	.001
I was unable to relax	.010	.047	-.011	.208	.835
I felt that I was worthless	.214	.045	.246	.751	.000
R	.325				
R ²	.106				
Adj. R ²	.094				

Table 2 shows the relationship between psychological issues and socioeconomic status indicators. The analysis explores how specific psychological issues variables relate to various socioeconomic status factors, shedding light on potential connections. The results indicate that feeling that one has nothing to look forward to ($\beta = -0.197, p < 0.001$) and feeling close to panic or panic attacks ($\beta = -0.180, p = 0.001$) are significantly associated with socioeconomic status. The model explains 10.6% of the variance in socioeconomic status, with an adjusted R-squared of 0.094.

Table No.3
 Relationship between Psychological Issues & Academic Performance

Predictors	Unstandardized Coefficients		t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	2.381	.186	12.796	.000		
I felt downhearted and hopeless	-.011	.030	-.378	.706	.781	1.281
I felt I was close to panic or panic attacks	-.003	.031	-.090	.928	.852	1.174
I was unable to relax	.075	.028	2.658	.008	.706	1.416
I felt that life was meaningless	.027	.029	.930	.353	.730	1.370
I felt sad or unhappy without any reason	.033	.027	1.196	.232	.753	1.327
I felt that I had nothing to look forward to	.067	.034	1.990	.047	.710	1.408
I felt trouble sleeping or sleeping too much	-.001	.028	-.040	.968	.728	1.374
I lost appetite or overeating	-.061	.034	-1.786	.075	.679	1.473
R	.227					
R ²	.052					
Adj. R ²	.034					

Table 3 presents the coefficients and significance levels of psychological issues variables on students' Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA). The results indicate that the feeling of having nothing to look forward to has a statistically significant positive impact on CGPA ($\beta = 0.067, p = 0.047$).

Additionally, the variable related to lost appetite or overeating shows a borderline significant negative impact ($\beta = -0.061, p = 0.075$). The model demonstrates an overall fit, explaining 52% of the variance in CGPA, with an adjusted R-squared of 0.34.

Table No 4
 Relationship between Socioeconomic Status & Academic performance of Student

Predictors	Unstandardized	Standard Error	T	p
Parents occupation (Private job)	-0.213	0.104	-2.050	0.041
Parents occupation (others)	-0.453	0.142	-3.198	0.002
Mothers education (Bachelor or equivalent)	-1.056	0.422	-2.503	0.013
Family type (Nuclear)	0.204	0.084	2.439	0.015
Family type (Separate)	0.172	0.070	2.448	0.015
Monthly income (30,000 to 40,000)	0.033	0.075	0.435	0.664
Monthly income (40,000 to 50,000)	-0.317	0.112	-2.834	0.005

Table 4 presents the results of a regression analysis examining the relationship between socioeconomic predictors and students' academic performance (CGPA). Notably, students whose parents have private jobs or belong to other occupational categories tend to have significantly lower CGPA scores, while other parental occupation types show no significant associations. Additionally, students whose mothers have a Bachelor's degree or equivalent education tend to have lower CGPA scores. On the family front, students from nuclear and separate families exhibit significantly higher CGPA scores, whereas single-parent families do not show a significant association. Monthly income between 40,000 to 50,000 is linked to lower CGPA, while other income ranges are not significantly associated. These findings emphasize the nuanced relationship between socioeconomic factors and academic performance among students, with some factors displaying significant impacts, while others do not exhibit substantial associations.

CONCLUSION

This study shed light on the significant influence of psychological factors, particularly among students from low socio-economic backgrounds in university of Okara. It was evident that these students faced higher levels of stress, anxiety, depression, low self-esteem and other psychological issues, which in turn negatively affected their academic achievements and overall well-being. The findings of this study strongly supported the notion that students from low socio-economic backgrounds experienced a multitude of challenges that contribute to their psychological distress. The study concluded strong correlation between psychological issues and academic performance and students with a higher number of psychological issues tended to have lower cumulative grade point averages (CGPA).

RECOMMENDATION

The current study suggest that there should be Psychological Counselling Centre in educational institutions to address the psychological challenges of students.

The Govt. should increase the provision of scholarships for needy students to reduce the economic challenges of students.

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