

# Effect of Gender on Mental Well-Being, Anxiety and Depression: A Comparative Study

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## ABSTRACT

Our mental well-being fundamentally impacts our overall health. Our internal workings and how we explain our lives are all partway we explain how we are in our lives are all parts of our mental well-being. As we lead a turbulent and fulfilling life, we continuously develop and refine the qualities and abilities that make up mental health and well-being. Anxiety is an uncomfortable feeling of inner conflict that is frequently accompanied by jittery actions like pacing back and forth, somatic complaints, and contemplating. A state of low mood and aversion to action is known as depression. It can influence a person's motivation, feelings, ideas, behavior, and well-being. Sadness, trouble concentrating and thinking clearly, and a substantial change in food or sleep schedule may be present. The objective of the current study was to determine how gender impacted mental health, anxiety, and depression. A total of 100 respondents between the ages of 18 and 25 from the Delhi-NCR region were recruited. The t-test was used to see whether there were any gender differences in mental health, depression, or anxiety. Data were gathered using the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI), the Warwick-Edinburgh mental wellbeing scale (WEMWBS), and the Self-Test for Anxiety (GAD-7) scale. The findings revealed that the mean difference is statistically significant at the 0.05 and 0.01 levels.

**Keywords:** Mental Well-Being, Anxiety, Depression and Gender

“Mental wellbeing”, in general, is the state of thriving in various areas of life, such as in relationships, at work, play, and more, despite ups and downs. It’s the knowledge that we are separate from our problems and the belief that we can handle those problems.

Before examining what mental wellbeing is, it’s important to understand what mental wellbeing is not. It is not

- The absence of mental illness
- The lack of problems, challenges, and adversity

In fact, it is often adversity, including facing mental illness, that shapes and hones mental health and wellbeing. Just as a broken bone is stronger after healing itself, so, too, can be your mental wellbeing each time you face and deal with difficulties. Mental wellbeing is how we respond to life’s ups and downs. In this simple mental wellbeing definition lies deeper meaning and implication for our lives. It includes how a person thinks, handles emotion (emotional wellness), and acts.

This important part of who we are has multiple meanings. These traits—which are all actually skills we can practice and develop—are all part of mental wellbeing:

- Self-acceptance
- Sense of self as part of something greater
- Sense of self as independent rather than dependent on others for identity or happiness
- Knowing and using our unique character strengths
- Accurate perception of reality, knowing that we can’t mind-read and that our thoughts aren’t always true
- Desire for continued growth
- Thriving in the face of adversity (emotional resilience)
- Having and pursuing interests

- Knowing and remaining true to values
- Maintaining emotionally healthy relationships
- Optimism (hope—the mindset that things can improve)
- Happiness that comes from within rather than being dependent on external conditions
- Determination
- Action (in contrast to a passive mindset and lifestyle, waiting for things to get better)

“**Anxiety**” is a feeling of uneasiness and worry, usually generalized and unfocused as an overreaction to a situation that is only subjectively seen as menacing.<sup>1</sup> It is often accompanied by muscular tension, restlessness, fatigue and problems in concentration. Normally considered to be appropriate, when anxiety is experienced regularly the individual may suffer from an anxiety disorder. Anxiety is closely related to fear, which is a response to a real or perceived immediate threat; anxiety involves the expectation of future threat. The cognitive effects of anxiety may include thoughts about suspected dangers, such as fear of dying. "You may ... fear that the chest pains are a deadly heart attack or that the shooting pains in your head are the result of a tumour or an aneurysm. You feel an intense fear when you think of dying, or you may think of it more often than normal, or can't get it out of your mind."

“**Depression**” is a state of low mood and aversion to activity. It can affect a person's thoughts, behaviour, motivation, feelings, and sense of well-being. It may feature sadness, difficulty in thinking and concentration and a significant increase or decrease in appetite and time spent sleeping. People experiencing depression may have feelings of dejection, hopelessness and, sometimes, suicidal thoughts. It can either be short term or long term. The core symptom of depression is said to be anhedonia, which refers to loss of interest or a loss of feeling of pleasure in certain activities that usually bring joy to people. Depressed mood is a symptom of some mood disorders such as major depressive disorder or dysthymia; it is a normal temporary reaction to life events, such as the loss of a loved one; and it is also a symptom of some physical diseases and a side effect of some drugs and medical treatments.

Depression (major depressive disorder) is a common and serious medical illness that negatively affects how you feel the way you think and how you act. Fortunately, it is also treatable. Depression causes feelings of sadness and/or a loss of interest in activities once enjoyed. It can lead to a variety of emotional and physical problems and can decrease a person's ability to function at work and at home.

### **Objective of the Study**

To study the significant gender difference on mental well-being, anxiety and depression

### **Hypothesis**

There would be significant gender difference on mental well-being, anxiety and depression.

### **Research Design**

A two-group design is used for the present study.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Participants**

A purposive sample of 100 participants (50 male and 50 female) belonging to age group of 18-25 years old from Delhi-NCR region were taken for the present study

### **INSTRUMENTS USED**

**The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS, 2006)** it was developed by Warwick and Edinburgh (2006). It consists of 14 items which are scored on 5-point rating scale. Test-retest reliability was 0.83 and has a good content validity.

**Self Test for Anxiety, (GAD-7, 1995)** it was developed by Dr. Robert L. Spitzer, Janet B.W. Williams, Kurt Kroenke and colleagues (1995). It consists of 7 items which are scored on 4-point rating scale. It shows good test-retest reliability.

**Beck Depression Inventory (BDI)** it was developed by Aaron T (1961). It consists of 21 items which are scored on 4-point rating scale. Test-retest reliability was 0.93. Construct validity is high.

**Procedure**

For the collection of the data, all the participants were individually contacted and rapport was established with the participants by making them feel comfortable. After the establishment of rapport, the questionnaire was handed over to the participants. After the completion of the questionnaires, questionnaires were taken back and the participants were thanked for their precious time devoted and for the cooperation. The data was analyzed with the help t-test.

**Statistical Analysis**

SPSS-21 version was used for statistical analysis. For the attainment of the objective, data was analyzed with the help of t-test.

**RESULTS**

**Table-1:**

Variables	Gender	N	df	Mean	S.D	t-value	Sig.(2-tailed)
Mental Well-being	Male	50	98	48.8	7.479	2.068*	0.041
	Female	50		52.2	8.533		
Anxiety	Male	50	98	5.56	3.860	2.284	0.009
	Female	50		6.4	4.179		
Depression	Male	50	98	16.4	9.233	2.450	0.16
	Female	50		11.72	9.856		

p<0.05 & 0.01

Table 1 exhibits the obtained value for mean (SD) and t-value for females and males on the dimension of well-being, Anxiety and Depression. On the scale of well-being female students scored a mean of 48.88 (SD = 7.47), whereas male students scored a mean of 52.2 (SD = 8.53). The obtained t-value is 2.069 which is significant at 0.05 levels. On the scale of anxiety female students scored a mean of 8.56 (SD=3.86), whereas male students scored a mean of 6.40 (SD = 4.17). The obtained t-value is 2.684 which is significant at 0.01 levels.

On the scale of well depression female students scored a mean of 16.40 (SD = 9.23), whereas male students scored a mean of 11.72 (SD = 9.85). The obtained t-value is 2.450 which are significant at 0.05 levels.

**DISCUSSION**

Males have a higher mean than females, which indicates that their level of well-being is higher than that of females, according to a comparison of the mean difference on the well-being dimension between genders. It's possible that men care more about their well-being than women do. Females sometimes neglect their personal needs because they are responsible for the entire family. For the UK, (Sevilla et al., 2020) show that mothers in households with two opposite-gender parents bear a disproportionate share of household responsibilities. Furthermore, females tend to dwell on a specific problem or scenario, which may have an impact on their well-being.

By comparing the mean difference in anxiety dimensions between males and females, we can conclude that males have a greater mean than females, implying that males are more anxious than females. The fact that men have to juggle a lot of responsibilities at once, such as office work, family demands, meeting financial obligations, social pressures, etc., makes this possibility plausible. Bilge and colleagues found female gender to be associated with increased anxiety and depression which is found to be in contrast with our study.

We can infer that females experience depression at a higher rate than males by examining the mean differences between the dimensions of depression in males and females. (Smith et al., 2006) and (Luyster et al., 2006) found no significant gender difference on the dimension of depression, which is found to be in contrast with our study. One potential explanation for female depression may be that they spend a lot of time caring for others while neglecting their own needs.

Women take care of the home, the children, and other family members. If her requirements are not met, she could get depressed. She attempts to satisfy everyone's needs, thus if she is not cared for, she could become melancholy.

## **CONCLUSION & IMPLICATIONS**

- This study although was done on a very small sample but has got applied aspects that male has better well-being than females. Males care much more about themselves than females.
- It also shows that the level of anxiety is much higher in females than in males. Women are more anxious than men.
- We can also say that females feel more depressed than males. Females think more about a particular problem than males.

### **Limitations:**

- It was a very small study; the sample taken was very small.
- Some other variables would have been taken as urban or rural background of the sample for study to make the comparison.
- The data collection was entirely based on self-report which may have inflated or deflated the results due to various biases.

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