

Psychosocial Problems of Female Students Living in University Hostels

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ABSTRACT

Background: Hostel environment provides an opportunity to socialize among students. This socialization influences behavior of students. Positive variations in behavior promote character building among students and make students ready for upcoming practical life. The negative variations in behavior included laziness among students, irresponsible behavior toward studies, and time-wasting with friends. **Objective:** To find out the psycho social problems that the students faced in University Hostel. **Study Design:** Cross-sectional survey-based study. **Settings:** Study has been performed at the female hostels of teaching institutes of Liaquat University of Medical & Health Sciences (LUMHS) Jamshoro, and Mehran University of engineering & technology (MUET) Jamshoro Pakistan. **Duration:** August 2018 to January 2019. **Methods:** Female students aged 18-40 years were randomly selected as a study population. Students were face to face interviewed for the psychosocial problems including feeling loneliness, homesickness, stress, anxiety, depression, adjustment Issues, relationship and financial stress by using a self -made proforma on basis of previously published literature. Some students given proforma to fill separately as per their wishes. All of the information was collected via that questioner based proforma and SPSS version 26 was used for the data analysis. **Results:** Majority of both LUMHS (83.9%) and MUET (86.4%) students fell within the 18-22 years age group. The study found that a significant proportion of both LUMHS and MUET students experienced psychosocial issues, including loneliness, homesickness, and insomnia. Anxiety levels were similar between the two groups. Satisfaction with hostel wardens varied, with a higher rating among MUET students. However, satisfaction with hostel facilities, cafeteria food quality, and security systems was generally higher among MUET students compared to LUMHS students. MUET students also rated the attitude of hostel management more positively than LUMHS students. Furthermore, the majority of students reported that there were limited and unsatisfactory access to computer, electricity, TV and washing machine facilities, with no significant difference observed between the two universities. **Conclusion:** Study revealed that, there were frequent psychosocial problems among female students living in hostel of both MUET and LUMHS of Jamshoro. Majority students were satisfied regarding behavior, but not satisfied from hostel facilities. Complete medical facilities, continues round of medical teams should be done specially in hostels in non-medical universities. Emergency and secured travelling facilities should be provided to girl's students.

Keywords: Psycho social problems, Students, LUMHS, MUET.

INTRODUCTION

Students have increased work challenges and pressures at university, which can lead to social, physical, and emotional problems.¹ They knew circumstances of surviving without an experienced family member to

guide.² Actually; hostel life uniquely influences the life-activities of students. Hostel life modifies the behavioral and social life of students. Hostel or boarding life is a set of various cultural settings, hostel life teaches students to interact with people of various cultural backgrounds.³ Female students find it hard to manage the residence

issue in distant cities from family, in such circumstances, hostels are believed to be an ideal solution. Even though these hostels provide facilities of high-quality,⁴ however still female students living in hostels in Pakistan, are facing different types of problems which involve social challenges as discouraging attitude of society, transportation issues, and health challenges. Cultural loops sometimes hinder the study life of female students in Pakistan generally and in major areas like Hyderabad division.⁵ The students have to manage their living in these hostels in order to successfully complete their studies while being away from their home but surely, they are facing a large number of hurdles such as personal helplessness, distress, anxiety, depression and much more.⁶ The commonest health issues faced are allergies, sinus infection, strep throat, and back pain. Health disorders that negatively impacted on their academic performance involve: stress, anxiety, sleep challenges and infections of upper respiratory tract.⁷ Students residing in hostels are more affected by these adjustment challenges compared to students living with their parents.⁸ Homesickness is the most common problem faced by students living in hostels. Studies indicates that approximately 90% of students usually experience some form of homesickness.^{8,9} Although the hostels serve as environments where experiments and observations are conducted under the guidance of dedicated teaching and supervisory staff. They encompass all facets of experimentation aimed at fostering the development of scientific and technical thinking, instilling moral values, and enhancing students' social adjustment abilities. Hostels are also an essential component of any advanced educational institution within society. The educational amenities provided in hostels, colleges, and other higher learning organizations are widely regarded as the backbone of the learning process. In various nations, student hostels are viewed as central hubs, comprising residential buildings and campus areas designed to offer living comfort while also catering to students' mental well-being and access to cultural, welfare, educational, physical fitness, counseling, libraries, nutritional, and healthcare facilities, all in accordance with prevailing regulations.¹⁰ Unfortunately in several developing countries, including Pakistan the student hostel facilities have historically been neglected, despite the ongoing struggle of higher education institutions to provide accommodation for the large influx of admitted students while upholding reasonable standards.¹⁰ The enrollment of students in higher education has consistently risen over time, resulting in a corresponding growth in the need for university hostel accommodations.¹⁰ This work has been done on problems of female students living in university hostels. However, no study has been performed to appraise the issues of female students living in hostels in Hyderabad Region. As these female students are facing different problems, thus it is very debatable

issue of our society and needs sympathetic consideration for solution. Hence, this study has been done to highlights the problems of female students residing in university hostels of Hyderabad Region, which may helpful to develop the strategies to solve the students' problems.

METHODS

This cross-sectional study was designed to find out the psycho social problems among female students living in the university hostels of Jamshoro, Hyderabad. Study duration was five months from August 2018 to January 2019. The hostels of two universities, Liaquat University of Medical and Health Science and Mehran University of Engineering and Technology Jamshoro were purposively selected for the study. After approval of research ethics committee (REC) LUMHS, prior to data collection, permission was taken from the concerned authority. A total of 365 female students aged 18-40 years were randomly selected as a study population. Students who were not willing to participate in study and students those who were living in the hostels less than six months were excluded. Informed consent was obtained from all the All the participants and the purpose of the study was explained. All the females' students were assured that their information will be kept confidential and only be used for the research purpose. Students were face to face interviewed for the psychosocial problems including feeling loneliness, homesickness, stress, anxiety, depression, adjustment Issues, relationship and financial stress by using a self -made proforma on basis of previously published literature. Some students given proforma to fill separately as per their wishes. All of the information was collected via that questioner based proforma and SPSS version 26 was used for the data analysis.

RESULTS

In terms of age distribution, a large majority of both LUMHS (83.9%) and MUET (86.4%) students fell within the 18-22 years age group, ($p=0.800$). Regarding religion, the majority of LUMHS (81.6%) and MUET (85.3%) students identified as Muslim, ($p=0.337$). Marital status showed a similar trend, with most students from both universities being unmarried. Additionally, in terms of socioeconomic status (SES), a majority of LUMHS (83.9%) and MUET (80.1%) students belonged to the middle SES category, showing no significant variance ($p=0.521$). In the survey conducted among 365 university hostel students, various psycho-social issues and perceptions were highlighted. Around 34.5% of LUMHS and 35.6% of MUET students felt loneliness, while 74.1% of LUMHS and 69.1% of MUET students experienced homesickness. Insomnia was reported by 43.7% of LUMHS students and 35.1% of MUET students. Anxiety levels were similar

among both groups, with about 34.5%. Concerning the relationship with hostel wardens, 27.0% of LUMHS students and 40.8% of MUET students rated it as very good. Satisfaction with hostel facilities varied, with 36.8% of LUMHS students satisfied compared to 75.4% of MUET students. Regarding cafeteria food quality, 37.4% of LUMHS students found it hygienic, while 46.1% of MUET students agreed. Satisfaction with the security system was higher among MUET students (96.3%) compared to LUMHS students (80.5%). In evaluating the attitude of hostel management, a greater proportion of MUET students (50.3%) rated it as good, compared to LUMHS students (22%). **Table 1**

Table 1: Psycho social problems facing students in University Hostel in terms n=365

Variables		Study groups		p-value
		LUMHS (n=174)	MUET (n=191)	
Feeling loneliness	Yes	60(34.5%)	68(35.6%)	0.824
	No	114(65.5%)	123(64.4%)	
Feeling homesickness	Yes	129(74.1%)	132(69.1%)	0.288
	No	45(25.9%)	59(30.9%)	
Insomnia	Yes	76(43.7%)	67(35.1%)	0.093
	No	98(56.3%)	124(64.9%)	
Anxiety	Yes	60(34.5%)	68(35.6%)	0.823
	No	114(65.5%)	123(64.4%)	
Feel problem when living combined	Anxiety	35(20.0%)	40(20.9%)	0.229
	Worry	55(31.6%)	57(29.8%)	
	Study disturbance	60(34.5%)	53(27.7%)	
	Sleep disturbance	24(13.8%)	41(21.5%)	
Relation with hostel warden	Very good	47(27.0%)	78(40.8%)	0.014
	Good	27(15.5%)	35(18.3%)	
	Average	75(43.1%)	59(30.9%)	
	Poor	25(14.4%)	19(9.9%)	
Satisfied from hostel facilities	Satisfied	64(36.8%)	144(75.4%)	0.001
	Unsatisfied	110(63.2%)	47(24.6%)	
Quality of food in cafeteria	Hygienic	65(37.4%)	88(46.1%)	0.098
	Unhygienic	107(61.5%)	103(53.9%)	
	Satisfactory	2(1.1%)	0(0.0%)	
Security system facility	Satisfied	140(80.5%)	184(96.3%)	0.001
	Unsatisfied	34(19.5%)	7(3.7%)	
Attitude of hostel management	Excellent	8(4.6%)	22(11.5%)	0.001
	Good	46(26.4%)	96(50.3%)	
	Average	80(46.0%)	52(27.2%)	
	Poor	40(22.8%)	21(11.0%)	
Difficulties while going coming back university	Always	34(19.5%)	14(7.3%)	0.002
	Sometimes	55(31.6%)	56(29.3%)	
	Rarely	34(19.5%)	55(28.8%)	
	Never	51(29.3%)	66(34.6%)	

In terms of access to computers where they live, 18.4% of LUMHS students and 64.4% of MUET students reported having access, ($p=0.001$). Regarding electricity facility, 20.7% of LUMHS students and 77.0% of MUET students rated it as good, whereas 79.3% of LUMHS students and

23.0% of MUET students found it unsatisfactory ($p=0.001$). Furthermore, the majority of students reported limited and unsatisfactory access to TV and washing machine facilities, with no significant difference observed between the two universities as shown in **table 2**.

Table 2: Distribution of students according to utility access in hostel n=365

Variables	Study groups		p-value
	LUMHS (n=174)	MUET (n=191)	
Access to computer where you live			0.001
	Yes	32(18.4%)	
	No	142(81.6%)	
Total	174(100%)	191(100%)	
Electricity facility			0.001
	Good	36(20.7%)	
	Unsatisfactory	138(79.3%)	
Total	174(100%)	191(100%)	
T V facility in hostel			0.244
	Yes	96(55.2%)	
	No	78(44.8%)	
Total	174(100%)	191(100%)	
Washing machine facility in hostel			0.138
	Yes	47(27.0%)	
	No	127(73.0%)	
Total	174(100%)	191(100%)	

DISCUSSION

This study examined various socio-demographic factors and psycho-social issues among students residing in university hostels at LUMHS and MUET. The findings revealed similarities and differences in age distribution, religious affiliation, marital status, socioeconomic status, and experiences related to hostel life. In terms of age distribution, a significant majority of students from both LUMHS and MUET fell within the 18-22 years age group, with no significant difference between the two universities. Similarly, a majority of students identified as Muslim, and most were unmarried, showing consistency across both institutions. Consistently an exploratory study examining the influence of life in hostels by Iftikhar A et al¹² found average age range 22-25 years.

On the other hand, Ariapoor L et al¹³ conducted the study on both hosteler and hostler medical students and out of them 428 were girls with an average age of 20.9 ± 2.4 years.

In this study regarding socioeconomic status, the majority of students belonged to the middle SES category in both universities, with no significant variance observed. This suggests a similar economic background among hostel students at LUMHS and MUET. Furthermore, this survey highlighted several psycho-social issues faced by hostel students. A substantial proportion reported feelings of

loneliness and homesickness, with slightly higher rates among LUMHS students. Insomnia and anxiety were also prevalent among both groups, indicating the psychological challenges associated with hostel life. In this study, the socioeconomic status (SES) distribution among students from both LUMHS and MUET revealed a predominant presence in the middle SES category with no notable difference between the universities. This suggests a similar economic background shared by hostel students across both institutions. Moreover, the survey shed light on various psycho-social challenges encountered by hostel students. A notable proportion reported feelings of loneliness and homesickness, with slightly higher prevalence rates among LUMHS students. Additionally, insomnia and anxiety were prevalent issues experienced by both groups, indicating the psychological hurdles associated with hostel life. Consistent with previous studies, our findings support the notion that homesickness and the desire for companionship are predictive factors for experiencing loneliness, with a discernible correlation observed between homesickness and loneliness. This relationship potentially influences the adjustment process to college life, highlighting the significance of addressing these emotional challenges among hostel students.^{14,15} In line with these observations, another study similarly emphasized the substantial impact of homesickness on college adjustment, reinforcing the importance of recognizing and addressing this issue within the university environment.¹⁶ In comparison to previous research, Liaqat et al.¹⁷ reported a consistent elevation in the incidence of depression, anxiety, and stress among both medical students residing in hostels and those living at home. However, intriguingly, no correlation was established between these mental health challenges and the students' residential circumstances. This suggests that factors beyond hostel residential conditions may contribute to the psychological well-being of students.

In this study the perceptions of hostel facilities and services varied between the two universities. While satisfaction with the hostel facilities was higher among MUET students, LUMHS students reported lower levels of satisfaction. Differences were also observed in perceptions of cafeteria food quality and satisfaction with the security system, with MUET students generally expressing higher levels of satisfaction. Furthermore, in this study in terms of access to amenities, MUET students reported better access to computers and electricity facilities compared to LUMHS students. However, both universities faced challenges regarding limited access to TV and washing machine facilities, with no significant difference observed between them. In the comparison of this study Nighat N et al.¹⁸ found better satisfaction of students regarding infrastructure and room conditions received positive responses ranging from 93% to 99%,

while mess food garnered a 67.7% approval rating. Gymnasium facilities were rated positively by 72% to 82% of respondents, while washrooms received a 60% positive rating. Security measures were highly rated at 94%, and overall hostel satisfaction was reported at 90%.¹⁸ Their findings suggest that attention should be directed towards addressing concerns related to mess food and washroom facilities in order to enhance the overall hostel experience.¹⁸ The study conducted by Khozaei F et al.¹⁹ indicated that undergraduate students' satisfaction with their hostel is primarily influenced by factors such as satisfaction with fees, proximity to university facilities, safety of room, size of the room, security of the hostel, and overall hostel facilities. Furthermore, there was a notable discrepancy in satisfaction levels between students residing inside and outside the campus.¹⁹ 61.7% reported having a typical living experience in hostels, whereas 57.7% of students perceived the hostel environment as restrictive. This study offers significant insights into the socio-demographic profiles and psycho-social encounters of university hostel residents. By delineating the challenges and experiences faced by these students, the research identifies specific areas in which improvements to hostel facilities and services can be made, ultimately contributing to the enhancement of overall student well-being. It's essential to acknowledge that in this study findings may not be fully generalizable to all university hostels, as the study focuses on specific institutions and student populations. Variations in hostile environments, cultural contexts, and student demographics may impact the applicability of the findings to other settings. Implementing support services such as counseling, peer support groups, and mental health resources within hostel premises can provide students with the necessary support systems to cope with psychological challenges effectively. Accessible and confidential support services can contribute to a positive hostel experience and facilitate students' adjustment to university life.

CONCLUSION

Study revealed that, there were frequent psychosocial problems like homesickness, anxiety, and insomnia. Most students showed poor and middle socioeconomic status, these factors also create the educational and psychological problems. Majority of students were satisfied regarding behavior of hostel management and relation with hostel warden, but not satisfied from hostel facilities specifically as electricity facility, access to computer, washing machine and cafeteria facility. Stressful hostile environments notably impacted the education of female students at MUET and LUMHS in Jamshoro. Addressing these concerns, particularly by ensuring comprehensive medical facilities and secure transportation options for female students, is crucial for

their well-being and academic success in university hostels

LIMITATIONS

The study was conducted on specific institutions and student groups, so the findings may not be universally applicable to all university hostels. Variations in hostel settings, cultural backgrounds, and student demographics could impact the relevance of the results in other contexts.

SUGGESTIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

Complete medical facilities, continues round of medical teams should be done specially in hostels in non-medical universities to discuss and management of health-related issue of students. Emergency and secured travelling facilities should be providing to girl's student. All the problems should be solved to reduce the stress among student to create the best educations among hostel living students."

CONFLICT OF INTEREST / DISCLOSURE

None.

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