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Relationship Between Fear of Negative Evaluation, Quality of Sleep, Perceived Stress and Anxiety in Adults

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationships between anxiety, quality of sleep, fear of negative evaluation, and perceived stress in adults. The sample included 64 participants who self-reported on their anxiety symptoms, sleep patterns, fear of criticism, and level of stress. Results showed a substantial positive link between symptoms of generalised anxiety disorder and fear of negative evaluation, showing that people with higher levels of fear of negative evaluation typically have more symptoms of generalised anxiety. Additionally, a strong positive link was discovered between fear of negative evaluation and insufficient sleep, indicating that people who fear negative evaluation more often have insufficient sleep. These results advance our knowledge of how anxiety, sleep patterns, self-consciousness, and stress perception interact with one another in adulthood.

INTRODUCTION

Anxiety is a mental health disorder that has a significant effect on a person's health and quality of life. It is classified into five categories: panic disorder (F41.0), Agoraphobia (F40.0),

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Specific Phobia (F40.2), Social Phobia (F40.1), Generalised Anxiety Disorder (F41.1), Mixed Anxiety and Depressive Disorder (F41.2), and Other Anxiety Disorders (F41.8). Excessive anxiety can have serious physical effects, such as increased heart rate, shallow breathing, shaking, sweating, and digestive issues. Additionally, it can co-occur with other mental health conditions like depression and substance abuse. If excessive worry develops into a recurring problem, it is imperative to seek professional assistance.

Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE) is a distressing apprehension of being judged or evaluated negatively by others in social situations. It can manifest as anxiety, nervousness, and even avoidance of social situations altogether. Studies have examined how FNE affects people's self-esteem, social anxiety, and social behaviour. People with high FNE are more prone to suffer anxiety and tension in social circumstances, to have low self-esteem, and to engage in avoidant behaviors in order to shield themselves from possible unfavorable judgements from others. Neurocognitive theories suggest that people who experience social anxiety show a number of information processing biases that lead to anxious sensations.

Sleep is essential for general health and happiness, and psychologists have developed several theories to explain why we sleep. According to the adaptive approach, sleeping has developed over time as a protective behaviour for creatures. According to the restorative theory, sleep is essential for the body to rejuvenate and mend itself. According to the consolidation theory, the consolidation of memories and new knowledge depends on sleep. People who are sleep deprived struggle to recall new information and may have trouble learning and consolidating memories. Sleep is divided into five stages: REM (rapid eye movement), stage 1, stage 2, stage

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3, and stage 4. Stage 1 is characterised by a slowing down in breathing, heart, and muscular tension rates, and is essential for enabling the body to unwind and fall asleep.

Stress is defined as a psychological and physiological response to a perceived threat or demand that exceeds a person's ability to cope with it. Richard Lazarus (1991) proposed the Cognitive Appraisal Theory (CAT), which suggests that people can control their emotional reactions to stress by altering how they view the circumstances. The two stages of a person's cognitive evaluation of a situation are primary appraisal and secondary appraisal. The Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (TMSC) is a stress theory developed by Richard Lazarus and Susan Folkman in 1984. Perceived stress is influenced by thoughts about how unpredictable and uncontrollable one's life is, how frequently one must put up with bothersome problems, and confidence in one's ability to handle obstacles. A questionnaire like the Perceived Stress Scale is used to quantify perceived stress.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

- To look at the connection between anxiety and the fear of being judged negatively in adulthood.
- To investigate the connection between adults' perceived stress and their fear of being negatively evaluated.
- To investigate the relationship between adult sleep quality and fear of negative evaluation.

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- To evaluate the connections between anxiety, stress, perceived stress, and adult adults' sleep quality.
- To ascertain if perceived stress in adults modulates the link between anxiety and the fear of being negatively evaluated.
- To study the kind of correlation between the three variables.
- To determine if the relationship between anxiety and fear of being negatively evaluated in adults may be moderated by sleep quality.
- To determine any relevant demographic or psychological elements that could affect adult subjects' levels of anxiety, perceived stress, and sleep quality.
- To provide understanding and shed light on the intricate relationships between anxiety, perceived stress, fear of failure, and sleep quality in adult populations.
- To contribute to clinical psychology research and deepen our understanding of the psychological processes that affect adults' mental health.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

❖ FEAR OF NEGATIVE EVALUATION

According to research by Carleton et al. (2014), there is a statistically significant positive correlation between FNE and anxiety sensitivity, indicating that those with greater levels of FNE are more likely to experience symptoms associated with anxiety. Anxiety symptoms also played a part in mediating the connection.

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Shah et al. (2017) investigated the relationship between anxiety and fear of negative evaluation (FNE) among Indian university students. The results showed that there is a substantial positive relationship between FNE and anxiety, with females reporting higher levels of both than males. The authors hypothesized that this might be due to the pressure society places on women to adhere to gender roles and conventions.

Rajappa et al. (2019) found that there is a significant positive relationship between fear of negative evaluation (FNE) and social anxiety in Indian teenagers, with females reporting higher levels of both than males. The study highlights the importance of treating these issues in the context of socioeconomic and cultural factors.

Varela et al. (2021) found that fear of negative evaluation (FNE) and anxiety have a significant positive relationship, with female students and those studying the humanities and social sciences reporting higher levels of fear of negative evaluation and anxiety. This study adds to the body of research demonstrating the connection between anxiety and fear of receiving a poor grade among university students in India.

❖ QUALITY OF SLEEP

Sharma et al.'s study in India found that 52.5% of individuals had mild to severe anxiety symptoms, while 65% reported poor sleep quality. The link between anxiety and sleep quality was found to differ between genders, with women reporting significantly lower sleep quality and higher levels of anxiety.

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Li et al.'s study in China found that lower baseline levels of anxiety symptoms predicted greater follow-up levels of anxiety symptoms, while higher baseline levels predicted lower follow-up levels of sleep quality. These findings highlight the need to address both factors in anxiety treatment plans.

Sahoo et al. (2021) and Tavakoli et al. (2021) studied the relationship between sleep issues and anxiety symptoms in Indian undergraduates. The study found that 52% of participants had moderate to severe insomnia, while 34% had moderate to severe anxiety. Female participants were more prone to developing these symptoms, and the study highlights the importance of treating sleep disorders as a viable anxiety therapy strategy. The study also highlights the prevalence of poor sleep quality and anxiety symptoms in this population, which can help healthcare practitioners develop therapies for this population.

❖ PERCIEVED STRESS

Lack of sleep or poor-quality sleep can increase the risk of mental health issues, such as anxiety, suicide thoughts, and depressive disorders. *Taylor et al. (2018*) found that stress and anxiety were significantly positively correlated with one another in undergraduate students, with anxiety levels rising along with stress levels. This suggests that anxiety among undergraduate students may be significantly influenced by stress.

This study examined how stress and anxiety interacted in a sample of college students. The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) and State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) were administered to 250 undergraduate students from a prestigious American public university. Results showed that

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stress and anxiety were significantly positively correlated, suggesting that anxiety levels tend to rise along with stress levels. Stress was also found to be a significant predictor of anxiety in a regression analysis, suggesting that stress may be a major factor in the development of anxiety.

Malhotra et al.'s (2019) study looked at the connection between stress and anxiety in medical students. Jaiswal and associates (2021) conducted a research study to look into the incidence of stress and anxiety among Indian college students. Results showed that female students experienced much higher levels of stress and anxiety than male pupils, and those who reported poor performance had significantly higher levels of stress and anxiety. These results suggest that stress and anxiety are common among Indian college students, and that the onset of anxiety may be significantly influenced by stress.

METHODOLOGY

SAMPLE:

- The sample consisted of 64 adult participants both male and female between the age of 25 to 35 years.

VARIABLES:

- Anxiety
- Fear of Negative Evaluation
- Quality of Sleep
- Perceived Stress

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HYPOHESES

- H1: Higher levels of Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE) will be positively associated with higher levels of Generalized Anxiety and Perceived Stress in adults.
- H2: Poor Quality of Sleep will be positively correlated with higher levels of Fear of Negative Evaluation and Generalized Anxiety in adults.
- H3: Higher levels of Perceived Stress will be positively correlated with greater levels of Fear of Negative Evaluation and Generalized Anxiety in adults.

DESIGN: The Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to assess the strength and direction of the relationships between the variables

TOOLS

- The *brief Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale (BFNE*) is a self-evaluation questionnaire designed to assess the worry about being perceived negatively, one of the key signs of social anxiety disorder. It consists of 12 items, each of which is evaluated from 1 (not at all indicative of me) to 5 on a Likert scale, with higher scores indicating greater fear of being judged negatively.
- The *Perceived Stress Questionnaire (PSQ)* is a tool for identifying stressful life events and circumstances that regularly induce or aggravate disease symptoms.
- *The Sleep Quality Scale (SQS)* is a 28-item scale that examines six aspects of sleep satisfaction.
- *GAD-7* is a self-report questionnaire used to measure the severity of generalised anxiety disorder in clinical and research settings. It ranges from 0 to 21 points with higher values indicating more severe symptoms.

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RESULT AND DISSCUSSION

The purpose of the current study was to examine the connections between Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD), Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE), Social Questionnaire Scale (SQS), and Perceived Stress Questionnaire (PSQ) in adults. Using Pearson correlation coefficients, the relationships between these variables were looked at. The sample consisted of both male and female participants between the age of 25-35.

Sixty-four adult volunteers performed the GAD, FNE, SQS, and PSQ tests. The strength and direction of the correlations between the variables were evaluated using the Pearson correlation coefficients. The Pearson correlation coefficients for the relevant variables are shown in the correlation matrix below.

Table 1: Correlation Matrix

Correlations

		GAD	FNE	SQS	PSQ
GAD	Pearson Correlation	1	.296*	.214	.068
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.017	.089	.592
	N	64	64	64	64
FNE	Pearson Correlation	.296*	1	.315*	.212
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.017		.011	.093
	N	64	64	64	64
SQS	Pearson Correlation	.214	.315*	1	.142
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.089	.011		.262
	N	64	64	64	64
PSQ	Pearson Correlation	.068	.212	.142	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.592	.093	.262	
	N	64	64	64	64

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*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Fear of Negative Evaluation is a major factor associated with generalised anxiety disorder. There is a significant connection between Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE) and Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD). The Sleep Quality Scale (SQS) and Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD) were not statistically significant. The Perceived Stress Questionnaire (PSQ) and Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD) were not statistically significant. The Sleep Quality Scale (SQS) and Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE) and Perceived Stress Questionnaire (PSQ) were not statistically significant. Finally, the lack of a statistically significant correlation between SQS and PSQ suggests that there is no connection between perceived stress levels and sleep quality.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
GAD	10.84	4.883	64
FNE	38.77	9.669	64
SQS	41.38	10.890	64
PSQ	76.42	14.287	64

Participants reported mild levels of generalised anxiety, fear of negative evaluation (FNE), sleep quality (SQS), and perceived stress (PSQ). GAD had a mean score of 10.84 and a standard deviation of 4.883, FNE had a mean score of 38.77 and a standard deviation of 9.669. Sleep quality had a mean score of 41.38 and a standard deviation of 10.890.

CONCLUSION

The current study examined the connections between generalised anxiety disorder (GAD) in adults and fear of negative evaluation (FNE), sleep quality (SQS), perceived stress (PSQ), and perceived stress. Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis results offer insightful information about these interactions. In conclusion, this study provides evidence for a significant positive correlation between Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE) and Quality of

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Sleep (SQS), as well as a significant positive correlation between FNE and Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) in adults. These findings suggest that individuals with higher levels of fear of negative evaluation may experience poorer sleep quality and greater generalized anxiety symptoms. However, no significant relationships were found between GAD, SQS, PSQ, and FNE, and PSQ. These findings highlight the complexity of the relationship between sleep quality, perceived stress, anxiety symptoms, and fear of negative evaluation in adults.

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