
**A PSYCHOANALYTIC STUDY OF WORK STRESS, DEFENCE
MECHANISMS AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING AMONG STAFF
MEMBERS OF VIDHYADEEP UNIVERSITY**

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Article Received: 24 December 2025, Article Revised: 13 January 2026, Published on: 02 February 2026

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DOI: <https://doi-doi.org/101555/ijarp.9545>

ABSTRACT

The present study examines work stress, defence mechanisms, and emotional well-being among staff members of Vidhyadeep University using a psychoanalytic perspective. Psychoanalytic theory explains that stress often activates unconscious conflicts, and individuals attempt to reduce anxiety by employing defence mechanisms. A descriptive survey method was adopted for this study. The sample consisted of 60 staff members (teaching and non-teaching) selected through random sampling. Data were collected using a Work Stress Scale (self-developed), a Defence Mechanism Inventory (standard tool), and an Emotional Well-Being Scale (standard tool). Statistical techniques such as mean, standard deviation, percentage analysis, Pearson correlation, and independent sample t-test were used. Findings showed that most staff members had moderate levels of work stress. Commonly used defence mechanisms were rationalization, denial, and displacement. A negative correlation was found between work stress and emotional well-being, indicating that higher stress is associated with lower emotional well-being. The study highlights the importance of staff counselling and emotional support programs at the university level.

KEYWORDS: Psychoanalytic, approach, Work stress, Defence mechanisms, Emotional well-being, University staff.

1. INTRODUCTION

University staff contribute significantly to academic growth, administration, and student development. However, staff members often experience occupational stress due to workload,

time pressure, documentation, institutional expectations, and interpersonal challenges. Stress not only affects productivity but also influences emotional balance and social functioning.

From a psychoanalytic perspective, stress is not only due to external events but is also connected with internal emotional conflicts. Freud's psychoanalytic theory explains that when anxiety increases, the ego uses defence mechanisms to protect the individual from psychological discomfort. Defence mechanisms such as rationalization, denial, repression, and displacement can help manage distress temporarily. However, prolonged stress and frequent use of defence patterns may reduce emotional well-being. Therefore, the present study attempts to understand work stress and emotional well-being of staff members through the lens of defence mechanisms.

2. NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is significant because it highlights the psychological impact of workplace demands on university staff. Stress among staff members may influence job satisfaction, interpersonal relations, and overall work performance. Psychoanalytic interpretation provides deeper understanding by explaining unconscious coping patterns and defence mechanisms used to handle stress and anxiety. The findings may help institutions design staff welfare, counselling, and emotional well-being initiatives.

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

“A Psychoanalytic Study of Work Stress, Defence Mechanisms and Emotional Well-Being Among Staff Members of Vidhyadeep University”

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- 1) To identify the level of work stress among staff members.
- 2) To study the major defence mechanisms used by staff.
- 3) To assess emotional well-being among staff members.
- 4) To find the relationship between work stress and emotional well-being.
- 5) To find the relationship between defence mechanisms and emotional well-being.
- 6) To compare work stress between male and female staff members.
- 7) To compare emotional well-being between male and female staff members.

5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1) What is the level of work stress among staff members?
- 2) Which defense mechanisms are commonly used?

- 3) What is the emotional well-being level among staff?
- 4) Is there any relationship between work stress and emotional well-being?
- 5) Do male and female staff differ in stress and emotional well-being?

6. HYPOTHESES

H1: There is a significant relationship between work stress and emotional well-being.

H2: There is a significant relationship between defence mechanisms and emotional well-being.

H3: There is a significant difference in work stress between male and female staff members.

H4: There is a significant difference in emotional well-being between male and female staff members.

7. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE (Brief)

Previous research indicates that workplace pressure contributes to anxiety, reduced job satisfaction, and burnout. Psychoanalytic studies suggest that individuals under stress unconsciously use defence mechanisms such as denial, rationalization, repression, and projection. While these defences can be helpful in the short term, excessive dependence on immature defence styles may negatively affect mental health and emotional well-being. Hence, psychoanalytic analysis provides a deeper understanding of staff adjustment and coping behaviour patterns.

8. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

8.1 Research Method

Descriptive Survey Method.

8.2 Population

All teaching and non-teaching staff members of Vidhyadeep University.

8.3 Sample

A sample of 60 staff members (30 male and 30 female) from Vidhyadeep University.

8.4 Sampling Technique

Simple Random Sampling.

8.5 Tools for Data Collection

- 1) Work Stress Scale (Self-developed)
- 2) Defense Mechanism Inventory (Standardized)
- 3) Emotional Well-Being Scale (Standardized)
- 4) Personal Information Sheet (Gender, Age, Experience, Department)

8.6 Statistical Techniques Used

- Mean
- Standard Deviation
- Percentage Analysis
- Pearson's Correlation Coefficient (r)
- Independent Sample t-test (Male vs Female comparison)

9. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

9.1 Level of Work Stress

Table 1.

| Stress Level | Frequency (N) | Percentage (%) |
|--------------|---------------|----------------|
| Low | 12 | 20.00 |
| Moderate | 34 | 56.67 |
| High | 14 | 23.33 |

Interpretation: The majority of staff members were found to have moderate work stress.

9.2 Common Defense Mechanisms

Table 2.

| Defence Mechanism | High Use (%) |
|-------------------|--------------|
| Rationalization | 65 |
| Denial | 52 |
| Displacement | 48 |
| Projection | 40 |
| Repression | 38 |

Interpretation: Rationalization and denial were frequently reported defence mechanisms among staff.

9.3 Correlation Between Stress and Emotional Well-Being

Table 3

| Variables | Pearson r | Result |
|------------------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Work Stress & Emotional Well-Being | -0.62 | Significant |

Interpretation: Work stress shows a negative relationship with emotional well-being.

9.4 t-test Analysis (Male vs Female)

Independent sample t-test was applied to compare male and female staff members on work stress and emotional well-being.

A) t-test for Work Stress (Male vs Female)

Table 4

| Group | N | Mean | SD | df | t-value | Result |
|--------|----|-------|------|----|---------|---------------------|
| Male | 30 | 52.40 | 6.10 | 58 | 2.15 | Significant at 0.05 |
| Female | 30 | 55.60 | 5.30 | | | |

Interpretation: There is a significant difference in work stress between male and female staff members.

B) t-test for Emotional Well-Being (Male vs Female)

Table 5

| Group | N | Mean | SD | df | t-value | Result |
|--------|----|-------|------|----|---------|---------------------|
| Male | 30 | 68.20 | 7.40 | 58 | 1.98 | Significant at 0.05 |
| Female | 30 | 71.50 | 6.90 | | | |

Interpretation: There is a significant difference in emotional well-being between male and female staff members.

10. MAJOR FINDINGS

- Most staff members reported moderate work stress.
- Rationalization, denial, and displacement were commonly used defense mechanisms.
- Work stress and emotional well-being were negatively correlated ($r = -0.62$).
- Male and female staff members showed significant difference in work stress.
- Male and female staff members showed significant difference in emotional well-being.

11. CONCLUSION

The present study concludes that staff members of Vidhyadeep University experience noticeable work stress, mostly at a moderate level. Psychoanalytic interpretation suggests that staff unconsciously adopt defence mechanisms to manage anxiety arising from workplace demands. Although defence mechanisms help maintain temporary balance, prolonged stress reduces emotional well-being. Therefore, universities should promote mental health support and stress management initiatives for staff members.

12. EDUCATIONAL / INSTITUTIONAL IMPLICATIONS

- Staff counselling and mental health support services should be made available.
- Stress management and emotional well-being workshops should be organized regularly.
- Supportive administration and healthy communication can improve adjustment.
- Early identification of burnout symptoms can prevent long-term psychological distress.

13. LIMITATIONS

- The study is limited to Vidhyadeep University staff only.
- Sample size was limited to 60 participants.
- Self-report measures may lead to response bias.
- The study used survey tools; qualitative psychoanalytic interviews were not conducted.

14. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- A comparative study between teaching and non-teaching staff can be conducted.
- Studies with larger samples from multiple universities can improve generalization.
- Qualitative interviews can provide deeper psychoanalytic insights.
- Intervention studies can examine the effectiveness of stress reduction programs.

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