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A Comparative Study of Stress and Well-being among College Students

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This study investigates stress and well-being among college students through a comparative analysis based on gender. Results from the analysis indicate that there is no statistically significant difference in stress levels between male and female college students (t -value = 0.47, $p > 0.05$). However, a significant difference is observed in well-being scores between male and female students (t -value = 2.57, $p < 0.05$), with male students reporting higher levels of well-being. Furthermore, a weak negative correlation is found between stress and well-being ($r = -0.1662$), suggesting that higher stress levels are associated with lower well-being among college students. These findings underscore the importance of addressing mental health concerns among college students and highlight the need for tailored interventions to promote well-being. Further research is warranted to explore the underlying factors contributing to gender differences in well-being and to develop effective strategies for enhancing mental health support in college settings.

Keywords: stress, well-being, mental health, college students

Stress is a pervasive phenomenon that affects individuals across various stages of life, with college students being particularly susceptible due to the myriad of academic, social, and personal challenges inherent in higher education. Defined as the body's response to perceived threats or demands, stress can manifest in physical, emotional, and cognitive symptoms, profoundly impacting an individual's well-being and functioning (American Psychological Association, 2023). While experiencing moderate levels of stress is a normal part of life and can even enhance performance and motivation, chronic or excessive stress can have detrimental effects on mental health, academic performance, and overall quality of life (National Institute of Mental Health, 2021; Hammen, 2019).

The transition to college represents a significant period of adjustment for young adults, marked by newfound independence, academic responsibilities, and social pressures. This transition, coupled with the demands of coursework, exams, extracurricular activities, and personal relationships, can create a fertile ground for stress to flourish. Moreover, societal expectations, financial constraints, and career uncertainties add additional layers of stress to the college experience.

While stress affects individuals of all genders, emerging research suggests that there may be gender differences in the experience and expression of stress among college students. Gender roles, socialization processes, and biological factors can influence how

males and females perceive and respond to stressors. Understanding these gender differences is essential for tailoring interventions and support services to meet the distinct needs of male and female college students effectively.

This study aims to contribute to the growing body of literature on stress among college students by examining and comparing the stress experiences of male and female students. By investigating the specific stressors, coping mechanisms, and mental health implications associated with gender, this research seeks to provide insights that can inform the development of gender-sensitive interventions and support initiatives aimed at promoting the well-being and academic success of all college students.

Well-being

In the complex tapestry of human existence, one theme stands out as universal and timeless: the pursuit of well-being. It is a journey that threads through the very fabric of our lives, encompassing physical health, mental resilience, emotional fulfillment, and social connection. Well-being is not merely the absence of illness or adversity but rather a holistic state of thriving, where individuals flourish in their pursuits and find harmony within themselves and their environments (Ryff & Singer, 1998).

At its core, well-being reflects the intricate interplay between body, mind, and soul. It is a dynamic equilibrium, influenced by diverse factors such as genetics, upbringing, lifestyle choices, societal norms, and environmental conditions (Diener, 2009). From the ancient philosophical teachings of Aristotle to the modern scientific inquiries of psychology and neuroscience, the quest for well-being has been a perennial subject of human inquiry and aspiration (Ryff, 1989; Seligman, 2011).

The pursuit of well-being transcends cultural boundaries, economic disparities, and temporal epochs. Whether in the bustling streets of a metropolis or the serene tranquility of the countryside, individuals across the globe seek meaning, purpose, and contentment in their lives. It is a fundamental human longing, woven

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