

Assessing Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Levels Among College Students: A Descriptive Quantitative Investigation

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Abstract

Depression, anxiety, and stress are established psychological and physiological phenomena observed across the world, especially in students. This study aimed to determine the depression, anxiety, and stress levels among college students in a university in the Philippines. A total of 89 BSED-Values Education students were selected as respondents. The research instrument used has two parts. Part I was the profile of the respondents, such as sex and year level, while Part II of the research instrument was the Depression, Anxiety, Stress Survey (DASS) 21. Data were collected through an online survey that was administered using Google Forms. The college students' levels of depression, anxiety, and stress were revealed according to their sex and year level. The level of severity of females in all three sub-scales (depression, anxiety, and stress) was higher when compared with the males, but the mean levels of both the males and females were all the same in each of the three sub-scales. Greater percentages in all the year levels belong to the "Normal" for the levels of severity ratings in depression. As to the level of anxiety, the different year levels belong to different anxiety levels. Regarding stress level, the vast majority of students are at the "Normal" level. There was no difference in the mean scores of male and female college students in all three subscales. Considering the year levels of the students, there is a difference in the mean scores of first-, second-, third-, and fourth-year college students across all three sub-scales. Only the first-year and second-year students were different in their mean level of depression. For the difference in mean anxiety level, there were differences between the first and second years, the second and third years, and the third and fourth years. When the mean stress levels across the year levels were compared, only first- and second-year students differed.

Keywords: depression; anxiety; stress; college students; student well-being

1. Introduction

College life is described as a period of growth, self-discovery, and preparation for future careers; however, it also presents numerous academic, social, and personal challenges that can affect students' emotional stability. This means that they are subjected to a series of stressors related to academic demands, including a high workload, an extensive curriculum, long class hours, a lack of leisure time, frequent exams, competition with peers, concerns related to academic performance, and a fear of failure, among others. Higher education represents a critical developmental period characterized by increased academic demands and transitional stressors that frequently exceed a student's adaptive capacity. When this physiological and psychological equilibrium is affected, it will often result in significant mental health challenges, that includes depression, anxiety, and stress (Asif et al., 2020; Martínez-Líbano et al., 2023). These psychological aspects are increasingly prevalent in the academic setting, where the combined impact of social and personal pressures mostly affects both the emotional well-being and academic achievement of students (Mahmud et al., 2021). In recent data, it was reported that more than 60% of students nowadays meet the diagnostic criteria for

at least one mental health disorder, which calls for an urgent need for an institutional intervention (Craig et al., 2025).

Depression, anxiety, and stress are ranked among the top mental health concerns faced by university students in recent times (Ooi et al., 2022). Increasing levels of common mental disorders like depression, anxiety, and stress are becoming a global concern for young adults and college students, according to Griggs (2017). University students who experience higher depression, anxiety, and stress in life reported a lower level of life satisfaction, as Bukhari & Saba (2017) and Denovan & Macaskill (2017) concluded in their respective studies.

Depression is a complex affective disorder often presenting with prolonged sadness and decreased academic or social participation (Davies et al., 2024). On the other hand, anxiety is expressed through intense apprehension and excessive worry, which often disrupts a student's ability to function effectively in high-pressure academic settings (Shaffique et al., 2020). Stress, often a pervasive underlying catalyst, has been associated with moderate levels of psychological morbidity in about half of the higher education population. Empirical findings indicate that these interconnected symptoms are often associated with diminished life satisfaction and may contribute to compromised long-term cognitive and behavioural outcomes (Jelleli et al., 2024; Ooi et al., 2022).

It is well-known that stress is associated with the development of anxiety and depression, and a positive relationship between stress, anxiety, and depression is well-established (Kurebayashi, Prado & Silva, 2012; Manpreet & Maheshwari, 2015; Ratanasiripong, 2012). According to the Psychology Foundation of Australia (PFA) (2014), these three problems indicate a composite state of negative emotional symptoms. These problems lead to poor psychological well-being that interferes with learning and limits the academic performance of students (Chernomas & Shapiro, 2013; Uras et al., 2012) and lower productivity, increase suicidal thoughts, and minimize the quality of life (Manpreet & Maheshwari, 2015; Papazisis et al., 2008).

Depression, Anxiety, Stress, and Sex

Depression, anxiety, and stress affect many university students, and differences in these experiences may be observed between male and female students due to their unique personal, social, and academic experiences. Gao et al. (2019) concluded in their study conducted in China that there was no significant gender difference in students' average depression and stress levels, but there was a significantly large proportion of female students who experienced anxiety above the normal threshold, and a higher percentage of male students endured different degrees of depression. Similarly, the study of Gill et al. (2022) concluded that there was a significant difference in the prevalence of depression, with females (89.4%) outnumbering males (72.6%). Othman et al. (2019) reported and concluded in their study conducted in Canada that 39.5% reported symptoms of moderate to severe depression, 23.8% reported moderate to severe anxiety, and 80.3% reported moderate to severe levels of perceived stress, with no significant differences between males and females. But for some studies, females have high academic stress, experience more academic stress compared to male students, according to Karaman et al. (2019), Devchoudhury and Devasagayam (2022), and Graves et al. (2021).

Depression, Anxiety, and Stress and Year Level

Depression, anxiety, and stress are common mental health concerns among university students, and their levels may differ across year levels due to varying academic and personal demands. Kassymova et al. (2018) reported that students identified academic activities and demands as their main stressors, as indicated by 6 to 10 of them having experienced stress during their study career. Another study showed that students were academically stressed because of curriculum overload. It is stressful to handle a heavy and challenging workload. It is challenging for students to handle increased assessments over a short period and prepare for exams (Adom et al., 2020). The period of adjustment for college students is during their first academic year, which is the transition period from their years spent in their junior high school years to their senior high school years. However, according to Aihie and Ohanaka (2019), freshmen students have lower mental distress, and this contradicts the study of Garrett et al. (2017), implying that freshmen students experience high

academic stress. Gao et al. (2019) concluded that both female and male college students suffered from mild anxiety in the first three years, and female students scored significantly higher in anxiety than males in the first and second years.

Understanding these distinct yet interconnected negative emotional states is therefore essential in developing effective mental health programs and support systems that promote student well-being and academic success. In the Philippine context, limited studies have comprehensively assessed the levels of depression, anxiety, and stress among college students using the Depression Anxiety Stress Scales-21. Although mental health concerns among students continue to rise due to academic, personal, and social pressures, existing local research often examines only one aspect of psychological distress. Hence, there is a need for localized, evidence-based studies to help universities strengthen mental health programs, counselling services, and student wellness initiatives.

This research explored differences in the level of depression, anxiety, and stress among college students when grouped according to sex and year level.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of sex and year level?
2. What is the level of depression, anxiety, and stress according to the following:
 - 2.1. sex, and
 - 2.2. year level?
3. Is there a significant difference in the mean scores of male and female college students in their level of
 - 3.1. depression,
 - 3.2. anxiety, and
 - 3.3. stress?
4. Is there a significant difference in the mean scores of the first year, second year, third year, and fourth year college students in their level of
 - 4.1. depression,
 - 4.2. anxiety, and
 - 4.3. stress?

Anchored in Albert Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory, this theoretical foundation supports students' beliefs in their own ability to handle academic demands, which play an important role in how they experience depression, anxiety, and stress. When students doubt their capabilities, they are more likely to feel overwhelmed and emotionally strained, while those with stronger self-belief tend to cope better with academic pressures. This study is significant as it provides insights into the levels of depression, anxiety, and stress among university students, which may help guide interventions and support programs to improve their mental well-being.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study used a quantitative survey research design. According to Creswell and Creswell (2017), this design involves collecting numerical data from participants through a survey or questionnaire to describe characteristics, attitudes, or experiences and to answer specific research questions. It was considered appropriate for this study because it helped the researcher assess and analyze the levels of depression, anxiety, and stress among the respondents

2.2 Research Locale

The study was conducted in one of the Philippine State Universities and Colleges located in

Tacloban City, Leyte, during the school year 2023-2024.

2.3 Research Participants

The respondents of the study were all undergraduate students from first year to fourth year enrolled in the Bachelor of Secondary Education major in Values Education program of the University. Total enumeration was used by the researcher, considering all eighty-nine (89) BSED-Values Education students. The respondents were considered the researchers' population of interest because the researcher serves as the organization's adviser to the BSED Values Education students. Through continuous interaction with the students, the researcher developed concern regarding their level of depression, anxiety, and stress, as these may influence their academic performance, organizational involvement, and overall well-being. Hence, all qualified students were included in the study to obtain comprehensive and reliable data.

2.4 Research Instrument

The research instrument used has two parts. Part I was the profile of the respondents, such as sex and year level. Part II of the research instrument was the Depression, Anxiety, Stress Survey (DASS) 21. DASS-21 is a self-report scale to measure the negative emotional states of depression, anxiety, and stress. It will only take 5-10 minutes to complete the test with excellent reliability ($\alpha = 0.82-0.94$) and is free for research use. The tripartite model provides separate scores for three emotional distress dimensions with established severity cut-offs (Normal, Mild, Moderate, Severe, Extremely Severe). Extensively validated across diverse populations and cultures, the DASS-21 demonstrates strong psychometric properties, including clear factor structure, convergent validity with established measures ($r = 0.70-0.81$), and sensitivity to treatment effects.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

Before data collection, the researcher obtained permission from the school administration and relevant offices to conduct the study. After approval, data were collected through an online survey that was administered using Google Forms. The survey link was disseminated to the respondents through appropriate online platforms. Upon completion, the responses were automatically documented in Google Forms and subsequently organized, evaluated, and analyzed by the researcher.

2.6 Data Analysis

The data were properly tabulated, accurately analyzed, and systematically processed. Appropriate statistical tools were used for data analysis and interpretation. The gathered data were analyzed based on their quantitative values and categorized according to the nature of the specified questions. For the descriptive statistics, frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations were utilized. For the inferential statistics, the t-test for equality of means and the one-way ANOVA were used. To identify which two-year levels significantly differ in the level of depression, anxiety, and stress, Scheffe's test was considered.

2.7 Ethical Considerations

Throughout the whole research process, the study adhered to strict ethical guidelines. Permission to conduct the study was secured from the school administration. Students were informed about the study's goals and methods before their voluntary participation. By coding the collected data and preventing disclosure of personal information, respondent confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed. Additionally, participants were told they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. All information gathered was used solely for research purposes.

3. Results and Discussion

This section presents the findings of the study regarding the level of depression, stress, and anxiety among college students. The findings are presented according to the research questions.

Table 1
Profile of the respondents in terms of sex and year level

Profile	N	%
<u>Sex</u>		
Male	19	21.3%
Female	70	78.7%
Total	89	100.0%
<u>Year Level</u>		
First Year	24	27.0%
Second Year	28	31.5%
Third Year	19	21.3%
Fourth Year	18	20.2%
Total	89	100.0%

As shown in Table 1, 70 (78.7%) of the respondents were females, and 19 (21.3%) were males. When grouped according to year level, 31.5% of them were composed of 28 second year students, followed by 24 (27.0%) who are first year. The third year and fourth year students were almost of the same number; 19 (21.3%) and 18 (20.2%), respectively.

3.1 Level of Depression, Anxiety, and Stress According to Sex

The study also examined the level of depression, anxiety, and stress according to sex. As revealed in Table 2, the majority (50 or 56.2%) of the respondents, composed of 12 (13.5%) males and 38 (42.7%) females, have “Normal” severity ratings in their level of depression. But 3 (3.4%) and 4 (4.5%) of them have a depression level of “Extremely Severe” and “Severe”, respectively. For the levels of severity ratings in depression, females dominate males in terms of percentages.

As to the level of anxiety, Table 2 shows only 26 (29.2%) respondents belonging to “Normal” severity ratings, and 24 (27.0%) of them are of “Moderate” level. It is alarming to have 15 (16.9%) and 9 (10.1%) who belong to “Extremely Severe” and “Severe” levels of anxiety, respectively. Like the level of depression, in the level of anxiety, females also dominate males in terms of percentages for all the severity ratings. When the level of stress was analyzed, the table displays a huge majority (73 out of 89, or 82.0%) of the college students who belong to the “Normal” level. Only 1 (1.1%) belongs to “Extremely Severe” and 2 (2.2%) belong to “Severe” levels. Like the levels of depression and anxiety, all the levels of stress are also dominated by females in terms of percentages.

Table 2
Level of depression, anxiety, and stress according to sex

Severity Ratings	Male	%	Female	%	Total	%
<u>Level of Depression</u>						
Normal	12	13.5%	38	42.7%	50	56.2%
Mild	4	4.5%	13	14.6%	17	19.1%
Moderate	1	1.1%	14	15.7%	15	16.9%
Severe	1	1.1%	3	3.4%	4	4.5%
Extremely Severe	1	1.1%	2	2.2%	3	3.4%
<u>Level of Anxiety</u>						
Normal	3	3.4%	23	25.8%	26	29.2%
Mild	5	5.6%	10	11.2%	15	16.9%
Moderate	8	9.0%	16	18.0%	24	27.0%
Severe	2	2.2%	7	7.9%	9	10.1%

Extremely Severe	1	1.1%	14	15.7%	15	16.9%
Level of Stress						
Normal	17	19.1%	56	62.9%	73	82.0%
Mild	1	1.1%	7	7.9%	8	9.0%
Moderate	1	1.1%	4	4.5%	5	5.6%
Severe	0	0.0%	2	2.2%	2	2.2%
Extremely Severe	0	0.0%	1	1.1%	1	1.1%

The mean level of depression, anxiety, and stress according to the sex of the students is presented in Table 3, below. The levels of depression of the males and females were found to have a mean of 10.05 and 10.16, respectively, and were classified as both in the “Mild” severity level. The mean levels of anxiety were 11.32 and 12.19 for males and females, respectively, and were found to be both of “Moderate” severity level. As to the mean level of stress, both males and females belong to the “Normal” severity level, having means of 10.37 and 10.79, respectively. The data shown in Table 3 revealed the same category levels of severity in all three (3) sub-scales, as can be seen in the “Interpretation” column of the table. As to the category levels, it was exposed that the males and females do not differ in their levels of depression, anxiety, and stress. The significant difference in the means of all three sub-scales for the males and females is still to be discussed on Table 6.

Table 3
Mean Level of depression, anxiety, and stress according to sex

Level of:	Sex	N	Mean	Interpretation	Std. Deviation
Depression	Male	19	10.05	Mild	7.25
	Female	70	10.16	Mild	7.39
Anxiety	Male	19	11.32	Moderate	4.12
	Female	70	12.19	Moderate	7.36
Stress	Male	19	10.37	Normal	3.85
	Female	70	10.79	Normal	6.94

3.2 Level of Depression, Anxiety, and Stress According to Year Level

The study also examined the level of depression, anxiety, and stress according to year level. Table 4 presents the results.

Table 4
Level of depression, anxiety, and stress according to year level

Severity Ratings	1 st Year	%	2 nd Year	%	3 rd Year	%	4 th Year	%	Total	%
<u>Level of Depression</u>										
Normal	8	9.0%	22	24.7%	8	9.0%	12	13.5%	50	56.2%
Mild	6	6.7%	3	3.4%	3	3.4%	5	5.6%	17	19.1%
Moderate	5	5.6%	2	2.2%	7	7.9%	1	1.1%	15	16.9%
Severe	3	3.4%	1	1.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4	4.5%
Extremely Severe	2	2.2%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%	0	0.0%	3	3.4%
<u>Level of Anxiety</u>										
Normal	2	2.2%	15	16.9%	5	5.6%	4	4.5%	26	29.2%
Mild	3	3.4%	5	5.6%	0	0.0%	7	7.9%	15	16.9%
Moderate	10	11.2%	7	7.9%	2	2.2%	5	5.6%	24	27.0%
Severe	3	3.4%	1	1.1%	3	3.4%	2	2.2%	9	10.1%
Extremely Severe	6	6.7%	0	0.0%	9	10.1%	0	0.0%	15	16.9%
<u>Level of Stress</u>										
Normal	18	20.2%	26	29.2%	12	13.5%	17	19.1%	73	82.0%
Mild	2	2.2%	2	2.2%	3	3.4%	1	1.1%	8	9.0%
Moderate	2	2.2%	0	0.0%	3	3.4%	0	0.0%	5	5.6%
Severe	2	2.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	2.2%
Extremely Severe	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%

As revealed in Table 4, the majority (50 or 56.2%) of the respondents, composed of 8 (9.0%) first year, 22 (24.7%) second year, 8 (9.0%) third year, and 12 (11.5%) fourth year, have “Normal” severity ratings in their level of depression. But 3 (3.4%) and 4 (4.5%) of them have a depression level of “Extremely Severe” and “Severe”, respectively. For the levels of severity ratings in depression, greater percentages in all the year levels belong to the “Normal” level.

As to the level of anxiety, Table 4 shows only 26 (29.2%) respondents belonging to “Normal” severity ratings, and 24 (27.0%) of them are of “Moderate” level. It is alarming to have 15 (16.9%) and 9 (10.1%) who belong to “Extremely Severe” and “Severe” levels of anxiety, respectively. In the level of anxiety, most (10 out of 24) of the first year students belong to severity level of “Moderate”, majority (15 out of 28) of the second year students belong to “Normal”, most (9 out of 19) of the third-year students belong to “Extremely Severe”, and most (7 out of 18) of the fourth-year students belong to “Mild”.

When the level of stress was analysed, Table 4 displays a huge majority (73 out of 89, or 82.0%) of the college students who belong to the “Normal” level. Only 1 (1.1%) belongs to “Extremely Severe” and 2 (2.2%) belong to “Severe” levels. For the level of stress, the majority of the students in all four (4) year levels have their stress severity level that is “Normal”.

The mean level of depression, anxiety, and stress according to the year level of the students is presented in Table 5, below. The level of depression of the first-year and third-year students was found to have a mean of 13.33 and 11.47, respectively, and were classified as both in the “Mild” severity level. Both the second-year and fourth-year students belong to the “Normal” severity level of depression, with means of 7.54 and 8.50, respectively. The mean levels of anxiety were 14.42 and 9.91 for first-year and fourth-year students, respectively, and were found to be both of “Moderate” severity level. The second year students yielded a mean of 8.11 (Moderate), while the third year students' mean anxiety level is 16.95, which is “Severe”. As to the mean level of stress, all the students coming from all four (4) year levels belong to the “Normal” severity level, having means of 13.42 (first year), 12.42 (third year), 9.83 (fourth year), and 7.75 (second year). The data shown in Table 5 revealed only the categories where the different year levels belong in the severity levels in all three (3) sub-scales, as can be seen in the “Interpretation” column of the table.

Table 5
Mean Level of depression, anxiety, and stress according to year level

	Year Level	N	Mean	Interpretation	Std. Deviation
Level of Depression	First Year	24	13.33	Mild	8.38
	Second Year	28	7.54	Normal	4.28
	Third Year	19	11.47	Mild	10.15
	Fourth Year	18	8.50	Normal	3.71
Level of Anxiety	First Year	24	14.42	Moderate	6.54
	Second Year	28	8.11	Mild	3.41
	Third Year	19	16.95	Severe	8.95
	Fourth Year	18	9.61	Moderate	3.24
Level of Stress	First Year	24	13.42	Normal	6.97
	Second Year	28	7.75	Normal	3.72
	Third Year	19	12.42	Normal	9.08
	Fourth Year	18	9.83	Normal	2.71

3.3 Difference in the Mean Scores of Male and Female College Students in Their Level of Depression, Anxiety, and Stress

The study also examined the difference in the mean scores of male and female college students in their levels of depression, anxiety, and stress. Table 6 presents the results.

Recalling the results in Table 3, it could be assumed that the population variances for all three sub-scales (depression, anxiety, and stress) are all equal, considering that the interpretation of the means for both males and females is the same. But, to be sure, when analysed in SPSS Version 27, the t-test for independent samples, using the pooled variance estimate, the equality of population variances was automatically tested using Levene's Test. As revealed in Table 6, the computed test statistic of Levene's test is $F = 0.140$ with p -value $0.710 > 0.05$ (not significant) for the mean level of depression for males and females. Hence, it is assumed that the population variances are equal. On the other hand, for the mean level of anxiety of the males and females, Levene's test resulted in $F = 6.654$ with p -value $0.012 < 0.05$ (significant), which leads to the assumption that the population variances are not equal. Likewise, considering the mean level of stress for males and females, the $F = 4.631$ with the p -value $0.034 < 0.05$ (significant), hence it is assumed that the population variances are not equal.

Table 6
Independent Sample Test

Level of:		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality on Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Depression	Equal variances assumed	.140	.710	-.055	87	.956
	Equal variances not assumed			-.055	28.970	.956
Anxiety	Equal variances assumed	6.654	.012	-.493	87	.623
	Equal variances not assumed			-.674	52.342	.504
Stress	Equal variances assumed	4.631	.034	-.251	87	.802
	Equal variances not assumed			-.345	53.010	.732

The test statistic for testing the population means is the t-value. As shown in Table 6, for the level of depression, the t-value is -0.055 with $df = 87$, and the associated p -value is $0.956 > 0.05$, hence the test is not significant. This means that there is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female college students in their level of depression.

As to the mean level of anxiety of the males and females, it was revealed by Levene's test that the population variances are not equal, but the difference is not yet established to be significant. Using the t-test for the equality of the means, Table 6, shows the t-value = -0.674 with $df = 52.342$, and the associated p -value is $0.504 > 0.05$, hence the test is not significant. The result shows that there is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female college students in their level of anxiety.

Likewise, there is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female college students in their level of stress as shown. Table 6 shows the t-value = -0.345 with $df = 53.010$, and the associated p -value is $0.732 > 0.05$, hence the test is not significant.

3.4 Difference in the Mean Scores of First Year, Second Year, Third Year, and Fourth Year College Students in Their Level of Depression, Anxiety, and Stress

The study also examined the difference in the mean scores of first-year, second-year, third-year, and fourth-year college students in their level of depression, anxiety, and stress. Since there are four (4) groups to be compared, the t-test for independent samples is not a good statistical test for testing the equality of population means. Hence, analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used. Table 7 presents the results.

Table 7
Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) summary table

Source of Variation		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Level of Depression	Between Groups	516.848	3	172.283	3.489	.019
	Within Groups	4197.534	85	49.383		
	Total	4714.382	88			
Level of Anxiety	Between Groups	1132.263	3	377.421	10.988	.000
	Within Groups	2919.737	85	34.350		
	Total	4052.000	88			
Level of Stress	Between Groups	490.594	3	163.531	4.487	.006
	Within Groups	3098.215	85	36.450		
	Total	3588.809	88			

Recalling the results shown in Table 5, it could be assumed that the population means of the level of stress for all four (4) year levels are equal, considering that the interpretation for their means is the same. On the contrary, for the population means of both the levels of depression and anxiety, they are not equal, considering that the interpretation for their means were different. When the analysis of variance (one-way ANOVA) was run in SPSS Version 27, it revealed in Table 7 that any two of the given means were significantly different. The computed test statistic $F = 3.489$ with $p\text{-value } 0.019 < 0.05$ (significant) for the mean level of depression with respect to the year levels. Hence, it is assumed that the population variances of any two year levels are not equal. On the other hand, for the mean level of anxiety of the year levels, ANOVA resulted in $F = 10.988$ with $p\text{-value}$ less than 0.01 (significant), which leads to the assumption that the population variances of any two year levels are not equal. Likewise, considering the mean level of stress for the year levels, the $F = 4.487$ with the $p\text{-value}$ less than 0.01 (significant), hence it is assumed that the population variances are not equal.

Considering the results shown in Table 7, with all the significant test statistics, the null hypotheses for all three sub-scales that there is no significant difference in the mean scores of first year, second year, third year, and fourth year college students in their level of depression, anxiety, and stress are all rejected. It means that there is a significant difference in any two (2) year levels in their level of depression, anxiety, and stress.

To ascertain which any two (2) year levels have a significant difference in their level of depression, anxiety, and stress, pairwise comparison using Scheffe's test was considered. Table 8 revealed the results.

As shown in Table 8, for the difference in the mean level of depression, only the first year and second year students yielded a significant difference of 5.798 with $p\text{-value } 0.038 < 0.05$. From Table 5, the mean level of depression of first-year and second-year students is 13.33 and 7.54, respectively. This shows that the first-year students are more depressed than the second-year students.

Table 8
Pairwise comparison using Scheffe's test

Dependent Variable	(I) Year Level	(J) Year Level	Mean	Std. Error	Sig.
			Difference (I-J)		
Level of Depression	First Year	Second Year	5.798*	1.95481	.038
		Third Year	1.860	2.15794	.863
		Fourth Year	4.833	2.19114	.190
	Second Year	Third Year	-3.938	2.08872	.320
		Fourth Year	-.964	2.12301	.976
	Third Year	Fourth Year	2.974	2.31140	.648
Level of Anxiety	First Year	Second Year	6.310*	1.63034	.003
		Third Year	-2.531	1.79976	.579
		Fourth Year	4.806	1.82745	.083
	Second Year	Third Year	-8.840*	1.74203	.000
		Fourth Year	-1.504	1.77062	.868
	Third Year	Fourth Year	7.336*	1.92775	.004
Level of Stress	First Year	Second Year	5.667*	1.67944	.013
		Third Year	.996	1.85395	.962
		Fourth Year	3.583	1.88247	.312
	Second Year	Third Year	-4.671	1.79448	.087
		Fourth Year	-2.083	1.82394	.729
	Third Year	Fourth Year	2.588	1.98579	.639

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

For the difference in the mean level of anxiety, significant differences were discovered between the first year and the second year, the second year and the third year, and the third year and the fourth year.

A difference of 6.310 between the mean level of anxiety of first-year and second-year students was significant ($p\text{-value } 0.003 < 0.01$). Going back to Table 5, with the mean level of anxiety of 14.42, the first-year students are more anxious than the second-year students, having a mean level of anxiety of 8.11 only. The difference between the mean level of anxiety of second-year and third-year students, it yielded a difference of 8.840 with a $p\text{-value}$ of 0.000 (significant). It is obvious in Table 5 that the third-year students are more apprehensive than the second-year students, having a mean level of anxiety of 16.95 and 8.11, respectively. A difference of 7.336 between the mean level of anxiety of third-year and fourth-year students was also found to be significant ($p\text{-value } 0.004 < 0.01$). Still based on Table 5, the third-year students are more anxious than the fourth year students having a mean level of anxiety of 16.95 and 9.61.

Like the difference in the mean level of depression, when the mean level of stress between the year levels was compared, it was also discovered that only the first year and second year students yielded a significant difference, as shown in Table 8. The difference in the mean level of stress of first-year and second-year students, which is 5.667, is significant at the 0.013 level of significance. Back to Table 5, with the mean level of stress of first-year and second-year students of 13.42 and 7.75, respectively, it shows that the first-year students are experiencing a more stressful life than the second-year students.

4. Conclusion

Based on the findings derived from the study, the following conclusions were drawn. The majority of the respondents were females, and most of them were second-year and first-year students. The level of severity of females in all three sub-scales (depression, anxiety, and stress) was higher when compared with the males, but the mean levels of both the males and females were all the same in each of the three sub-scales.

Greater percentages in all the year levels belong to the “Normal” for the levels of severity ratings in depression. As to the level of anxiety, the different year levels belong to different anxiety levels. For the level of stress, a huge majority of all the students belong to the “Normal” level. There was no difference in the mean scores of male and female college students in all of the three sub-scales (depression, anxiety, and stress). Considering the year levels where the students belong, there is a difference in the mean scores of the first year, second year, third year, and fourth year college students in all of the three sub-scales. Only the first-year and second-year students were different in their mean level of depression. For the difference in the mean level of anxiety, there were differences between the first year and second year, second year and third year, and third year and fourth year. When the mean level of stress between the year levels was compared, only the first-year and second-year students differed.

5. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher recommends the following: First, the university will provide academic activities that will support and consider the emotional states of the students. Second, to create a Guidance program that will address the emotional states of the university students. And finally, research similar to this study should be periodically conducted to assess the level of depression, anxiety, and stress of the students, and appropriately address their mental state, and to update some policies on mental health in the university.

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