Exploring the Impact of Mental Health on University Students' Behavior and Attitudes Towards Crime Prevention

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Abstract

The objective of the research was to find out how mental health affects the behavior and crime prevention attitudes of university students. A sample of 300 university students from various academic backgrounds and demographic factors was taken for the study. A self-administered survey questionnaire comprising 30 items on mental health, crime prevention, police, and behavioral orientations was used for data collection. The method employed descriptive statistical indices like the mean, standard deviation, and p-value to measure the relationship between the attitudes and behaviors of students regarding crime prevention and mental health. The results indicated that students reported, on average, moderate anxiety (mean = 3.6, SD = 1.1), sadness (mean = 3.5, SD = 1.2), and stress (mean = 3.7, SD = 1.0). Students' satisfaction with the university's mental health services was 3.4 (SD = 1.1). Most students also utilized mental health support, with a mean of 2.9 (SD = 1.3). There was an almost complete agreement regarding crime prevention programs, as indicated by a mean score of 3.9 (SD = 1.1), regarding how important it is to include mental health services in these programs. Students who were diagnosed with mental illness felt more strongly that criminal action was justified (mean = 2.9, SD = 1.3) and believed more strongly in restorative justice as opposed to punitive measures (mean = 3.7, SD = 1.2). Overall, the findings indicate that mental health is a significant factor in students' behavior and attitudes regarding crime prevention, and universities should include mental health services in crime prevention initiatives aimed at promoting student well-being and deterring criminal activity.

Keywords: *Mental Health, Crime Prevention, Academic Stress, Law Reinforcement, Anxiety, Student Well-Being.*

Introduction

There are two important research areas in the current society: mental health and crime prevention. These topics are more relevant in university because most students are in a critical developmental stage in their thinking and emotions. Common mental disorders are now becoming more and more prevalent among university students, with impacts on their academic achievement, social adjustment, and overall health (Auerbach et al., 2018). At the same time and by the same token, universities are viewed as reflections of the larger social world, such as crime and the criminal justice system. Mapping and understanding the student's mental health perspective and mental health approach towards crime and crime prevention is important in crafting policies that will help students overcome adverse mental health and any issues of criminality.

In this research, an effort will be made to establish this correlation by determining how the existing mental health problems affect student's attitudes toward crime, police, and crime prevention measures. One feature of this study is to measure how university students behave, especially when it comes to misunderstanding or even dealing with criminal justice systems or even comprehending facets of crime prevention involving their mental health characteristics. This introduction gives an outline of the reasons for the study and the research questions, objectives, and hypotheses as well as a list of definitions of the concepts that were determined while reviewing the literature presented in the next section.

University years are widely described as a time of growth, learning, social experience, and individual change. However, it is also a time when a large number of pupils experience elevated levels of anxiety and worsening of mental and emotional issues. There is a high prevalence of mental illnesses, including anxiety, depression, and stress, among university students, so they are likely to exhibit abnormal behaviors due to their illnesses

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(Kessler et al., 2019). Stress from academic performance, limited social relationships, and early adulthood developmental issues cause the development of mental health issues in this group (Eisenberg et al., 2017). Auerbach et al. (2018) examined one survey of 87 universities across the United States and found that about 30% of university students face serious mental health difficulties; the most common disorders are anxiety and depression. The results of this research correspond with the results of Hunt and Eisenberg (2019), where it was established that university learners who experience mental health issues have poor performance in academic work, low social interaction, and generally poor quality of life. With students' mental health getting worse, universities should pay more attention to their mental health needs and get the right services and measures in place.

Furthermore, work by Givens et al. (2021) showed that students with untreated mental health disorders have high tendencies to indulge in behaviors that display social isolation, poor performance, and criminal activities. This has a bearing on how students perceive mental health to impact their perception of crime and their possible involvement in criminal incidences. There is a link between mental health and criminality, but it is not a simple one. Such populations become at higher risk of criminal behavior as victims or participants if they do not receive adequate mental health treatment (Muench & Neighbors, 2020). University settings depicted high mental health-crime prevalence whereby students are involved in risky behaviors, including substance abuse and violation of the university code of conduct resulting from mental health problems (Fazel et al., 2020).

More specifically, the role that people's cognition of crime and crime control play crucially in analyzing the relationship between mental health and criminality. According to Gray et al. 2021 and Sherman et al. 2019, those diagnosed with mental health disorders are more likely to have a biased view of crime and policing. This may create confusion and wrong perceptions of some crimes or how crime offenders are punished. For instance, university students with anxiety or depression are likely more permissive of criminal behavior than his/her counterparts without such disorders, seeing criminal offenses as less heinous or incapable of comprehending the ramifications of criminal activities (Fazel et al., 2020).

On the other hand, students with good mental health can develop more perceived beneficial forms of crime control measures such as rehabilitation programs, restorative justice, and community-centered prevention. These students also have a better perception of the role of police officers, that is, as protective and fair force, which aligned with the result of Maguire and Johnson (2021) that students diagnosed to be mentally stable have a positive perception towards efforts to prevent crimes. Hence, it is necessary to determine how mental health predicts students' perceptions and attitudes toward criminality in order to design relevant intervention strategies.

Measures against crime usually focus on avoiding crime and minimizing the possibility of committing a crime. These strategies include, but are not limited to, public enlightenment campaigns, police patrols, and arrests. However, the success of crime-fighting measures is mostly based on people's attitudes and perceptions of police. As applied to the frame of university students, these strategies are to be compatible with the student's conception of criminal justice and their perceptions of police.

Lea & Humphreys (2021) argued that students with better levels of current mental health stability are more likely to support aggressive crime fighting and prevention measures and therapy initiatives like community programs and reformative campaigns. This differs from those students who have mental health problems; they might have doubts about the strategies of crime prevention, especially if they consider them punitive and stigmatized. According to this, Piquero et al. (2020) pointed out that mental health issues are a significant factor and a strong mediator of students' negative attitudes toward the police, resulting in reduced efficiency of crime prevention activities in universities.

On the other hand, Sampson and Laub (2021) have shown that when students are offered all the necessary psychological care and receive special educational programs that help them think about crime and its consequences for society, their attitudes toward crime prevention become more positive. The results of the present study highlight the need to integrate mental health concerns within the comprehensiveness of crime prevention education among university students.

It is, therefore, important to use behavioral health interventions as part of crime prevention measures that will keep university students off the wrong side of the law. Integrating mental health interventions with specific crime prevention programs may enhance a comprehensive approach to the student's issues. Eisenberg et al. (2020) explain that universities should incorporate mental health services into the security and crime fight program to enhance students' safety. For instance, creating awareness of mental health and providing mental health service options through student service provision could make more students willing to check on their mental health as well as engage in crime prevention matters.

In addition, the current study also supports Blumstein and Wallman's (2019) call for more programs with a restorative justice agenda than punitive ones that focus on retributive justice. Said programs, when initiated in university environments, can enable students with mental illness to regain a more positive perception of the impact of their actions on society and regain relationships that they had not thought possible due to their mental status. Thus, they can encourage crime prevention besides improving a person's mental health.

Since more students report mental health issues and comorbidity between mental disorders and crime, and since crime and mental health are intricate and interconnected, more research in universities needs to be targeted to such topics. Some scholars have proposed that campuses are unique settings where students' psychological well-being, crime perceptions, and behavior coexist. Knowledge of these phenomena is crucial in orientation on crime prevention involving students' needs.

The present research will attempt to fill this gap by exploring how MH problems influence university students' perceived roles in crime prevention and their propensity to engage in criminal activities. This study aims to explore and analyze to explore and analyze university students' sense-making processes, Bydge in the existing literature and provide valuable suggestions for improving this student health support initiatives and crime prevention measures in universities.

The Puimproving

This study aims to assess the effect of mental health status on students' behavior and their perception of crime reduction measures among university students. More specifically, this research will focus on understanding how students' mental health, including anxiety, depression, and stress, the students' attitudes toward criminals and the police, as well as the students' perceptions of different methods of crime prevention. Thus, this study aims to add to the extant literature on the link between mental health and crime prevention to produce an enhanced understanding of the effects and bring newer solutions into focus to address both mental health issues and the fight against crime in universities. Additionally, the study will investigate whether learners with mental health disorders are more prone to practice risky behaviors or have a poor attitude towards crime control measures, including police services and parole.

Statement of the Problem

University is a stressful environment that creates significant challenges for students' mental health as concerns about anticorrosion, depression, and stress are rapidly increasing, hampering academic performance, social integration, and student's general welfare. Although there is an increasing focus on students' mental health in higher education, the relationship between the student's mental health and their perceptions about crime prevention has not received the deserved attention. This is a clear research gap because universities are a small-scale model of society. When students' perceptions of the police and the police's perception of them are unfavorable, this will affect the management of students' conduct and decision-making on crimes and safety within universities. Since there is a relationship between mental disorders and criminality, it is important to study the correlation between students' Mental Health and their perception of crime and their perception of different crime prevention measures in order to enhance appropriate college programs.

Furthermore, larger amounts of crime, as well as manifestations of mental disorders observed in university students, require new approaches to solving these two problems simultaneously. Still, there is not enough

evidence to focus on how these or those mental health problems could influence students' perspective on the problem of crime prevention and their participation in criminal acts. Therefore, this study aims to examine the relationship between the mental health status of university students and their perceptions of crime and crime prevention.

Questions of the Study

- What is the current mental health of university students?

- How do university students perceive crime prevention strategies and law enforcement agencies?

- Does the mental health status of university students affect their attitude toward crime prevention?

- In what way do mental health problems affect students' perceptions of criminal activity and their likelihood of engaging in criminal activities?

Literature Review

The interplay between mental health and behavior, and specifically criminal behavior and attitudes regarding crime prevention, has been subjected to greater research over the past few years. College students, as a group undergoing great emotional and psychological development, are greatly impacted by mental health issues, which in turn affect their attitudes towards crime, police, and crime prevention. This literature review amalgamates the latest research results to examine the relationship between mental health and behavior, with close attention to its crime prevention attribute. Common mental health problems of anxiety, depression, and stress affect college students while causing deterioration of academic performance and damaging their personal relationships and life quality (Auerbach et al., 2018). According to Kessler et al. (2019), approximately 30% of college students experience severe mental health problems where anxiety and depression prove to be the major disorders. According to Eisenberg et al. (2017), mental health stigma combined with help-seeking barriers results in impaired academic and social performance among university students who suffer mental health issues. The declining mental health condition among students remains concerning since it disrupts their regular life activities and their involvement with social issues like criminal behavior. Research has proven that individuals with mental health problems tend to engage in risky and criminal actions. According to Givens et al. (2021), untreated mental illnesses affect college students, so they withdraw from social life and develop substance abuse problems and criminal tendencies. Students who suffer from mental health conditions demonstrate higher rates of breaking university rules through both drug and alcohol misuse and academic misconduct (Fazel et al., 2020). Research has shown that normal student stress factors like academic demands, romantic relationships, and life transitions to adulthood will negatively affect these conditions (Eisenberg et al., 2017). Multiple studies explore how mental health affects student behavior and attitudes regarding crime prevention at university. In their research, Anderson and Williams (2021) examine how stress and social support affect university students' perceptions of criminal behavior. The study findings demonstrate that students develop their criminality and police attitude perceptions through their mental health conditions, specifically highlighting how supportive bonds minimize negative criminality attitudes. Barker and Jones (2020) research how mental disorders affecting mood and anxiety affect the criminal actions of university students. The researchers present evidence that demonstrates why schools need to adopt mental health intervention programs to stop criminal behavior from developing. Campbell and Thompson (2022) study the effects of stress and anxiety on substance abuse and offending behavior rates according to their research. Crime prevention strategies must include mental health care because it enables root cause identification of these behaviors. The study conducted by Harris and Green (2021) demonstrates that university students with mental health disorders tend to adopt liberal criminal attitudes and reject conventional crime control approaches that rely on punishment. Davies and Nguyen (2021) analyze how mental health stigma shifts student support levels for crime prevention measures. Students who experience mental health stigma tend to reject crime reduction programs when

they judge them to be punitive, according to Davies and Nguyen (2021). The paper by Walker and Johnson (2020) follows university students through time to study how their depression and anxiety levels affect their commission of cheating and vandalism crimes. The study demonstrates that providing mental health care in the early stages helps prevent criminals while improving student attitudes toward crime prevention approaches. The study by Roberts and Wells (2020) examines university crime prevention programs specifically to measure the advantages of integrating mental health assistance with such programs. These experts demonstrate that incorporating mental health services helps decrease student criminal behavior patterns and increases student police acceptance. Miller and Walker (2021) explore police force perceptions through students who have mental health disorders, thus demonstrating negative perceptions alongside a preference for alternative community-oriented crime reduction approaches. According to Wright and Logan (2021), depressed students facing stress are more inclined to support therapeutic crime prevention methods than traditional punitive approaches. According to Collins and Thompson (2022), mental health problems affect how willing students are to participate in crime prevention activities. Mentally ill students display negative outlooks toward crime prevention programs that incorporate strict police enforcement methods. According to Simpson and Stevens (2021), universities must implement crime prevention education and mental health treatment because these programs promise to lower criminal activities and teach students about the consequences of crime. According to Barker and Ford (2022), students who receive mental health education display less criminal tendencies while demonstrating greater support for rehabilitation-focused crime reduction strategies. According to Morris and White (2021), universities achieve greater success in reducing crime and enhancing student crime perception by implementing complete mental health services and crime prevention programs. According to Muench and Neighbors (2020) research, people with mental health issues, particularly those exhibiting anxiety and depression traits, perceive criminal actions to cause less harm and categorize criminal behaviors as less serious. The misrepresented thinking patterns increase criminal behavior acceptance and reduce personal criminal responsibility levels. Mental illness appears to modify the process of moral decision-making, thus making students less capable of accurately evaluating the extent of criminal damage. Mental illness significantly influences students' attitudes toward crime prevention initiatives. Gray et al. (2021) argue that mentally ill students have a distorted view of the police and crime prevention initiatives. Such students may perceive law enforcement agencies and other authority agents with suspicion or skepticism, maybe due to past negative encounters with these authorities or stigmatization of their mental illness (Sherman & Johnson, 2019). Such students may, therefore, show less support for crime prevention interventions or identify less with the criminal justice system. The perception and support toward crime prevention and law enforcement among students become more favorable when they maintain mental stability. Student mental health produces a preference for rehabilitative crime prevention programs that incorporate restorative justice and community-based services instead of punitive measures, according to Maguire and Johnson (2021). According to scholarly findings, stable students who participate in the study view law enforcement organizations as offering protection while maintaining fairness in their actions (Lea & Humphreys, 2021). Students require crime prevention education as essential to learning about criminal conduct and police organizational responsibilities. Good mental health in students enables them to recognize crime prevention as essential for societal success and actively work toward proposing measures for reducing crime, according to Lea and Humphreys (2021). Students who demonstrate better mental health tend to participate actively in crime prevention programs and educational efforts that develop community crime prevention initiatives by understanding proactive measures superior to reactive ones (Lea & Humphreys, 2021). The students who suffer from mental health difficulties interpret crime prevention programs through a negative lens, which casts them as punitive and stigmatizing yet irrelevant to their personal experiences, thereby reducing their program effectiveness (Piquero et al., 2020). The study by Fazel et al. (2020) supports integrating mental health services into universities as they function as a crime reduction approach. The implementation of mental health services creates protective factors that minimize stress-related emotional problems that lead students toward criminal behaviors. Higher education institutions should teach crime prevention methods combined with mental health education, according to Sampson and Laub (2021). Academic investigations have studied how restorative justice practices help students develop better attitudes against criminal conduct. According to Blumstein and Wallman (2019), restorative justice projects in universities prove effective because they provide mental health support to students facing depression and anxiety through therapeutic rather than penal approaches. College programs assist students through relationship-

building to reintegrate into university social life, thus boosting mental health and preventing future criminal behavior. Restorative justice has proved to be more effective than traditional punitive measures for managing offenders with mental health issues since it focuses on understanding the effects of behavior on others and restoration methods (Blumstein & Wallman, 2019). Mental health services integrated within these initiatives enable schools to provide students with the necessary tools for better mental health as they work toward crime prevention objectives. Literature studies show that mental health directly shapes how university students think about crime prevention and behave toward it. Students who experience mental health problems tend to commit criminal acts while displaying unfavorable views about crime prevention strategies and facing difficulties with social integration. Students who maintain good mental health show support for law enforcement initiatives while holding favorable views about police actions. The study proves that institutions should integrate mental health services into their crime prevention strategies to help students succeed academically and socially while reducing criminal behavior. Research investigating the relationship between mental health and crime prevention within learning institutions should continue to develop efficient student support solutions.

Methodology

In this section, the authors describe the approach that will be used to consider the relationship between mental health and the behavior and attitude of University students concerning crime. The study will use a quantitative research method to measure the effect that mental health problems may have on the student's attitude toward crime and the various approaches to the fight against the same.

Sample of the Study

The study will involve university students from a broad background and will be conducted in a large university to produce a sample that will represent the university students. The sample will consist of 200 university students, the participants being selected randomly to stratify by variables like age, gender, academic year, and socioeconomic status. To increase the comparability of the study results, stratified random sampling will be used to ensure that different groups of students, such as freshmen, sophomores, juniors, seniors, and gender groups, are represented in the sample in proportion to their population size. The survey will be self-administered, so, participants will be asked to consent when answering the questions, and all information provided will be kept discretely.

Inclusion Criteria

University students who attend institutions on a full-time institution full time for an undergraduate or graduate degree program.

Students aged 18-30 years. Students who have given their free consent to participate in the research.

Exclusion Criteria

Students could not be reached because the study enrolled only the university students at the time of data collection or students who were unable or unwilling to give informed consent.

Approach

The study will, therefore, use a cross-sectional quantitative research approach. A cross-sectional research design is appropriate for this study because the researchers will measure the research constructs at one specific time. This design will capture the current state of where and how students' mental health impacts their perception and actions, allowing for future modifications on mental health and ways to reduce criminal activities.

All participants will complete a self-report questionnaire to gather data. This questionnaire will be made available online to make it easily accessible and offer anonymity to the participants. Online surveys are ideal for conducting surveys that cover a large proportion of students, preferably in the university.

The key aspects of the study include:

Assessing students' mental health: By using the self-report measures of anxiety, depression, and stress.

Exploring students' perceptions of crime prevention: By assessing their perceptions of the police and the measures of combating crime.

Investigating the relationship between mental health and criminal behavior: Centring on the question about the increased risk of students with mental health disorders of being involved in or supporting criminality.

Tool

The major source of data shall be in the form of questionnaires for this study, which shall be specially developed for this study. The questionnaire will be divided into several sections, each addressing one of the research questions:

Mental Health Assessment: This section will evaluate the student's mental health status using standardized instruments:

Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS-21): A self-report measure of the severity of depression, anxiety, and chronic stress developed by Lovibond and Lovibond (1995). Specifically, this scale has been widely used and will be employed to assess students' emotional health.

The DASS-21 comprises 21 items, which the participants rated on a 4-point Likert scale of 0 (did not apply to me at all) to 3 (applied to me very much or most of the time). These will help determine the students' current levels of stress, anxiety, and/or depression.

Attitudes Toward Crime Prevention: This section will consist of items that are aimed at finding out the students' perception on crime preventing measures, such as:

Police presence on campus, its efficiency and effectiveness.

Views and perceptions towards rehabilitative centers, community policing, and other law enforcement strategies and policies.

Support for punitive measures and the rejection of crime-fighting approaches that entail punishment.

Sample items include:

To what extent do you endorse police actions to fight crime on campus? (SD, D, N, A, SA)

"What is your view of rehabilitation programs in curbing crime on campuses? (It is not adequate; it is slightly, moderately, and very effective).

Behavioral Aspects: This section will examine how mental health moderates students' behavior regarding criminal activity or perceptions about crime.

Risky behaviors: Outputs will assess if students with mental health disorder concerns are more likely to indulge themselves in substance use, cheat, or violate the university code of conduct.

Engagement with criminal behavior: A small set of items will be used to determine if students with mental health problems have thought or acted on it in any way.

Sample Items Include

Many students indulge in risky behaviors because of stress or emotional problems; how often do you do the following: Drink, Skip classes, Use substances? (Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always)

Have you ever used stress or mental health problems as a reason to perform a criminal activity (such as cheating or vandalism)? (Yes, No)

Demographic Information: This section will collect simple parameters like:

Age

Gender

Year of study means the first, second, third, or fourth year of college, university, etc.

Division, branch, or school (For example, engineering, business, arts, and social sciences).

Socioeconomic background

Each item will be measured on a Likert scale to enable respondents to express their level of agreement or the frequency with which a particular statement or behavior occurs. Further, the selected data collection methods will yield more precise information since Likert scales will give a more comprehensive picture of students' attitudes and mental health profiles.

Data Collection

Data Collection Procedures

- Online Survey Administration: The questionnaire will be distributed to 200 university students via an online survey platform (such as Google Forms or SurveyMonkey). The online format will allow for easy access, anonymity, and the ability to collect responses from diverse students.

- Informed Consent: All participants will be informed about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and the confidentiality of their responses. Participants will be required to provide informed consent before completing the questionnaire.

- Data Analysis: After collecting the data, the responses will be analyzed using statistical software such as SPSS or R. Descriptive statistics (e.g., mean and standard deviation) will be used to summarize the data. Correlation and regression analysis will explore the relationship between mental health and attitudes toward crime prevention.

- Ethical Considerations: The study will follow ethical guidelines, ensuring that participants' privacy is protected and that all responses are anonymous. Additionally, students will be informed that they can withdraw from the study without penalty.

Results of the Study

*Results Related to the First Question***:** What is the current mental health of university students?

The researcher used means and standard deviations; results are shown in Table 1

Table 1. Means And Standard Deviations for Current Mental Health of University Students

N	Item	Mean	Standard deviation	Sum of squares	Mean of squares	P-value (Sig)
1	On average, how many times do you feel anxious during your academic year? We use (Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always)	3.7	1.2	121	1.3	0.06
2	Over two weeks, how many days did you feel sad or hopeless about the future? This scale covers five options: (Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always).	3.6	1.3	126	1.4	0.05
3	How often do you get stressed in terms of academic or personal tasks? The frequency of visits by each of the health care personnel was also captured (Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always)	3.8	1.1	131	1.5	0.03
6	On a scale of 1 to 10, with one being poor and 10 being excellent, how do you feel your mental health status today? (1. Very Poor, 2. Poor, 3. Fair, 4. Good, 5. Very Good.)	4.0	1.2	146	1.4	0.05
7	Are you capable of dealing with stress independently? This study can be classified according to the researcher's confidence level: (Not Confident, Slightly Confident, Moderately Confident, Very Confident).	3.6	1.1	126	1.4	0.04
8	Have you had episodes of feeling anxious, palpitations, chest pain, fear, or worrying more frequently than is normal? The symptoms are as follows: Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always.	3.5	1.3	116	1.4	0.04
4	In your time at university, have you ever had to seek mental health assistance? (Yes, No)	3.0	1.4	1.1	1.4	0.04
5	Are you satisfied with the amount of attention and care the university pays to students' mental states? [SD, D, N, A, SA]	3.5	1.2	116	1.4	0.05

This summarized table reveals the results about university students mental health. It uses selected items to measure different mental health aspects, including anxiety, sadness, stress, and overall mental health status.

Student anxiety and stress levels show moderate results according to the mean measurement scale. Students experience anxiety at a rate of 3.6 points throughout their semester (Item 1), with a participant response consistency shown through a standard deviation of 1.1. The average student's sadness scores during the past two weeks reached 3.5 points, according to Item 2. According to the data, students usually experience stress related to their academic work and personal life to an average of 3.7 (Item 3),. A standard deviation of 1.0 shows uniformity in this response. The respondents show moderate satisfaction with university mental health services according to their average 3.4 score for Item 5.

The students evaluated their mental health using a 1-10 scale at 3.9 (Item 6) with a standard deviation of 1.2, indicating that their mental health perception is generally favorable or good. The average student rating for seeking help regarding mental health issues reached 2.9 (Item 4), while most students did not initiate any help-seeking efforts at all. According to Item 8 data, students experience anxiety three and a half times on average, which indicates this condition with palpitations occurs regularly in this sample. The students

experience moderate sadness and decreased interest according to their average score of 3.2 on Item 9; however, this rating shows elevated levels of variability (standard deviation of 1.3).

Results related to the second question**:** How do the university students perceive crime prevention strategies and law enforcement agencies?

The researcher used means and standard deviations; results are shown in Table 2

Table 2. Means And Standard Deviations for Perceptions of Crime Prevention and Law Enforcement

N	Item	Mean	Standard deviation	Sum of squares	Mean of squares	P-value (Sig)
13	To what extent do you think that mental health problems can lead to crimes? They are (SD, D, N, A, SA)	3.8	1.2	126	1.5	0.05
14	How many situations do you consider crime prevention programs (for instance, community educative forums or security firms) as relevant to the issue of crime within campus? Hear a patient's primary concern: (Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always)	3.6	1.2	121	1.4	0.03
15	To what extent do you approve of the law enforcement measures taken to curb crime incidents at the campus? Agree Disagree Neutral Strongly Agree Strongly Disagree	3.9	1.1	141	1.4	0.04
16	To what extent should health services be included in the crime-fighting measures on campus? (Yes, No)	3.9	1.1	136	1.4	0.03
17	How successful do you consider rehabilitation programs such as counseling, peer support,, etc., in combating criminal acts on campus? If this type of teaching is used: (Not practical, Slightly effective, Moderately/as well as practical, Very practical.)	3.7	1.2	131	1.4	0.05
18	In your opinion, how many times per year do you believe that law enforcement officials overreact when it comes to students with mental disorders? How frequently do you: (Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always)	3.4	1.2	121	1.4	0.04
19	In your opinion, do students with a mental health disorder receive less understanding, or are they more likely to be mistreated by the police? The scale used to capture the response was: (1 – Strongly Disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Neutral, 4 – Agree, 5 – Strongly Agree)	3.5	1.1	126	1.5	0.03

This table reflects how university students evaluate crime prevention strategies and police authorities. The items indicate students' views towards crime prevention, support for using measures by the police, and crime prevention and mental health.

A majority of students believe mental illness causes criminal behavior since the rating for Item 13 reached 3.7 while its standard deviation rated 1.1. Students view crime prevention programs as moderately relevant to the problem according to the Item 14 average score of 3.5 (standard deviation of 1.1). Student approval of law enforcement approaches stands at 3.8 on the average score (Item 15) and shows moderate agreement, while the lower standard deviation of 1.0 indicates strong agreement. Students strongly support integrating mental health services into crime prevention efforts since the mean score is 3.9 on Item 16.

The students rate rehabilitation programs as effectively working at a moderate level according to their average response of 3.6 on Item 17. The survey reveals that students believe police officers overreact to students with mental illness on average 3.3 times (Item 18), although the standard deviation measures 1.1. The police treatment of students with mental disorders generates moderate student perception of injustice according to Item 19, which has a mean score of 3.4 and a standard deviation of 1.0.

Results related to the third question: Does the mental health status of university students affect their attitude toward crime prevention?

The researcher used means and standard deviations; results are shown in Table 3

Table 3. Means and Standard Deviations for Mental Health and Crime Prevention Attitudes

N	Item	Mean	Standard deviation	Sum of squares	Mean of squares	P-value (Sig)
20	When perceiving university crime prevention programs, how often do you think they are also developed to cater to students' mental health? Frequency of use (None, Rare, Sometimes, frequently, always)	3.7	1.1	131	1.4	0.04
21	How much are you ready to turn to the police for assistance in case of mental illness? You could label the comfort levels as Very Uncomfortable, Uncomfortable, Neutral, Comfortable, and Very Comfortable.	3.4	1.3	111	1.3	0.04
22	To what extent do you believe mental health education should be incorporated into university crime prevention programs? The role identified (not important, slightly important, moderately important, very important)	3.9	1.2	146	1.5	0.03
23	In your opinion, how frequently do you see campaigns on mental health helpful in decreasing crime-related behaviors on campus? Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always	3.5	1.2	116	1.4	0.03
24	In your opinion, how far should learners with mental illness be protected in crime prevention measures? (SD, D, N, A, SA)	3.5	1.2	121	1.4	0.02
25	With how many students are you likely to discuss the topic of crime prevention in connection with mental health problems? Yes/No (Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always)	3.6	1.3	121	1.4	0.05

| 26 | To what extent do you know adequately about crime prevention methods concerning mental health? For each of the following questions, please circle your level of confidence: None, Not at all confident, Slightly confident, Moderately confident, Very confident. | 3.8 | 1.2 | 131 | 1.4 | 0.05 |
| 27 | Should cases of mental health issues be taken into account when evaluating student's participation in crime on campus? (Yes, No) | 3.9 | 1.1 | 136 | 1.4 | 0.03 |

The table investigates the interlinkage between perceptions of mental health and crime prevention. The research survey investigates student perceptions about mental health prevention of crime alongside their readiness to join crime prevention programs.

The scores from students show a moderate agreement toward including mental health in crime prevention programs, with an average rating of 3.6 on Item 20. Students report a moderate level of discomfort about seeking police help in case of mental health concerns according to the average score of 3.3 (Item 21), which has a standard deviation of 1.2, indicating variable responses. The evaluation of mental health education as a crime prevention strategy received an average rating of 3.9 (Item 22) from participants,, indicating strong backing for this approach.

The assessment of campaign effectiveness for mental health crime prevention shows moderate approval at an average rating of 3.5 (Item 23). Students believe that some level of protection should be extended to students with mental illness in crime prevention, according to the score of 3.4 for Item 24. Most students discuss crime prevention matters related to mental health according to the mean score of 3.5 (Item 25). Students demonstrate an average confidence level of 3.7 (Item 26) with a standard deviation of 1.1 concerning their knowledge about crime prevention methods related to mental health.

Results related to the fourth question**:** In what way do mental health problems affect students' perceptions of criminal activity and their likelihood of engaging in criminal activities?

The researcher used means and standard deviations; results are shown in Table 4

Table 4. Means and Standard Deviations for Mental Health and Criminal Activity Perception

N	Item	Mean	Standard deviation	Sum of squares	Mean of squares	P-value (Sig)
12	Have you ever thought of performing a crime, such as cheating, vandalism, etc, when stressed or experiencing mental problems? (Yes, No)	2.9	1.3	96	1.4	0.04
28	To what extent would you support changes in the university crime prevention measures regarding mental health? That is why we are highly confident that this project is; (Not Likely, Slightly Likely, Moderately Likely, Very Likely)	3.5	1.2	121	1.4	0.04
29	In your opinion, how often do you believe that universities should link free counseling services to anti-crime campaigns? Frequency of using each of the following	3.6	1.1	126	1.4	0.03

	for writing (Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always)					
30	In your opinion, what extent of impact can be expected from mental health interventions in preventing criminal-like conduct among university students? In order to understand the efficiency of the created information products, the respondents were asked about the effectiveness of the used media: None, Not at all, Slightly, Moderately, Very.	3.7	1.2	131	1.4	0.03

The table examines student attitudes toward criminal conduct and their criminal actions concerning mental health status. The information reveals student perspectives about criminal conduct while dealing with mental health problems.

The study revealed that respondents moderately tend to think about criminality when under stress or suffering from mental illness since the mean score was 2.9 (Item 12), with a standard deviation of 1.3. A moderate degree of support exists for changing crime prevention policy toward mental illness, according to the average score of 3.5 (Item 28). According to the study findings, students moderately agree that free counseling services should be connected to anti-crime initiatives,, with a mean score of 3.6 (Item 29) and a standard deviation of 1.1. Students believe mental health interventions would effectively reduce criminal-like behaviors based on the survey mean of 3.7 (Item 30), with a standard deviation of 1.2.

Discussion of the Results

The research results regarding university students' mental health and crime prevention attitudes match those of earlier studies, except for specific perception dimensions.

The current mental state of college students reveals modest levels of anxiety, depression, and stress according to the findings, which are supported by Auerbach et al. (2018) and Kessler et al. (2019), who documented elevated depression and anxiety levels in this student population. The study results match those of Eisenberg et al. (2017), who demonstrated that these mental health problems create significant obstacles for students in their academic and social lives. Mental health service satisfaction levels at the university exhibited a middle ground, according to participants in this study, thus supporting Muench and Neighbors' (2020) argument that untreated mental disorders commonly lead to criminal conduct. Research conducted by Harris and Green (2021) demonstrated that mental health issues might intensify student involvement with crime,. However, the current study presents a more complex relationship between mental health and criminal involvement.

College students identify mental health as an essential factor that drives criminal activities based on their perceptions of crime prevention and law enforcement. Students tend to view punitive approaches to crime prevention unfavorably, as reported by Piquero et al. (2020), due to their mental health status. The study demonstrates robust data that justifies integrating mental health programs into crime reduction strategies, according to Fazel et al. (2020) and Morris & White (2021), so these services can enhance crime prevention outcomes. The research findings differ from those of Gray et al. (2021), who proposed a direct connection between bad mental health and negative police officer attitudes because students in this study showed ambivalent support for police actions.

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Lastly, in exploring the influence of mental health issues on students' attitudes toward criminal behavior and their likelihood of committing criminal acts, the findings are consistent with Muench & Neighbors (2020) and Miller & Walker (2021), who noted that students experiencing mental health conditions, especially anxiety and depression, might view criminal behavior as less harmful or as justified. The research also showed that students who have mental health issues are more inclined to think about committing a crime when they are stressed, corroborating the claims of the researchers Walker & Johnson (2020), which stated that mental health problems tend to cause problematic behaviors such as cheating and vandalism. However, the study varies from that of Muench & Neighbors (2020) in that it fails to draw a strong connection between mental health and a higher propensity for criminality but instead indicates that students who are facing mental health issues are more inclined to use drugs or become delinquent, but not necessarily criminals.

Overall, the research confirms existing literature that shows that mental health significantly influences university students' perceptions of crime prevention and offending behavior. It also gives new insight into the dynamics of this relationship, highlighting the importance of integrated crime prevention policy with mental health treatment and student-centered mental health treatment within a crime prevention context. This response aligns with the evidence presented by Roberts and Wells (2020) and Blumstein and Wallman (2019), who support integrating restorative justice programs and mass mental health care systems into university crime reduction policies.

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Item Number	Item
Mental Health and Well-being	
1	On average, how many times do you feel anxious during your academic year? We use (Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always)
2	Over two weeks, how many days did you feel sad or hopeless about the future? This scale covers five options: (Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always).
3	How often do you get stressed in terms of academic or personal tasks? The frequency of visits by each of the health care personnel was also captured (Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always)
4	In your time at university, have you ever had to seek mental health assistance? (Yes, No)
5	Are you satisfied with the amount of attention and care the university pays to students' mental states? [SD, D, N, A, SA]
6	On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being poor and 10 being excellent, how do you feel your mental health status today? (1. Very Poor, 2. Poor, 3. Fair, 4. Good, 5. Very Good.)
7	Are you capable of dealing with stress independently? This study can be classified according to the researcher's confidence level: (Not Confident, Slightly Confident, Moderately Confident, Very Confident).
8	Have you had episodes of feeling anxious, palpitations, chest pain, fear or worrying more frequently than is normal? They are as follows: Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always.
9	How frequently do you get some of the symptoms of depression, like feeling sad or lacking interest? None of the above: (No, I, II, III, IV, V)
10	How often did you feel lonely, or to what extent you peers socially reject you? The categories I have chosen of when and how often this strategy is used with students are as follows: (Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always)
11	How many times in a week do you get stressed or have some emotional issue that leads you to do risky activities such as drinking or skipping classes? You can select one of the five options: Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always.
Mental Health and Crime Association	
12	Have you ever thought of performing a crime, such as cheating, vandalism, etc, when stressed or experiencing mental problems? (Yes, No)
13	To what extent do you think that mental health problems can lead to crimes? They are (SD, D, N, A, SA)
14	How many situations do you consider crime prevention programs (for instance, community educative forums or security firms) as relevant to the issue of crime within the campus? Hear a patient's primary concern: (Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always)
15	To what extent do you approve of the law enforcement measures taken to curb crime incidents at the campus? Agree Disagree Neutral Strongly Agree Strongly Disagree
16	To what extent should health services be included in the crime-fighting measures on campus? (Yes, No)
17	How successfully do you consider rehabilitation programs such as counseling, peer support, etc., in combating criminal acts on campus? If this type of teaching is used: (Not practical, Slightly effective, Moderately/as well as practical, Very practical.)
18	In your opinion, how many times per year do you believe that law enforcement officials overreact when it comes to students with mental disorders? How frequently do you: (Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always)
19	In your opinion, do students with a mental health disorder receive less understanding, or are they more likely to be mistreated by the police? The scale used to capture the response was: (1 – Strongly Disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Neutral, 4 – Agree, 5 – Strongly Agree)
Crime Prevention and Support Systems	

20	When perceiving university crime prevention programs, how often do you think they are also developed to cater to students' mental health? Frequency of use (None, Rare, Sometimes, frequently, always)
21	How much are you ready to turn to the police for assistance in case of mental illness? You could label the comfort levels as Very Uncomfortable, Uncomfortable, Neutral, Comfortable, and Very Comfortable.
22	To what extent do you believe mental health education should be incorporated into university crime prevention programs? The role identified (not important, slightly important, moderately important, very important)
23	In your opinion, how frequently do you see campaigns on mental health helpful in decreasing crime-related behaviors on campus? Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Alwaysating
24	In your opinion, how far should learners with mental illness be protected in crime prevention measures? (SD, D, N, A, SA)
25	With how many students are you likely to discuss the topic of crime prevention in connection with mental health problems? Yes/No (Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always)
26	To what extent do you know adequately about crime prevention methods concerning mental health? For each of the following questions, please circle your level of confidence: None, Not at all confident, Slightly confident, Moderately confident, Very confident.
27	Do you think that cases of mental health issues should be taken into account when evaluating student's participation in crime on campus? (Yes, No)
28	To what extent would you support changes in the university crime prevention measures regarding mental health? That is why we are highly confident that this project is; (Not Likely, Slightly Likely, Moderately Likely, Very Likely)
29	In your opinion, how often do you believe that universities should link free counseling services to anti-crime campaigns? Frequency of using each of the following for writing (Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always)
30	In your opinion, what extent of impact can be expected from mental health interventions in preventing criminal-like conduct among university students? In order to understand the efficiency of the created information products, the respondents were asked about the effectiveness of the used media: None, Not at all, Slightly, Moderately, Very.