P-ISSN: 2456-8430

Self-Efficacy, Depression, Anxiety and Stress of University Students: A Study by Mahalanobis Distance

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.52403/gijash.20230302

ABSTRACT

In the current study, Mahalanobis distance is used to compare the differences between two groups of university students' levels of selfefficacy, depression, anxiety, and stress. Differences between student groups for all dependent variables assessed at once aren't taken into account. Mahalanobis distance is an effective metric for determining a group of variables' dynamical character. For this study, three distinct dichotomous groupings of students are taken into account. Five dependent variablesgeneral self-efficacy, specific self-efficacy, depression, anxiety, and stress-are compared using Mahalanobis Distance to see how dynamically they differ. It is discovered that the dynamical nature of five dependent variables for various sets of independent variables is not significantly different.

Keywords: General self-efficacy, Specific self-efficacy, Depression, Anxiety, Stress, Mahalanobis distance, University students.

INTRODUCTION

It has been discovered that learners' levels of stress, anxiety, and despair are rising. Self-efficacy is significantly impacted during a pandemic (Gayen and Sen., 2021; Sen et al., 2021). These dependent variables are interconnected, but we can only measure one

of them specifically if we assess each one separately. Therefore, if we measure them both, the results will be more valuable. Such measurements will capture the dynamic nature of the variable group for any dichotomous variable (such as male vs. female). We can use a measure like the Mahalanobis Distance in the current investigation.

Different dimension of survey research in education are Cluster analysis (Mohanta et al., 2023; Sen et al., 2023; Gorain et al., 2022; Ansary et al., 2023; Saha, et al., 2021; Adhikari & Sen, 2023; Adhikari et al., 2023a; Adhikari et al., 2023b), correlational studies (Saha, 2012; Saha, 2013; Gayen & Sen, 2021: Sutradhar & Sen. 2022: Mahato et al... 2023a; Mahato et al., 2023b; Kundu et al., 2015), parametric tests (Ansary et al. 2022; Khan et al, 2023; Khatun et al., 2022; Mahanti et al., 2016; Mondal & Saha, 2017; Mondal et al., 2018; Naik & Sutradhar, 2015; Naik et al., 2015; Roy & Saha, 2022; Roy & Saha, 2023; Roy et al., 2017; Saha, 2012; 2021) and non-parametric tests Saha. (Mahato & Sen, 2021; Haldar et al., 2022; Mahato et al., 2022; Saha & Adhikari, 2021) etc. Mahalanobis Distance is currently used educational psychology and several metrics of achievement analysis.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mahalanobis Distance was developed by Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis in the context of his research on racial resemblance and was first published in 1936. In the works of Rosenbaum (2015), Diedrichsen, Provost, and Zareamoghaddam (2016), Cristani and Murino (2018), Toma (2019), Imani (2019), and Etherington (2019), Mahalanobis Distance was used in a variety of study domains.

Ahmed et al. (2019) studied the difference in achievement in mathematics for different learners in different grades of higher secondary level of Assam, India. The nature of mathematical success for two groups of higher secondary level students is the focus of a study project, according to Ahmed et al. (2020) in their article 'Application of Mahalanobis △2 on Achievement Tests on Mathematics: A Study on Higher Secondary Level Students'. As per further investigation, Sen and Pal (2020) applied this distance for achievement analysis. Using Mahalanobis Distance achievement in different subjects like Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Mathematics between two groups of students of Bodoland Territorial Region, Assam, India was conducted by Ahmed et al. (2021). Mahato and Sen (2021) have applied the Mahalanobis distance to study academic stress, self-efficacy in mathematics, and anxiety in mathematics for two groups of higher secondary level students.

In their article 'A Study on Internet Dependency, Social Isolation, and Personality using Mahalanobis Distance', Gorain et al. (2021) have discussed the following topics. Due to its detrimental effects on human personality and potential for social withdrawal, social isolation is a significant element in the development of the internet in the twenty- first century. Utilizing measures like internet dependence, social isolation, and five personality factors, Mahalanobis Distance is used to evaluate the psychological traits of university students.

The article 'A Comparative Study on Academic Achievement of Mathematics and English with Other Subjects of Secondary Level in the Bodoland Territorial Region of Assam, India, Using Mahalanobis Distance' by Ahmed et al. (2022a) examines a recent study that contrasts the academic achievements of two student groups in the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR), Assam, India, in four different subject areas: Mathematics, English, General Sciences, and Social Studies.

Ahmed et al. (2022b) research on the use of the Mahalanobis Distance to compare the academic performance of two groups of higher secondary students in the Bodoland Territorial Region, Assam, India in five different subject areas (Mathematics, English, and other studies).

In another research, 400 secondary level school teachers from West Bengal were studied by Mohanta et al. (2023) using Mahalanobis distance to examine institutional including commitment, professional affective commitment, commitment, commitment to the learner, and academic commitment taken as a unit. They found no significant differences in the dynamic nature of the dichotomous groups when the four dependent variables, namely commitment. professional affective commitment, commitment to the learner, and academic commitment, were taken into consideration.

Sen, Pal, and Adhikari (2023) used the Mahalanobis distance to compare 135 postgraduate students from two groups in terms of their self-efficacy, depression, anxiety, and stress. They discovered that the Mahalanobis distance could accurately compare the two groups of postgraduate students' self-efficacy, depression, anxiety, and stress.

Sen et al. (2023) examined 40 Heads of West Bengal institutions using Mahalanobis distance to examine various leadership styles, including commanding leadership, democratic leadership, visionary leadership, affiliative leadership, and coaching leadership. They found no significant differences in the dynamical nature of the dichotomous groups when five dependent variables, including commanding leadership,

democratic leadership, visionary leadership, and affiliative leadership, were included.

Objectives

Objectives of this study is to compare general and specific self-efficacy, depression, anxiety and stress taking together as a branch for different group of university students as follows:

- 1. To compare the difference between male and female students regarding the present condition of above-mentioned variables
- 2. To compare the difference between first and third semester students regarding the present condition of above-mentioned variables.
- 3. To compare the difference between students of science departments and social science departments regarding the present condition of above-mentioned variables.

Hypotheses

Following hypotheses may be considered for the present work:

- **Ho1:** There is no significant difference between male and female students on general and specific self-efficacy, depression, anxiety and stress taken together as a unit.
- **H**₀**2:** There is no significant difference between second and fourth semester students on general and specific self-efficacy, depression, anxiety and stress taken together as a unit.
- **H**₀**3:** There is no significant difference between students of science departments and social science departments on general and specific self-efficacy,

depression, anxiety and stress taken together as a unit.

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive survey method is applied to curry out the research.

Tools used

- The Self-Efficacy Scale: Construction and Validation by Sherer et al. (1995)
- Depression Anxiety & Stress Scales by Lovibond and Lovibond (1995)

Population: Students of Sidho-Kanho-Birsha University, Purulia, West Bengal, India.

Sample: 500 samples are taken randomly. **Variables:**

- Independent Variables: Gender (Male and Female), Semester (Second and Fourth) and Department (science and social science)
- Dependent Variables: General Selfefficacy, Specific Self- efficacy, Depression, Anxiety and Stress.

Statistical Measure

Mahalanobis Distance (MD) has been calculated by equation:

$$\Delta^2 = (A - B)^T \Sigma^{-1} (A - B)$$

Where A and B are column vectors and Σ is pooled covariance matrix of two groups of data.

$$MD = [(A - B)^{T} \Sigma^{-1} (A - B)]^{\frac{1}{2}}$$

Pooled Covariance Matrix

$$\Sigma = [n_1 \Sigma_1 + n_2 \Sigma_2]/N$$

Where Σ_1 and Σ_2 be the Covariance Matrices, n_1 and n_2 are the sample sizes for first and second group respectively and $N = n_1 + n_2$.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1: Descriptive statistics for different group of students

Male Students (N=249)							
Dependent variable	Stress	Anxiety	Depression	General Self-efficacy	Specific Self-efficacy		
Mean	20.75	21.93	17.59	145.60	45.00		
	Female Students (N=251)						
Dependent variable	Stress	Anxiety	Depression	General Self-efficacy	Specific Self-efficacy		
Mean	20.40	20.97	18.29	159.27	44.72		
Semester-1 Students (N=231)							
Dependent variable	Stress	Anxiety	Depression	General Self-efficacy	Specific Self-efficacy		
Mean	20.64	20.65	17.46	150.31	46.83		
Semester-3 Students (N=269)							
Dependent variable	Stress	Anxiety	Depression	General Self-efficacy	Specific Self-efficacy		
Mean	20.52	22.13	18.35	154.31	43.17		

Table no.1continued						
Students of Social Science Department (N=294)						
Dependent variable	Stress	Anxiety	Depression	General Self-efficacy	Specific Self-efficacy	
Mean	20.70	21.42	17.75	153.39	44.88	
Students of Science Departments (N=206)						
Dependent variable	Stress	Anxiety	Depression	General Self-efficacy	Specific Self-efficacy	
Mean	20.40	21.49	18.20	151.14	44.83	

Table 2: Pooled Variance-Covariance Matrix for Male and Female Students

	Stress	Anxiety	Depression	General Self-efficacy	Specific Self-efficacy
Stress	26.21	3.70	6.31	-1.24	6.60
Anxiety	3.70	38.31	15.99	-15.13	-10.80
Depression	6.31	15.99	57.67	-35.11	-18.51
General Self-efficacy	-1.24	-15.13	-35.11	1232.68	96.24
Specific Self-efficacy	6.60	-10.80	-18.51	96.24	137.92

Table 3: Pooled Variance-Covariance Matrix for Semester-1 and Semester-3 Students

	Stress	Anxiety	Depression	General Self-efficacy	Specific Self-efficacy
Stress	26.24	3.83	6.28	-2.33	6.52
Anxiety	3.83	37.99	15.49	-19.93	-9.37
Depression	6.28	15.49	57.60	-33.59	-17.76
General Self-efficacy	-2.33	-19.93	-33.59	1275.56	98.91
Specific Self-efficacy	6.52	-9.37	-17.76	98.91	134.61

Table 4: Pooled Variance-Covariance Matrix for Social Science and Science department Students

	Stress	Anxiety	Depression	General Self-efficacy	Specific Self-efficacy
Stress	26.23	3.79	6.29	-2.62	6.62
Anxiety	3.79	38.55	15.82	-18.39	-10.73
Depression	6.29	15.82	57.75	-32.45	-18.56
General Self-efficacy	-2.62	-18.39	-32.45	1278.28	95.22
Specific Self-efficacy	6.62	-10.73	-18.56	95.22	137.93

Table 5: Mahalanobis Distance for three dependent variables general self-efficacy, specific self-efficacy, depression, anxiety and stress

| Independent variables | Male vs Female | Semester-1 vs Semester-3 | Social Science Department vs Science Departments |
| Mahalanobis Distance | 0.4726 | 0.4267 | 0.1113 |

Values of Mahalanobis Distance listed in Table 5 express that the differences are insignificant. So, there is no significant difference in dynamical nature of the dichotomous groups when five dependent variables general self-efficacy, specific self-efficacy, depression, anxiety and stress composed as a branch. So, H₀1, H₀2 and H₀3 are accepted.

CONCLUSION

A partial attribution of the current state may be made if we take the detection of one variable into account individually. Researchers can measure a group of dependent variables considering as a branch attribution by Mahalanobis Distance detects the overall dynamical nature of the present state. In present study we found no significant differences between groups as result one may conclude that dynamical nature of the five dependent variables taken at a time are similar.

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How to cite this article: Aniket Sutradhar, Subir Sen, Anasuya Adhikari et.al. Self-efficacy, depression, anxiety and stress of university students: a study by Mahalanobis distance. Galore International Journal of Applied Sciences & Humanities. 2023; 7(3): 7-15. DOI: https://doi.org/10.52403/gijash.20230302
