



PSYCHOLOGICAL STRESS OF COVID-19 ON YOUNG LEARNERS OF PROFESSIONAL COURSES

Suresh Chinna  and Mahammad Ali Sunkesula 

COVID-19 has blocked the world since March 2020, which has increased tension and anxiety among learners. The World Health Organization warned that the pandemic, social isolation, and disinformation could raise stress and anxiety. The present study aims to study the psychological stress of COVID-19 on young learners with respect to gender, locality, type of family, profession and year of study. 430 respondents from different parts of Tamil Nadu responded to a questionnaire based on five dimensions (Mental Stress, Health Stress, Academic Stress, Financial Stress and Social Stress). The results reveal that there is no statistically significant variation in the psychological stress of COVID-19 by gender, locality, type of family and profession among young learners. Female responders have endured tension, assault, and abuse due to the lockdown. Rural respondents felt more alone than their urban peers; young learners experienced the same level of psychological stress regardless of their family types. For future Covid-like scenarios, ideas like mental health, yoga and meditation, dance and music and concepts like 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbaam', and 'Sarve Janah Sukhino Bhavantu' must be incorporated into school education with the line of NEP 2020.

KEYWORDS: COVID-19, Psychological Stress, Young Learners, NEP 2020

INTRODUCTION

In January 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak was identified. As per the records of WHO, the first infected case was reported in India on 30 January 2020. Later, around March 2020, it turned into a major outbreak (Gupta et al., 2020). After the national lockdown, people found themselves caught in

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varying degrees of quarantine to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus. When people were restricted to their homes, the panic situation of the COVID-19 pandemic affected the mental health of people adversely due to a variety of reasons such as uncertainty, a poor prognosis, economic loss, hesitancy, turmoil, emotional isolation, school and workplace closures, lack of resources for medical purposes, and insufficient distribution of necessities. People thus encounter numerous emotional problems, including tension, insomnia, frustration, and irritability, which may culminate in psychiatric diseases like melancholy, anxiety, behavioural changes, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Since anxiety and stress can negatively impact immunity, it is essential to keep one's mind and feelings under control. The fact that people feel scared and helpless about the Coronavirus is the primary cause for concern over the psychological stress of COVID-19. It is significant for those with weak immune systems or at a higher risk for COVID-19 problems to experience these feelings (Bhat et al., 2021). Research studies in India revealed that while a greater number of men worried about social and leisure activities, on the other hand, a greater number of females worried about their academic success and physical health. The students in India between the age group of 13-19 reported that the pandemic has substantially influenced many parts of their lives, and especially they are nervous about their academic performance, societal and relaxation activities, and physical health (Shukla et al., 2021).

PSYCHOLOGICAL STRESS ON YOUNG LEARNERS

Young learners refer to students who are not adults and are aged between 20 to 25 years. Considering the wide spread of COVID-19, the World Health Organization (WHO) has published a journal titled "Mental Health and Psychological Considerations During the COVID-19 Outbreak." In this WHO reports that young people and adolescents have been subjected to excessive stress as they are currently in the phase of adulthood/adolescence. In today's world, it is not unusual for teenagers and young ones to experience stress, and when combined with the detrimental effects of social isolation. This stress may wreak havoc on an individual's mental and physical health. It can be particularly challenging for young people to deal with social isolation and closing colleges. The most significant effect on youth is staying home with family and missing out on social interactions. As a result, their emotional response to COVID-19 social distance has changed. Public health emergencies also affect teens and young people psychologically in various ways, including by causing anxiety, dread, and worry.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Tuysuz et al. (2022) conducted a study in Turkey during the COVID-19 pandemic to identify the factors that affect the fear levels of secondary school students. In the study, the researchers adopted the 'Corona Virus Fear Scale' which was developed by (Haktanir et al., 2020). A 5-point Likert consisting of 7 items with a reliability value of 0.83 was used. The sample for this study included 528 secondary school students from Grade 5 to Grade 8. The findings revealed that students' fear towards coronavirus was moderate. Factors that are responsible for increasing fear levels among the respondents are (a) an increase in cases, (b) an increase in deaths (c) being covid positive (d) a family member being covid positive (e) death of family members (f) death of close relatives and (g) fear of losing loved ones. They concluded that following the standard operating procedure for COVID-19 helped the respondents to reduce their fear levels.

Chandra et al. (2020) conducted a survey through online mode to identify the factors that are associated with self-perceived stress during the initial stage of the COVID-19 outbreak in Nepal. They evaluated 374 respondents using the "Sheldon Cohen Perceived Stress (SCPS)," scale to assess stress levels. The results indicate that nearly 3/4 of the respondents rated their self-perceived stress as moderate to high, and about 1/4 of the respondents reported having low self-perceived stress. There was a strong correlation between age and employment status and the psychological effects of the pandemic. The study suggested that there is a need to carry out some psychological interventions through various mediums during the Covid-19 epidemic to people become more resilient.

Hossain (2020) perceived stress in young adults during social isolation. This research was carried out in Kolkata while the city was under quarantine because of Covid-19. This research aimed to investigate and analyse the stress levels experienced by young people in Kolkata while being separated from their peers. Using the 10 and 14 versions of the PSS item inventory, the study was carried out on a sample of 100 individuals between the ages of 18 and 25. After that, the scores were calculated, and the mean and standard deviation were compared between male and female, students and working individuals. According to the study, women experienced higher stress levels than men in both PSS versions (10 and 14). It was also discovered that employed people report higher stress levels than students.

Liang et al. (2020) conducted a cross-sectional study on the "Effect of Covid-19 on youth's mental health". The purpose of this study was to assess youth's mental health after two weeks of its occurrence in China and to identify the factors of mental health among youth groups. This study consists of 584

youth and completed the questions about the cognitive status of COVID-19. The “General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12)”, the PTSD checklist-civilian version (PCL-C) and the Negative coping styles scale. This study revealed that 40.4% of the respondents were prone to psychological problems and 14.4% recorded post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms. Thus, the study found that Covid-19 may immensely influence youth’s mental health.

Cao et al. (2020) conducted research on the “Psychological impact of Covid-19 on college students in China.” The researchers collected data from Chanzi Medical College by employing cluster sampling. Among the 7143 medicos who made up the sample, 69.65% of the medicos were female and 30.35 were male; In addition, 52.86% of students’ parents did not have a consistent source of income. 99.45% of individuals reported that there is no family member or friend infected with Covid-19. These students responded to a questionnaire packet containing the “7-item Generalized Anxiety Disorder Scale (GAD-7),” along with questions inquiring about the basic information of the participants. According to the findings, just 0.9% of the respondents were dealing with severe anxiety, 2.7% were dealing with solid anxiety, 21.3% were dealing with mild anxiety, and 75.1% were with normal anxiety. On the other hand, having family or associates infected with COVID-19 was a risk factor for increasing the levels of anxiety experienced by the sample students. The findings of the study reveal that economic consequences, effects on everyday life, and postponements in academic activities were all clearly associated with anxiety indicators. Nevertheless, a negative correlation was found between the amount of social support and the level of anxiety. During times of widespread illness, it is advised that mental health screenings be performed on students enrolled in colleges and universities.

Saurabh and Ranjan (2020) studied “Compliance and Psychological Impact of Quarantine in Children and Adolescents due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.” The aim was to look at a group of children and adolescents who were placed in quarantine during the 2019 outbreak of the coronavirus disease in India and to characterise their perceptions of compliance with the quarantine and its psychological effects. This study was conducted on 121 children and adolescents, together with their parents. According to the findings, children and adolescents who were in quarantine suffered more from psychological distress than those who were not under quarantine. The three most prevalent emotions that were observed in the study are worry (68.59%), helplessness (66.11%) and dread (61.98%) respectively.

According to a review of the available literature, most researchers examined the psychological effects of Covid-19 on the general public and students in the initial stages of the pandemic or during times of lockdown. However, the present study aims to examine the psychological stress of COVID-19 on young

learners who have been affected for almost a year and have felt a great deal of tension, anger, and distance from family and friends for a longer duration.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study is carried out with the following objectives:

1. To find out the level of psychological stress experienced by young learners during the COVID-19 pandemic in toto and with respect to Gender, Locality, Type of family, Profession and Year of study.
2. To investigate whether there is any significant difference in the psychological stress of the COVID-19 pandemic/outbreak on young learners with reference to Gender, Locality, Type of family, Profession and Year of study.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

To test the farmed objectives the following hypotheses were formulated:

1. There will be a significant difference in the levels of psychological stress experienced by the young learners due to the COVID-19 pandemic in toto and with respect to Gender, Locality, Type of family, Profession and Year of study. (H1)
2. In terms of Gender, Locality, Type of family, Profession and Year of study there will be significant differences in the psychological stress of the Covid-19 pandemic on Young learners. (H2)

SAMPLE OF THE STUDY

Using a Simple random sampling procedure, 430 undergraduate students pursuing Engineering and Teaching professional courses and aged 20 to 25 years in the Thanjavur division of Tamil Nadu, India were selected as the sample for the current study.

TOOL AND PROCEDURE ADOPTED

The researchers developed a Psychological Stress Questionnaire (PSQ) with 45 statements pertaining to assessing the psychological stress due to the COVID-19 outbreak with five alternatives based on the Likert model (Strongly agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly disagree). This tool also consists of questions related to the Socio-Demographic information of respondents. Content and Face validity have been established duly following the norms of standardizing the tool. The developed tool was administered through offline mode

in December 2020 on 280 samples with the aim of establishing Item validity, Intrinsic validity and reliability. In the item analysis 39 items were retained (items which are significant at 0.05 level or less are considered for final study) and 6 items which were not significant at 0.05 level were discarded. These 39 items were pooled and categorized into five dimensions namely: Mental Stress, Health Stress, Academic Stress, Financial Stress and Social Stress. The possible score for the tool is 139 (Minimum score) to 195 (maximum score). The Split-half test reliability of the questionnaire (PSQ) is 0.768 and the intrinsic validity is 0.876. The details of the dimensions and number of statements are clearly depicted in Table 1.

Table 1

Psychological Stress Questionnaire (PSQ) Dimensions and Number of Statements.

Dimension/ Aspect	Description	Statements Numbers		Number of Statements
		From	To	
A	Mental Stress	1	9	9
B	Health Stress	10	19	10
C	Academic Stress	20	29	10
D	Financial Stress	30	33	4
E	Social Stress	34	39	6
Total			39	

The final form of PSQ was shared with respondents in a 'Google form' electronically (through WhatsApp and e-mail). 430 students of Engineering and Teaching professional courses from SASTRA Deemed to be University residing in different parts of Tamil Nadu, India recorded their responses to the PSQ.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Collected data was grouped and analysed through the IBM-SPSS 21 package with the aim to find the psychological stress of COVID-19 on young learners by concerning Gender, Locality, Type of family, Profession and Year of study. Frequency (N), Mean, Standard Deviation (SD) and 't', ANOVA (F) and Chi-square tests were employed.

Section 1

To achieve the purpose of the study, based on the scores obtained from the sample were categorised into 3 broad groups with the help of Mean and SD scores and they are – Low, Moderate and High psychological stress. N, Mean and SD values and the procedure followed to categorise the psychological stress levels were clearly described in Table 2.

Table 2

Grouping of Psychological Stress Levels based on Mean $\pm \frac{1}{2}$ SD scores on PSQ.

	Level	N	Mean	SD	Value
Low	Below Mean $-\frac{1}{2}$ SD				Below 134.408
Moderate	Between Mean $-\frac{1}{2}$ SD and Mean $+\frac{1}{2}$ SD	430	144.17	19.52	Between 134.40 and 153.93
High	Above Mean $+\frac{1}{2}$ SD				Above 153.932

The sample lying below 134.408 comes under the low psychological stress category; the sample lying between 134.408 and 153.932 is considered a moderate psychological stress group and the sample obtained above 152.932 on PSQ was considered a psychologically highly stressed category due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

In order to find out the level of psychological stress experienced by Young learners during the Covid-19 pandemic in toto and with respect to Gender, Locality, Type of family, Profession and Year of study, the obtained data from the young respondents has been categorised based on their groups into three levels and Chi-Square was computed to assess the association between the groups. The results are presented systematically in Table 3.

From Table 3 it is clear that 30.2% of the sample reported that they experienced Low Psychological stress during the Covid-19 pandemic. Whereas 31.2% of young learners expressed that they were highly stressed psychologically due to Covid-19 lockdowns and the pandemic. But interestingly, the majority (38.6) of the sample informed that they experienced moderate levels of psychological stress because of this pandemic. Similarly, irrespective of Socio-demographic variables (Gender, Locality, Type of family, Profession and Year of study) the majority of the young learners experienced moderate levels of Psychological stress due to the Covid-19 outbreak. These results agree with

the other studies (Tutku et al., 2020; Tuysuz et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2020).

Table 3

Psychological Stress Levels of Young Learners and Chi-Squares Values.

Variable	Group	N	Psychological Stress Level (%)			χ^2	p	
			Low	Moderate	High			
Gender	Male	163	27	41.1	31.9	1.38	0.50	
	Female	267	32.2	37.1	30.7			NS
Locality	Rural	151	27.2	39.1	33.8	1.25	0.53	
	Urban	279	31.9	38.4	29.7			NS
Type of Family	Nuclear	332	30.4	39.2	30.4	0.38	0.82	
	Joint	98	29.6	36.7	33.7			NS
Profession	Engineering	228	26.3	37.3	36.4	6.96*	0.03	
	Teaching	202	34.7	40.1	25.2			
Year of Study	First	50	30	36	34	5.95	0.42	
	Second	121	30.6	36.4	33.1			
	Third	194	33.5	39.7	26.8			NS
	Final	65	20	41.5	38.5			
Total		430	430	38.6	31.2	NA		

*Sig. at 0.05

In a study conducted during the first COVID-19 epidemic breakout in China, it was shown that more than half of the respondents experienced moderate psychological anxiety and worry (Wang et al., 2020). A study with 1050 respondents, conducted in Turkey with the goal of identifying health anxiety levels and controlling perception of COVID-19, found that the participants' health anxiety levels were moderate (Tutku et al., 2020) used the COVID-19 Fear Scale in their study and the result are parallel with the result obtained from this study. Tuysuz et al. (2022) conducted a study to identify the factors that affect the fear levels of secondary school students during the COVID-19 pandemic in Turkey and the study findings revealed that students' fear of coronavirus was moderate.

With respect to Gender, the majority of Male Young learners (L: 27%, M: 41.1% & H: 31.9%) revealed that they have experienced Moderate and High levels of psychological stress due to the Covid-19 pandemic than their counterparts (L: 32.2%, M: 37.1% & H: 30.7%). Therefore it is obvious from the results that male young learners feel more stressed psychologically than females during the Covid-19 pandemic and it is not statistically significant (χ^2 : 1.382 & p-0.501). It may be because in society male wards were nurtured as they could move or roam freely at any time, due to lockdowns, and restrictions like social

distance. The findings obtained in this study are in line with Dogan & DuZel, 2020 and contrary to other studies (Bakioglu et al., 2021; Gencer, 2020).

Likewise, the same results were observed in the locality groups. It is clear from Table 3 that the rural sample (L: 27.2.2%, M: 39.1% & H: 33.8%) feel more stressed than the urban (L: 31.9%, M: 38.4% & H: 29.7%) during Covid-19 pandemic and it is also not significant statistically (χ^2 : 1.253 & p-0.534). This may be because Rural communities had very less medical and health facilities and support during this pandemic.

With regard to the type of family groups majority sample from both nuclear and joint families felt moderately (39.2% & 36.7%) stressed psychologically in this epidemic. In the Nuclear family group, young learners equally reported low and high stress (30.4%). When compared with the Low and High stress, more samples from the Joint families reported that they have been highly stressed psychologically (L: 29.6% & H: 33.7%) throughout the Covid pandemic. This may be due to the fact that members of the Joint families have lost their family members or have been infected with this disease or are feeling more threatened as their families have more members. The results of Chi-square (χ^2 : 0.389 & p-0.823) indicate that there is no statistically significant association among the psychological stress levels with respect to type of family.

More young prospective engineering professional students (36.4%) reported higher psychological stress than prospective teaching professionals (25.2%). On the other hand, a higher percentage of prospective teaching professional young learners express having experienced moderate (40.1%) and low (34.7%) levels of psychological stress due to the Covid-19 pandemic than the prospective engineering professional young learners (M: 37.3% & L:26.3%). The Chi-square value for the variable Profession is 6.961 and the p-value is 0.03 and it is significant at 0.05 level. This confirms that there is a significant association between the levels of psychological stress in Engineering and Teaching prospective professional learners due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, prospective young engineering professionals have faced more psychological stress than prospective young teaching professional learners. Thus, the formulated hypothesis (H1) with regard to the profession is retained. Engineering is a profession which deals with machines, materials and programming methods (i.e., systems) whereas the teaching profession deals with human resources and no machine can't completely replace the Teachers. Hence, prospective engineering professional young learners may be more worried about their placements and careers than prospective teaching professional learners.

It is also apparent from Table 3 that in the four groups of the Year of the study sample, the majority of the respondents reported that they felt moderately stressed psychologically throughout the pandemic. Among the four

groups, a greater percentage of Final-year students expressed being highly stressed (38.5%) when compared with the First, Second and Third-year samples (34%, 33.1% & 26.8% respectively). It is also clear from the result that a smaller percentage of the third-year sample reported higher psychological stress than their counterparts.

With regard to variable Gender, Locality, Type of family and Year of study the formulated hypothesis (H1) is rejected.

Section 2

To find whether there is any significant difference in the psychological stress of the COVID-19 pandemic on Young prospective professional learners with reference to Gender, Locality, Type of family and Profession, Mean, SD, *t* and *p* values were computed and presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Mean, SD, Mean difference and “t” value of Young Learners on the Psychological Stress Questionnaire (PSQ) with respect to Gender, Locality, Type of Family and Profession.

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	Mean Diff.	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Gender	Male	163	143.51	21.26	1.07	0.55	0.58
	Female	267	144.58	18.41			
Locality	Rural	151	145.25	17.71	1.66	0.83	0.40
	Urban	279	143.59	20.44			
Type of Family	Nuclear	332	143.91	19.73	1.16	0.51	0.60
	Joint	98	145.07	18.88			
Profession	Engineering	228	145.35	21.20	2.51	1.33	0.18
	Teaching	202	142.84	17.39			

NS: Not Significant

It is clear from Table 4 that, calculated *t*-values for the variables Gender (*t*: 0.550 & *p*: 0.583), Locality (*t*: 0.838 & *p*: 0.402), Type of family (*t*: 0.519 & *p*: 0.604) and Profession (*t*: 1.331 & *p*: 0.184) are less than the table values (i.e., *p*-values are greater than 0.05). Therefore, there is no statistically significant difference between the group of variable Gender (1.07), Locality (1.66), Type of family (1.16) and Profession (2.51). Hence, the formulated hypothesis H2 is rejected with respect to independent variables namely Gender, Locality, Type

of family and Professional background.

From the values of Mean difference, it can be seen that there is a slight difference between the groups of these four independent variables. Based on the Mean values it can be inferred that,

1. Females show higher psychological stress (Mean: 144.58) than male young learners (Mean: 143.51). This may be because of domestic violence, different forms of abuse, medical negligence towards the females, increased household work and so on and these results coincide with the studies conducted by Almeida et al., (2020), Sediri et al. (2020) and Thibaut and van Wijngaarden-Cremers (2020).

2. Young prospective professional students who are residing in Rural areas (145.25) expressed that they experienced more stress than their counterparts i.e., a sample from Urban localities (143.59). Mean values indicate the rural sample has experienced more psychological stress of COVID-19 due to poor socio-economic conditions, management and governance, transportation, health, low internet connectivity and which is similar to the findings of the study by Iyer (2020).

3. Respondents from Joint families have expressed that they feel more stress due to COVID-19. The responses of respondents made it clear that they experienced different magnitudes of psychological tensions, confusion, anxiety, and fear of dying or the demise of family members or close relatives, whatever type of family they belonged to.

4. The mean value for Engineering students (145.35) shows that they have reported greater stress than prospective teachers (142.84) on PSQ. The difference in mean values indicates that students from engineering backgrounds had experienced more psychological stress from COVID-19. This may be, because of students who think delaying graduation will reduce the chance of getting a job.

Section 3

To find whether there is any significant difference in the young prospective professional learners' psychological stress due to the COVID-19 pandemic with respect to the variable Year of study. A One-way ANOVA has been computed and presented in Table 5.

It can be seen from Table 5 that the F-ratio for psychological stress of young professional students belonging to different years of study (i.e., first, second, third and fourth year) is significant at 0.05 Level (F: 3.252 & p: 0.022). Therefore, hypothesis (H2) is retained with regard to variable Year of study. Hence, it can be concluded that there is a statistically significant difference in the psy-

chological stress of young students studying in different years of Engineering and Teaching professional courses in SASTRA Deemed to be University.

Table 5

Results of One-way ANOVA for Psychological Stress Scores of Young Learners With Respect to Year of Study.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Between Groups	3661.057	3	1220.35	3.252*	0.022 Sig
Within Groups	159870.208	426	375.28		
Total	163531.265	429			

* Significant @ 0.05 Level

To find whether there is any significant difference between the Young prospective professional learners' psychological stress of the Covid-19 pandemic with respect to the variable Year of study Mean, SD, t and p values were calculated and are depicted in Table 6.

Table 6

Mean, SD, Mean Difference, and "t" value of Young Learners on Psychological Stress Questionnaire (PSQ) with Respect to Year of Study.

Year of Study	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p
1 First	50	144.70	18.39	t ₁₂ : 0.391	169	p ₁₂ : 0.696 NS
				t ₁₃ : 1.086	242	p ₁₃ : 0.27d NS
2 Second	121	145.93	18.73	t ₁₄ : 1.300	113	p ₁₄ : 0.196 NS
				t ₂₃ : 2.040 *	313	p ₂₃ : 0.042 Sig*
3 Third	194	141.26	20.32	t ₂₄ : 1.140	184	p ₂₄ : 0.256 NS
				t ₃₄ : 2.786 **	257	p ₃₄ : 0.006 Sig**
4 Final	65	149.18	18.28			

* Sig at 0.05 Level ** Sig at 0.01 Level

From Table 6 it is clear that the calculated t-values of young learners' psychological stress scores between the first and second year (t₁₂: 0.391 & p₁₂:

0.696); first and third year (t_{13} : 1.086 & p_{13} : 0.278); first and final year (t_{14} : 1.300 & p_{14} : 0.196); and second and final years (t_{24} : 1.140 & p_{24} : 0.256) groups are less than the table values. So, the difference between these groups is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level of significance. Thus, the formulated hypothesis (H2) with respect to the Year of study is rejected for the above-mentioned four groups. But, from the Mean scores and Mean differences, it is obvious that second-year students (145.93) felt more psychological stress than first-year students (144.70); First-year students experienced more stress than third-year students (141.26); and final-year professional students (149.18) expressed more psychological stress than the second-year sample (145.93)

The computed t-value for psychological stress scores for the Second and Third years (t_{23} : 2.040 & p_{12} : 0.042) is significant at 0.05 level as the computed t-value is greater than the table value. Therefore, the formulated hypothesis (H2) is accepted for the samples who are studying in the second and third years. The mean difference between the psychological stress scores of second and third-year professional students (md_{23} : 4.67) is significant and from the mean values, it is clear that second-year students experienced (145.93) more psychological stress than third-year students (141.26). This may be because current second-year students were admitted to undergraduate courses in 2020 via online mode after passing their grade 12 examination. For them, the entire curriculum was delivered exclusively online, and neither the teachers nor the students had any prior training in teaching online. They haven't interacted socially or physically with their classmates and as a result of this, their social network has been completely useless. They might have experienced boredom and total isolation in their online classes, and they might have eagerly anticipated the start of their offline classes, but the news about the second lockdown and the various waves of COVID-19 that circulated on television and in social media may have increased their psychological stress.

Similarly, the calculated t-value between the psychological stress scores of third and final-year engineering and teaching students (t_{34} : 2.786 & p_{12} : 0.006) is statistically significant at 0.01 level as the p-value is less than 0.01. Thus, the hypothesis (H2) is retained for the sample pursuing engineering and teaching professional programmes in the third and final years. From the Mean values, it is clear that final-year young professional students reported that they have experienced (149.18) more psychological stress than the third-year students (141.26).

From the mean psychological stress scores of all four sample groups of the Year of study, it is undoubtedly clear that the third-year professional young learners expressed a lower degree of psychological stress (M_3 : 141.26) than the other three groups of the variable (M_1 : 144.7; M_3 : 145.93; and M_4 : 149.18). These results are also depicted graphically in the below Mean plot.

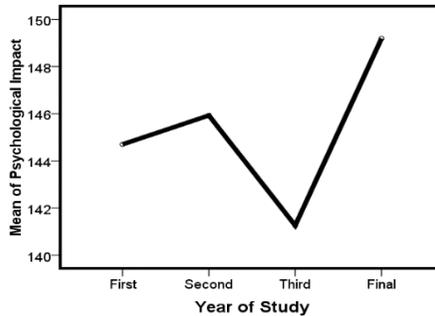


Figure 1. Means Plots for the Psychological Stress Scores of Young Learners on PSQ

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the responses given by the respondents in this study, findings reveal that they felt uncertain and fearful of guidelines and rules of lockdown, offline to online studies, and worrying about future employability. It was also shown that they felt frustrated, habit of laziness, fell asleep, had nightmares, had poor appetite, were afraid of exam results, felt alone/felt hard to share their feelings, did not have enough savings, etc., due to the Covid-19 outbreak. These findings suggest that we should pay more attention to the psychological state of the people during pandemics and epidemics. When severe public health problems occur, society must pay more attention to addressing them. To address the psychological impact in covid like situations in the future, concepts like mental health, stress management, yoga and meditation circles, music and dance performance circles, sports circles, painting, drawing, gardening, debate circles, Health and well-being Clubs, Culinary Arts (Cuisine Arts of food preparation) and the spirits like 'Vasudhaiva Kutumba' which means 'The world is one family' (Guha, 2021) and 'Sarve Janah Sukhino Bhavantu' which means 'Let's all celebrate, Let's all be happy together' (Colive, 2020) should be encouraged in the secondary school curriculum, which enables the country's people to deal with the psychological issues.

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