



Anxiety Among Higher Education Students



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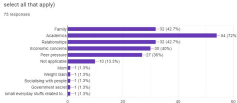
Introduction

- In India, a study reports that 56.8% of students experience one or the other type of anxiety disorder, with 155 having panic disorder, 13% generalized anxiety disorder, 4% separation anxiety disorder, 15.6% social anxiety and 9.2% school avoidance anxiety[1].
- Anxiety disorders are a cluster of mental disorders characterized by significant and uncontrollable feelings of anxiety and fear
- Anxiety in higher education is a complicated, multifaceted social, medical, and institutional problem with no clear definition and accommodating diverse perspectives of different stakeholders.
- In the context of Indian Higher Education, What are the specific factors driving anxiety among students.
- We interrogated how 'anxiety' gets manifested and promoted by faulty social ecosystem of academic world through probing actors involved in the world.
- Our work highlights how multifaceted factors contribute to the issue and limits the efficiency of present mental health solution measures.
- We identify complexity and requirements of the issue and, offer a robust solution intervention which incorporates essential online and offline anxiety preventive and curative measures.

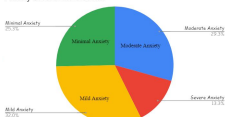
Research Design

- Stakeholders-Students, Professors, Counselor and Institution.
- Ways of data collection-The data was collected using both primary and secondary data collection.
- The primary data was gathered through interviews with counselors, professors, and students, as well as through a survey that provided insights into the prevalence and impact of anxiety among higher education students.
- The survey included the social ecosystem in which students live, their digital well-being, understanding anxiety among student through GAD-7 scale and students coping measure.
- Secondary data, including research papers, articles, and existing literature, was also utilized to inform the study.
- We have rolled out survey among 75 students and taken interviews of 7 students, 2 professors and 1 counselor.
- We used Requirement Engineering and Soft Systems Methodology (SSM) to understand the perspectives and concerns of stakeholders in addressing anxiety among higher education students.
- Requirement Engineering was employed to identify and address the concerns of students, professors, and counselors separately, focusing on self-predisposition, trust concerns, and the need for more focus on reactive/curative solutions.
- On the other hand, Soft Systems Methodology (SSM) was utilized to engage with stakeholders, explore their perspectives, concerns, and goals, and foster empathy, inclusivity, and ownership among them.

Which factor contributes to most of your anxiety, if you have ever felt anxious? (Please select all that apply)



Anxiety Level in the Students



Insights

From various stakeholders

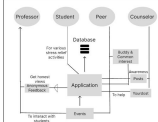
- Students-**
 - Academic pressures: deadlines, workload, exams, grades
 - Group work: unclear expectations, mismatched work styles, lack of cooperation, competition
 - Instructor behavior: unclear communication, unloading anxiety on students
 - Social comparison: public display of grades, competitiveness
- Professors-**
 - The frequency of interaction between students and professors have gone down due to degraded interpersonal skills.
 - Large class sizes can make it harder for instructors to identify struggling students.
 - Anxiety can hinder academic performance of students.
- Counselor-**
 - Anxiety is a feeling of dread due to future insecurity, from thinking about things that are not in control. It is fear generated from overthinking of anticipated events (what will happen).
 - Students hesitation to seek help is big barrier.
 - Awareness - Students are unaware about their condition (recognisability issue) & think that anxiety symptoms will stay with them life long as their individual characteristic.
 - Causes - Lack of support system, Negative social environment, Social media usage leading tendency of comparing self with others.



Conclusion

Concerns	Requirements	Solutions
Self-predisposition (Student)	Restoration of hope of cure & normalization	Recognition and display of success stories. Increasing awareness.
Trust concerns (Student)	Safe space (common interest)	Creating familiar, personally customizable sphere. Explicit privacy policy.
More focus on Reactive/Curative solutions (Student)	Privacy policy without any condition (red stone)	Stress management activities. Buddy system (Common interest)
Lack of proper communication (Professor)	Visible preventive measures.	Promoting interaction beyond academics. Convenient interaction initiation
Low visibility as an option (Counselor)	Supportive & encouraging environment for interaction. Anonymised channel of communication.	Frequent feedback mechanism. Awareness
	Awareness - curability & counselors' effectiveness	Information portal - Symptoms, causes & cure
	Familiarization and trust building	Counselors' intellectual presence
	De-stigmatization	Clustering preventive with curative measures

Digital Intervention



- Digital application on smartphone clubbed with physical events and seminars.
- Proposed to create a safe space for the user and then go beyond.
- Proposes several anxiety preventive measures, inspired by wellbeing application "THINK RIGHT".
- Provide curative measure by integration with "YOURDOST" platform.
- Leverages network effect to promote interaction.
- Work for any academic campus or even workplace.
- Links to prototype-**
- Student interface- <https://shorturl.at/GZR28>
- Professor interface- <https://shorturl.at/jjV08>
- Counselor- <https://shorturl.at/jjV08>

- Professor-** They use application to get anonymous feedback from students and they are also connected to students through events which are created using the application to increase interaction between professor and students.
- Students-** They are connected to application for the various stress relief activities offered by the application such as yoga, meditation, recreation activities, buddy system and events etc.
- Peer-** They are the other batch mates of the students and are individually connected to each other through buddy system and recreation activities where students who share common interest can collaborate and can enjoy.
- Counselor-** Through the application using post they are spreading awareness among students about various things related to anxiety as well as they are available to interact on a platform named Yourdost which is connected to our application just by one click.

References

- Rehman, A. U. (2016). Academic anxiety among higher education students of India, causes and preventive measures: An exploratory study. *International journal of modern social sciences*, 5(12), 102-116.
- Bhujale, V. M. (2017). Depression, anxiety and academic stress among college students: A brief review. *Indian Journal of Health and Wellbeing*, 8(7), 748-751.