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Suzanne Nalivka

Montana Tech of the University of Montana

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DEPRESSION AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS BASED ON MOTIVATION, AGE AND PARENTAL STATUS

STUDENT RESEARCHER: SUZANNE NALIVKA || FACULTY SPONSOR: DR. ELYSE LOVELL

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to clarify whether depression levels may be predicted by motivation among college students based on gender. Is there a difference in depression levels based on gender? Are there differences based on depression/motivation variables? The participants of this research consisted of (N=85) undergraduate college students. The Beck Depression inventory was administered to measure the degree of depression and a T-test was used to evaluate the distinction between the depression/motivation variables and gender. The results of this study showed that females seem to have a higher level of depression but also have a higher level of motivation.

BACKGROUND

Depression is a disorder which is very frequent in most societies, especially among students. These causes refuse students from fantastic possibilities for success, career and an appealing upcoming (Avison & McAlpine, 1992; Bhave & Nagpal, 2005). There is a difference in the rate of depression between males and females, which is similar to the well-known idea that depression is more experienced by women in general (Ghaed & Mohd, 2014). Depressive disorders are significantly more experienced by females than in males, with a lifetime occurrence of 14.1% for females and 8.6% for males (Coopeland, Beekman & Dewey, 1999). Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression are known to be highly comorbid; however, previous findings regarding the nature of this comorbidity have been inconclusive (Horesh, Lowe, Galea, Udden & Koenen, 2015). Across time, PTSD and depression are distinct, but correlated, constructs among a highly-exposed epidemiologic sample (Horesh, Lowe, Galea, Udden & Koenen, 2015). According to Lindsay, Fabiano & Stark (2009) men were as likely as women to report feeling depressed. Depression is a strong predictor of suicide, which is the third leading cause of death in 15-24 year olds and the second leading cause among college students (Hass, Henden & Mann, 2003). According to the National Institute of Mental Health, major depressive disorder (MDD) affects about 5% of the adult population in a given year and 15-20% of the population during a lifetime (Lindsay, Fabiano & Stark, 2009). Early research posited that authenticity was most important for the mental health of females due to gender expectations to be self-sacrificing and dependant compared to male gender expectations to be independent and assertive (Gilligan, 1982; Miller, 1986). According to Dr. Aaron Beck's Cognitive Theory of Depression, negative thoughts, generated by dysfunctional beliefs are typically the primary cause of depressive symptoms. A direct relationship occurs between the amount and severity of someone's negative thoughts and the severity of their depressive symptoms. In other words, the more negative thoughts you experience, the more depressed you will become.

METHODS

The purpose of this quantitative comparative analysis study was to clarify if depression levels differ among males and females. An IRB was sent to Montana Tech and the University of Montana Institutional Review board and was approved for this study. Using a sample of convenience, (N= 85) male and female undergraduate college students were given surveys to fill out that pertained to their depression levels and motivation. There were n=50 females and n=35 males. The Beck depression test was part of the survey to measure the degree of depression. Descriptive data and inferential statistics: Paired Samples T-tests were used to evaluate the distinction between depression/motivation variables and gender.

RESULTS

Table 1 Frequency Distribution of Dependent and Independent Variables

Variable	Entire Sample (n=85)		Male (n=35)		Female (n=50)	
	(M)	(S)	(M)	(S)	(M)	(S)
Dependent Variables						
Sadness	1.34	.608	1.28	.621	1.38	.602
Pessimism	1.31	.560	1.34	.639	1.30	.505
Past Failure	1.45	.646	1.42	.654	1.48	.646
Loss of pleasure	1.45	.716	1.45	.780	1.46	.676
Guilty Feelings	1.37	.616	1.28	.572	1.44	.643
Punishment Feelings	1.25	.639	1.22	.598	1.28	.671
Self-Dislike	1.48	.810	1.25	.560	1.64	.920
Self-Criticalness	1.67	.864	1.60	.847	1.72	.881
Crying	1.40	.789	1.22	.731	1.52	.814
Agitation	1.44	.567	1.45	.560	1.44	.577
Loss of Interest	1.49	.749	1.42	.777	1.54	.734
Indecisiveness	1.63	.884	1.54	.700	1.70	.994
Worthlessness	1.28	.628	1.20	.531	1.34	.688
Loss of Energy	1.78	.741	1.60	.650	1.92	.778
Changes in Sleep	2.07	.783	2.08	.742	2.06	.818
Irritability	1.48	.700	1.37	.598	1.56	.760
Changes in Appetite	1.69	.802	1.74	.741	1.66	.847
Concentration Difficulty	1.62	.739	1.68	.900	1.58	.609
Tiredness or Fatigue	1.77	.807	1.65	.725	1.86	.857
Loss of Interest in Sex	1.29	.613	1.28	.621	1.30	.614
Motivation Scale	2.68	.448	2.55	.432	2.77	.441
Independent Variables						
Age					Scale: Age	
18-24 (Trad)	(59) 69%				0=Trad	
25+ (Non-Trad)	(26) 31%				1=Non-Trad	
Parental Status					Parent Status	
Non-parent	(57) 67%				1=Parent	
Parent	(28) 33%				0=Non-Parent	
Gender					Gender	
Male	(35) 41%				0=Male	
Female	(50) 59%				1=Female	

Table 2 shows a T-test that was used to evaluate the distinction between the depression/motivation variables and gender.

Variable	M	SD	t	p
Sadness			-.697	.488
Male	1.28	.621		
Female	1.38	.602		
Pessimism			.331	.742
Male	1.34	.639		
Female	1.30	.505		
Past Failure			-.358	.721
Male	1.42	.654		
Female	1.48	.646		
Loss of Pleasure			-.018	.986
Male	1.45	.780		
Female	1.46	.676		
Guilty Feelings			-1.161	.249
Male	1.28	.572		
Female	1.44	.643		
Punishment Feelings			-.371	.712
Male	1.22	.598		
Female	1.28	.671		
Self-Dislike			-2.190	.031*
Male	1.25	.560		
Female	1.64	.920		
Self-Criticalness			-.632	.529
Male	1.60	.847		
Female	1.72	.881		
Crying			-1.693	.094
Male	1.22	.731		
Female	1.52	.814		
Agitation			.137	.891
Male	1.45	.560		
Female	1.44	.577		
Loss of Interest			-.665	.508
Male	1.42	.777		
Female	1.54	.734		
Indecisiveness			-.805	.423
Male	1.42	.700		
Female	1.54	.994		

CONCLUSION

Depression is a disorder that affects both males and females. Many studies have been conducted about depression using the Beck Depression Test, thereby increasing the reliability of this assessment measure to understand depression levels. According to the results of this research, it seems that female college undergraduate students suffer from a higher level of depression than the males, as results showed statistically significant differences. This research has also shown that the female students seem to have a higher level of motivation when compared to the males, as results showed statistically significant differences.

FUTURE STUDIES

Further research is needed to find the differences in the cause of depression for males and females, and more specifically college students. Because males and females process and internalize things differently, if distinct causes can be found, different treatments could be implemented to help treat depression among male and female college students which would in turn help them be more successful in their academic careers.

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