

Residential Crowding, Perceived Control and Subjective Well-being among Students Staying in Hostel Dormitory

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The present study investigated the intervening role of perceived control in the relationship between crowding and well-being of the students. The study has been carried out on 448 students staying in hostel dormitories of Pondicherry University. The variables studied were residential crowding, perceived control and subjective well-being. It was hypothesized that residential crowding negatively influences subjective wellbeing, also perceived control positively influences subjective wellbeing. In addition, it was also hypothesized that residential crowding influences subjective wellbeing through perceived control. The findings of the correlational analysis indicate that crowding has a significant, negative relationship with subjective wellbeing and perceived control. Also, perceived control has a significant, positive contribution towards subjective wellbeing. Moreover, the mediation analysis shows that there is a partial mediation by perceived control on the relationship between crowding and subjective wellbeing. The findings have been discussed in corroboration with related literature.

Keywords: Crowding, Control, Subjective Well-being, Mediation

Nowadays, the scientific attention in crowding has increased due to the increase in population density and urbanization. Crowding is the psychological aspect of population density, which causes tremendous influence on the physical as well as mental health of individuals (Gifford, 1987). Nagar (2006) defined crowding as a multifaceted experience of a person in reaction to density related factors. Generally, the experience of crowding depends on the availability of space (Freedman, 1975), previous crowding experience (Jain, 1997), close physical proximity (Worchel & Teddlie, 1976), overload and unwanted interactions (Baum & Valins, 1977). Nagar and Paulus (1997) through factor analysis revealed four distinct components of crowding experience such as space satisfaction, positive relationship, negative relationship, and uncontrolled disturbance. All these four components predict the psychological wellbeing, and affect of the inhabitants (Nagar & Paulus, 1997). The present research also analyzed crowding based on these four components.

Crowding has a negative impact on different aspects of human behavior. Some studies

reveal that crowding is associated with adverse emotional and health problems (Kamal & Jain, 1984; Nagar, 1985), social withdrawal (Lepore, Merritt, Kawasaki & Mancuso, 1990) and poor social relationships (Gove, Huges & Galle, 1979). But, there is not much attempt to examine the role of intervening variables in the relationship of crowding with outcome variables as mentioned above. Therefore, the researchers in the present study have attempted to identify the mediating role of perceived control in crowding-wellbeing relation.

Crowding and Subjective Well-being

Crowding experience in one's residential settings may have a lot of negative impact on an individual's health, emotional state and social behavior (Baum & Valins, 1977; Cox, Paulus & McCain, 1984). Earlier researches conducted in dormitories reported that tenants living in crowded dormitories experience helplessness behavior, social withdrawal (Evans, Lepore, & Schroeder, 1996), social overload (McCarthy & Saegert, 1978), psychological and emotional distress (Giel & Ormel, 1977; Neethu & Sia,