



Short Communication

Psychological distress and personality traits among under graduate students

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Abstract

The present study examined psychological distress and personality traits among the undergraduate students. There were 100 participants from Ist and IIIrd year in BA and B. Com in a private college at Anchal, Kollam district, Kerala and the age range of 18-23 years. Socio-demographic details, DASS and Ten Item Personality Inventory were administered among the participants. The findings indicate that the psychological distress and personality traits had more experienced by first year than third year undergraduate students.

Keywords: Psychological distress, personality traits, undergraduate students.

Introduction

Students are the future assets of our society. They need a positive mental health and good personality were leads to improve their life. To reduce the psychological distress is an important factor among the students for their better living conditions¹. Most of the studies found that psychological distress was communal among the young adult hood²⁻⁴. Psychological distress leads to the poor academic performance and impairment in cognition⁵⁻⁷. Various studies from different part of the world found there were psychological distress among the under graduate students⁷⁻¹⁰.

Understanding of personality has different perspective among the psychological schools. Gordon Allport called personality as a amalgamation of traits¹¹. The five dimensions of personality or Big five traits are Openness, neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness. Warren Norman was introduced the Big Five in 1963^{12,11}. When any kind of distress happen our personality always change. Majority of the studies were illustrated among the students studying medicine and present study was conducted among arts and commerce undergraduate students. The study aims to understand the psychological distress and personality among the arts and commerce under graduate students.

Objectives: i. To find out the personality traits among undergraduate students. ii. To evaluate psychological distress and personality traits between Ist and IIIrd year undergraduate students.

Methodology

Cross sectional descriptive study design and purposively selected the collage were in the present study. There were 100

participants from Ist and IIIrd year in BA and B. Com in a private college at Anchal, Kollam district, Kerala and the age range of 18-23 years. Those who were interested to fill the questionnaire were taken for the study.

The permission from the collage authority and individual concern from each participant were taken. After the acceptance from the participants, the researcher followed further procedures. The tools of data collection were socio-demographic details such as age, gender, education, socio economic status etc. The self-reported questionnaire of DASS consist of 7 items in each domain were administered among undergraduate students¹³. Along with DASS, the personality traits were also assessed among the participants. The scale consists of ten items and each item consists of one shaft on personality traits dimensions¹⁴. The results were analyzed through the SPSS software.

Results and discussion

The participants mean age=19.24 and SD=1.138, majority are female (67%), belong to Hindu religion (69%), nuclear family (77%) and majority of them are from upper middle socio-economic background (38%).

The Table-1 shows the distribution of psychological distress of Ist and IIIrd year students. The Ist year had 15% of moderate and 2% of severe depression were found whereas 13% of moderate and 7 percent of severe depression among final years. The Anxiety level of first year is 14% of moderate and 7% of severity were found and 16% of moderate and 3% of severe anxiety were found among final years. Finally, in stress there was 9% of moderate, 1% of severe and 1% of extremely severe was found among first year students but among the final years only 4% of moderate stress were found.

Table-2 indicates that the evaluation between the Ist and IIIrd year undergraduate students on Psychological distress. There was significant evaluation found between the Ist and IIIrd year students on anxiety and stress whereas depression has no significant evaluation was found.

There were no significance comparisons found among Ist and IIIrd year undergraduate students in the personality traits in Table-3. In the extraversion the first and final year were found moderate. The first year and final year were found moderate pleasant, considerate, compassionate and cooperative in agreeableness. Emotional stability Conscientiousness and Openness were moderately found among both groups.

Discussion: The study found that there were more than one tenth of the participants were having psychological distress and similar studies were also found the same¹⁵⁻¹⁷. The study was conducted among arts and commerce undergraduate students, so the level of psychological distress is lesser that medical and other professions. Present study found moderate level of personality characteristic were found among the first year and third year under graduate students^{18,19}.

There were some limitations of our study, chosen a cross-sectional study and purposive sampling; sample size was small in the present study.

Table-1: Distribution of Psychological Distress among Ist and IIIrd year under graduate students.

	Normal		Mild		Moderate		Severe		Extremely	
	I st	III rd	I st	III rd	I st	III rd	I st	III rd	I st	III rd
Depression	23	18	10	12	15	13	2	7	00	00
Anxiety	13	14	12	17	14	16	7	3	4	00
Stress	34	40	5	6	9	4	1	00	1	00

N=100; First year N=50 and Final year N= 50; Percentage.

Table-2: Evaluation between Ist and IIIrd year undergraduate students on psychological distress.

	I st		III rd		t	P-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Depression	1.92	.96	2.18	1.08	-1.26	.36
Anxiety	2.54	1.24	2.16	.91	1.73	.01**
Stress	1.60	.99	1.28	.60	1.94	.000**

N=100; First year N=50 & Final year N= 50.

Table-3: Evaluation between the Ist and IIIrd year undergraduate students on Personality.

	I st		III rd		t	P-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Extraversion	4.29	1.24	4.01	1.48	.99	.40
Agreeableness	4.03	1.13	4.40	1.34	-1.48	.06
Emotional stability	4.15	1.17	4.59	1.27	-1.79	.69
Conscientiousness	3.85	1.08	4.50	1.28	-2.72	.15
Openness	4.10	1.09	4.27	1.27	-.71	.52

N=100; First year N=50 & Final year N= 50.

Conclusion

There is a need provide psycho social intervention and guidance, counseling for reducing the Psychological distress and help to improve healthy personality. First year had more psychological distress than the final year undergraduate students.

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