



Mental Health Awareness as a Tool for Promoting Emotional Resilience in University Students

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ABSTRACT:

University students' mental health issues have become a global problem, having a substantial impact on their general well-being, interpersonal connections, and academic performance. This study investigates how raising knowledge of mental health issues can help university students become more emotionally resilient. The capacity to adjust to stress and hardship is known as emotional resilience, and it is essential for managing the personal struggles, social shifts, and academic pressure that are typical in higher education. A structured questionnaire was given to 200 college students as part of the study's mixed-methods approach, which also included qualitative interviews with 15 counseling experts from three different universities. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze quantitative data, and thematic analysis was used to analyze qualitative data.

The results showed that students' emotional resilience and mental health awareness were strongly positively correlated ($r = 0.72$, $p < 0.01$). According to thematic analysis, awareness campaigns improved students' comprehension of coping mechanisms, decreased stigma, and encouraged them to seek help. According to the study's findings, systematic initiatives to raise awareness of mental health issues create a positive learning environment that supports students' emotional development and academic achievement. It suggests that workshops, peer support networks, and counselling services be used to formally teach mental health at colleges. In order to create a resilient student body that can handle life's challenges, the study emphasizes how vital it is to incorporate mental health awareness into higher education regulations.

Keywords: Mental health awareness, emotional resilience, higher education, university students, psychological well-being, student support.

INTRODUCTION:

A crucial time for transition, university life is marked by social adjustment, identity formation, and academic stress. Mental health conditions like anxiety, depression, and burnout have become more common among college students in recent years. Nearly one in five young individuals encounter mental health issues while pursuing higher education, according to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2022).

Despite the increasing prevalence, many institutions still lack adequate knowledge and comprehension of mental health, especially in developing nations like India.

The term "mental health awareness" describes the knowledge, comprehension, and proactive approach to psychological problems and mental health. It aims to lessen stigma and promote prompt help-seeking behaviour by encompassing knowledge about causes, symptoms, prevention, and treatment. Conversely, emotional resilience refers to the capacity to recover from stress and hardship. It entails preserving psychological stability in the face of difficulties like interpersonal problems, financial limitations, or exam pressure. Even though colleges have implemented programs for stress management and counselling, many students are still ignorant of these options or are afraid to utilize them because of the stigma associated with using them. This ignorance frequently results in inadequate coping strategies and declining mental well-being. Examining how mental health awareness campaigns can help university students develop emotional resilience is so essential.

Objectives of the Study

1. To assess university students' awareness on mental health issues.
2. To examine the connection between emotional resilience and mental health awareness.
3. To determine how awareness campaigns are considered to affect students' wellbeing and coping mechanisms.
4. To suggest methods for raising awareness on mental health issues in institutions of higher learning.

Relevance of the Research

The study adds to the expanding conversation on promoting mental health in educational settings. By emphasizing awareness as a preventative measure, it draws attention to an economical and long-term strategy for improving student wellbeing. Policymakers, educators, student counselors, and social workers involved in juvenile mental health advocacy should all take note of the findings.

Method

To guarantee thorough comprehension, a mixed-method study design was used, integrating quantitative and qualitative techniques. 200 students from three universities in Karnataka namely Shivangotri, Davangere University, Manasagangotri, University of Mysore, Kuvempu University Shankarghatta, aged between 18 to 25,

participated in the study. Researcher adopted stratified random sample technique for this study. Besides purposive sampling was also used to interview 15 student mentors with counselling academic discipline, and gender. Students studying during the academic year 2024-2025 were included in the sampling. Semi-structured interviews and structured questionnaires based on the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC) and Mental Health Literacy Scale were used to collect data. SPSS v25 was used to evaluate the data quantitatively, while thematic analysis was used to get qualitative insights. The Institutional Review Board granted ethical approval.

Results

Profile of Demographics: Of the 200 responders, 42% were men and 58% were women. The participants came from a variety of academic backgrounds, including professional courses (15%), science (30%), commerce (20%), and the arts (35%).

Awareness of Mental Health at Different Levels: While 32% of pupils exhibited poor understanding, over 68% of students indicated moderate to high awareness of mental health issues. Stress and anxiety were the most widely recognized, whereas sadness and suicidal thoughts were the least.

Scores for Emotional Resilience: On the CD-RISC, the mean resilience score was 73.2 (SD = 9.8), which denotes moderate resilience. Although not statistically significant, female students' resilience scores were somewhat higher (M = 74.1) than those of male students (M = 72.0).

Analysis of Correlation: Emotional resilience and mental health awareness were shown to be strongly positively correlated ($r = 0.72$, $p < 0.01$). Students who knew more about mental health resources reported being more adaptive and having stronger coping mechanisms.

Thematic Results of the Interviews

- **Breaking the Stigma:** Mental health discussions became more commonplace thanks to awareness efforts.
- **Knowledge-Based Empowerment:** Students felt more capable of controlling their emotions and helping their friends.
- **Institutional Support Matters:** More people participated when they had access to workshops and counselling services.
- **Peer Influence:** Awareness campaigns run by peers were seen as more approachable and successful.

Discussion

The results confirm that pupils' development of emotional resilience is greatly aided by mental health awareness. Awareness campaigns give kids the skills they need to recognize stress symptoms early, get support, and develop

flexible coping mechanisms. These findings are in line with earlier research that highlights the contribution of education on psychological well-being (Hunt & Eisenberg, 2020; Singh & Thomas, 2023).

Higher education consequences

- **Curriculum Integration:** Psychological literacy can be normalized through the introduction of mental health education modules.
- **Peer Mentorship Programs:** Educating students to be ambassadors for mental health promotes learning among peers.
- **Access to Counselling:** Colleges should make sure that counselling services are both reasonably priced and stigma-free.
- **Digital Interventions:** Webinars, internet campaigns, and mobile apps can reach more students.

Limitations: Generalizability may be hampered by the study's scope, which was restricted to three universities. Social desirability bias can potentially affect self-reported statistics. The long-term impacts of awareness campaigns could be more accurately evaluated by longitudinal research.

Future studies: The efficacy of particular awareness interventions (such as workshops and digital campaigns) and their influence in various cultural contexts should be investigated in more detail. Studies that compare campuses in rural and urban areas may show that they face different difficulties.

Conclusion

Awareness of mental health is transformative, not just educational. Awareness campaigns enable students to handle stress and overcome hardship by promoting comprehension, empathy, and proactive behaviour. One of the main tenets of higher education policy should be the development of emotional resilience via awareness. Tomorrow's citizens will be mentally healthier if resilient students are raised now. According to the study, raising university students' awareness of mental health issues can help them become more emotionally resilient. Awareness campaigns enable students to better manage their personal and academic issues by educating them about mental health, stress management, and coping strategies. The significance of institutional attempts to incorporate mental health education into higher learning contexts is shown by the substantial association between awareness and resilience.

To foster a nurturing environment where students may flourish both intellectually and emotionally, universities must use proactive measures including peer support programs, counselling sessions, and digital advertising. In addition to improving individual well-being, fostering an environment of transparency and understanding around mental health benefits the academic community as a whole. Therefore, raising awareness of mental health issues is

not just a learning goal; it is a crucial investment in creating future citizens who are resilient, kind, and mentally sound.

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