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STRESSORS CONTRIBUTING TO ACADEMIC STRESS: A STUDY ON SENIOR SECONDARY STUDENTS IN UDAIPUR CITY

Abstract

Every one of us has experienced stress in his/her life. Stress is a state or emotion that a person experiences when they perceive that demands exceed the amount of personal and social resources, they are able to mobilise. The concept of stress was initially introduced to the life sciences by Hans Selye in 1936. It is a belief derived from natural science. One of the important factors that plays a key role in many ideologies is how a person reacts to a situation. The psychological ability to deal with a challenging professional, social, or vocational environment determines one's capacity for handling stress. If stress is not properly managed, it can have both beneficial and bad effects on academic institutions. Academic institutions have different work environments than non-academic ones, therefore it makes sense that the signs, triggers, and effects of stress would vary between the two environments. Stress seems to be a major part of life for college students. Senior secondary students are cautious and focused on developing their careers. The decision to attend college holds a dual desire: first, to land a well-regarded career; and second, to reach a higher level of academic achievement in order to gain status in society. They experience stress, anxiety, and a variety of other bodily ailments as a result of their level of expectation in accomplishing their intended goals. The study aims to assess the various sources of stress through the study conducted on senior secondary students.

Keywords: Academic Stress, Career, Stressors, Professional

Introduction

We have all dealt with stress at some point in our lives. When a person believes that demands surpass the amount of personal and social resources, they are able to mobilize, stress is a condition or feeling that is experienced. Hans Selye introduced the idea of stress to the life sciences for the first time in 1936. It is a notion that was taken from natural science. The way a person responds to a circumstance is among the crucial elements that have a significant place in numerous philosophies. One's capacity for managing stress is based on their psychological capacity to deal with an adverse professional, social, or occupational environment

Pascal (1992) defines stress in terms of perceived environmental situation which threatens the gratification of needs. When a person faces a stressful event, his or her body responds by activating the nervous system. There are certain hormonal reactions activated in the body that results in releasing hormones such as adrenalin and cortisol. These hormones cause physical changes in the body which results in reacting quickly and effectively to get

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through the stressful situation. This is sometimes called the 'fight or flight' response. The hormones increase our heart rate, breathing, blood pressure, metabolism and muscle tension. Our pupil widens and our perspiration rate increases. While these physical changes help us try to meet the challenges of the stressful situation, they can cause other physical or psychological symptoms if the stress is ongoing and the physical changes don't settle down. On the other hand, stressor is a situation or event that causes us to feel stressed. They can be internal or external factors, like our memories, environment, or the people around us. They're also very personal; a significant source of stress for one person might cause no stress for another. In the various categories of stress, the discussion of academic stress holds a prominent position. Academic stress is emotional anxiety caused by anticipated setbacks that could lead to academic failure or even the unawareness of such failures. Students must contend with a variety of academic obligations, such as school exams, in-class discussions, demonstrating academic progress, inadequate knowledge, etc.

Components of Academic Stress

Stress in academic institutions can have both positive and negative consequences if not well managed. Academic institutions have different work settings compared to non-academic and therefore one would expect the difference in symptoms, causes, and consequences of stress in the two set up. Stress seems to be very common in college student's life. Students at senior secondary are cautious and keen towards their career building. The option of choosing degree college hold a two-way desire ie to get a job of high repute and second is to achieve a higher standard of academic excellence in order to have a status in the society. Their level of expectation in achieving their desired goals results in stress, anxiety and various other physiological disorders. On the other hand, the format of bachelor degree curriculum has drastically changed in competence with the changing educational environment with reference to new education policy thus putting higher level of challenges for students. In order to cope with this condition student puts a higher pressure with his/her studies that might result in some sort of stressful situations related to academics.

Importance of the Study

Students desire to live up to a variety of standards, goals, and values, but this can only be done if their expectations, goals, and values are aligned with those of the institution. They must maintain their academic standing and get ready for various professional options available. The current generation of students is under a lot of pressure to continue learning more than previous generations. The same way that managing a large and tough workload can be unpleasant, some students may experience stress from routine academic work that isn't challenging enough. The present study attempts to find out which of these aspects are creating stress among management students. Stress is sure, what one can do is that he can manage his mind and actions in a positive direction to manage stress. Stress management encompasses techniques to equip a person with effective coping mechanisms for dealing with physiological stress. If a student is not in a position to manage stress, then the results might be dangerous as evidenced through newspaper reports.

Factors Affecting Stress

There are various factors that are responsible for stress depending upon the circumstances and the environment in which a person is dealing with. Stress is actually a normal part of life. At times, it serves a useful purpose. Stress can play a motivational role in development of a person. But if you don't get a handle on your stress and it becomes long-term, it can seriously interfere with your job, family life, and health. The important matter in this discussion is how one's deals with the stressful conditions.

Sense of insecurity: Stress can be brought on by hearing about threats such as attacks, global warming, political unrest, unemployment, social or family-related misfortunes, and specific types of professional or occupational issues relating to oneself or a group on a regular basis, especially if you feel powerless to stop those events. These occurrences induce tension, but in truth, the majority of the problems listed above are largely mental constructs that have nothing to do with reality from your point of view. Furthermore, despite the fact that disasters are normally

extremely infrequent occurrences, the media's vivid portrayal of them may give the impression that they are more common than they actually are. Fears can also hit closer to home, such as being worried that you won't finish a project at work or won't have enough money to pay your bills this month.

Attitudes and Perceptions: How you view the world or a particular situation can determine whether it causes stress. For example, if a student fails in a particular subject, he may take the attitude, that he will try his best in the second chance or in a back exam. He may also think that, "I 'm poor in studies, this will decay my career, what would be the reaction of my parents and friends etc. etc.?" Similarly, employees who feel like they're doing a good job at work will be less stressed out by a big upcoming project than those who worry that they are incompetent.

Unlikely Expectations: Sometimes we expect more than our potentials that may cause stressful situation for us. No one is perfect. If you expect to do everything right all the time, you're destined to feel stressed when things don't go as expected. We are also not in a position to achieve positive results, although we have made our hundred percent efforts.

Unacceptable Changes: Our adamant opposition to change is one of the main sources of stress. These changes could involve your career or your relationships, for example. Even joyous events like getting married or getting promoted at work can be stressful major life changes. Even worse occurrences like divorce, huge financial setbacks, or death in the family can be major sources of stress.

Review of Literature

An exhaustive study of the previous work concluded by scholars and writers is very important for the researcher to proceed with his study. Review of literature of the existing stock of knowledge plays a vital role in setting up the direction of present study with reference to setting up of objectives, hypothesis, and collection of data etc. it provides a road map in the scope to be merged in the present study. With reference to this

the researcher had made the following reviews fruitful in channelizing the present study. Pandya Bhavin, Deshpande, et.al (2012), in their study Stress in academic institutions can have both positive and negative consequences if not well managed. Academic institutions have different work settings compared to nonacademic and therefore one would expect the difference in symptoms, causes, and consequences of stress. Rajasekar, (2013), in his study suggested that the management students should pay more attention to their physical and mental health. They should cultivate an undaunted spirit, stress-induced emotions can be self-managed. Family support is helpful for students facing stress, no matter how well they are adaptable to stress. Maryam & Amber, (2015), in his study discussed that the main sources of stress or stressor identified among students were the academic related stress. When the core curriculum and teaching related areas were studied, they found that group presentation, achieving academic targets, timely submission of term report and assignments were the stressors which causes the stress among the students of business institute. Meenakshi sundaram, saleendran, Panachanathan, (2010), in his study concluded that stress in management students is common and is process oriented. Academic factors are greater perceived cause of stress in management students. Feelings of apprehension and fear may hinder optimal learning and adversely influence the level of performance. Emotional factors are found to be significantly more in first year students. Female students perceive more academic stress and emotional stress. However, stress is not stressor or trait specific. It is also dependent on personal ways of coping strategy and social support. It also suggested need for measures to reduce such stress and future research. Malik seema, (2016), in her study concluded that, the college, university etc. are managed by administrators. The administrators play a very important role in achieving educational goals. Administrators face various type of stress such as workload, time pressure, family pressure, staff related problems, students indiscipline etc. Goveas Aslam & Thomas (2013), in their study on impact of stress on academic performance concluded that, in the modern era stress has become a part of day to day living of every individual. There is negative

correlation between academic stress and GPA which means that increase in academic stress decreases GPA. The management of stress is very important. The best way of dealing stress is by learning how to manage the stress that comes in one's life. The management of stress is possible only when one knows the factors that lead to stress. Shah Kalagi & Pooja, (2015), Academic stress was found to be more prominent among the students of professional students by many research studies. This study primarily concentrated on exploring the micro issues of different components of academic activity in the professional course work setup. The components of academics, in general, are curriculum and instructions, assessment and placement. Chhaya parihar(2016) in her study concluded that, stress is not terrible. In fact, small level of stress is required to lead a beneficial and productive life. Stress harms individual and it harms their associations. It can be all pervasive. It can influence individuals in all occupations and of all ages regardless of sex, nationality, educational background or role. D'cunha, Shah, (2016), in their study found that academic stress as well as physical stress affect the performance of students. Incidences of depression were also found among stressful adolescents as it is linked with inability to concentrate, fear of failure, negative evaluation of future, etc. (Busari, 2012). The students feel that individual task is better than team work. It was also found that the assessment related stressors i.e. syllabus, duration of semester, number of projects and assignments causes more stress to the students and while pursuing the course majority of students didn't get time for extra activities. Some of the common stressors reported in an academic setting include excessive assignments, poor time management and social skills, peer competition, etc. (Fairbrother & Warn, 2003). These results are consistent with studies conducted in India as well as reported by Sreeramareddy, Shankar, Binu, Mukopadhyay, Ray & Menezes (2007). The educational system also plays an enabling role subsequently leading to increased stress levels experienced by students. Some of the sources include overcrowded lecture halls, semester grading system, inadequate resources and facilities (Awing & Agolla, 2008), vastness of syllabus (Agrawal & Chahar, 2007; Sreeramareddy et al., 2007), long hours and expectations of rote learning (Deb et al., 2015). A

total of 190 students from grades from three government-aided and three private schools in Kolkata India were surveyed in the study. This work investigates the academic stress and mental health of Indian high school students and the associations between various psychosocial factors and academic stress. This randomized controlled trial investigated the effectiveness of mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) in reducing academic stress among college students. The authors found that MBSR was effective in reducing academic stress and improving mental health outcomes (Huang et al. 2021). The three psychological aspects including self-confidence, academic stress, and coping strategies were proven to have a positive relationship with students' academic achievement when undergoing the physical education process during the COVID-19 pandemic. Students who have high self-confidence and good management of coping strategies were able to cope with academic stress, which in turn has an impact on high student academic achievement. (Aria Kusuma Yuda et al., 2022).

Objectives of the Study

In order to conduct good research, it is essential that the correct research methodology is adopted so that best results can be obtained. First of all, it is very necessary to lay down the objectives to give a proper direction to the research work.

- To Evaluate the stressors responsible for Stress
- To Check the Level of Stress

Sample design

The sampling units are Students Pursuing their senior secondary studies enrolled in Rajasthan Board of Secondary Education from selected schools of Udaipur City for the academic year 2022-23. Sampling method used in this research is simple random sampling for 145 students.

Analysis of Data

In order to check the stress level of a particular person it is very necessary to identify the current phase of the stress as mentioned in Table no.1. At the other end it is prominent to identify the reason of stress. In the present course of sources of stress are identified to check the source that is least or

highest responsible in contributing towards stress. It is vital to note that the sources of stress may vary from profession to profession. In the present study the variation might occur due to the academic as well as non-academic environment of the institutes. The following stressors are identified for the purpose of study:

- Assignments
- Academic outcomes
- Peer pressure
- Family pressure
- Admission Priorities
- Health issues
- Preparation of Exams
- Inadequate study facilities
- Time management

The factors responsible for contributing the stress are evaluated on the basis of central tendency measure (mean) and central tendency measure of dispersion (standard deviation). The collected data is measured on scale of 1 to 5. As discussed earlier there are various factors responsible for stress among students. On a likert scale the identified factors are rated. (1 for high stress and 5 for low stress). The detail is exhibited in table 1. Academic outcomes include the scores of senior secondary exams, admission priorities seeking for

premium institution for admission post senior secondary exam, inadequate study facilities, the facilities provided by the schools including lab facilities, extra classes etc. Peer and family pressure are the expectations of the friends, classmates and family.

As per the above table, Time management is identified as a least important factor that can be held responsible for stress. The mean score as per the sample is 3.88. As far as known academic stress is concerned, family issues & relationships does not much effect in contributing stress. These factors revolve around the average scores (3). However Academic Outcomes and Admission priorities in undergraduate courses are the two important stressors responsible for academic stress. In order to check any differences in the sample and population through the measure of mean as a base of central tendency. The researcher had applied student t-test with the following hypothesis constructed. The study attempts to find out whether the factors can be held responsible for stress or not.

H_0 - There is insignificant difference between sample mean and population mean of stressors under study

H_1 - There is significant difference between sample mean and population mean of stressors under study.

Table 1 : Sources of Stress

Stressors	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
Academic outcomes	2.1310	1.37060	1
Admission Priorities	2.6828	1.06526	2
Peer pressure	0207	1.34876	3
Assignments	3.0690	1.27287	4
Preparation of Exams	3.0486	1.20796	5
Health issues	3.1310	1.22051	6
Family pressure	3.1448	1.24426	7
Inadequate study facilities	3.3517	1.21066	8
Time management	3.8897	1.25342	9

Source : Primary Data

Table 2 : One Sample T - Test (Stressors)

Sources	Test value - 3			
	T	P value	Mean Difference	Decision
Assignments	-7.634	.001	.86897	Rejected
Academic outcome	-3.586	.001	.31724	Rejected
Admission Priorities	1.293	.198	.14483	Accepted
Family issues	.200	.842	.02069	Accepted
Peer Pressure	.652	.515	.06897	Accepted
Health issues	1.293	.198	.13103	Accepted
Preparation of Exams	.483	.630	.04861	Accepted
Inadequate study facilities	3.498	.001	.35172	Rejected
Time Management	8.547	.001	.88966	Rejected

Source : Primary Data

As per the above null hypothesis the level of stress is not affected by its sources. The result of t-test is presented in table 2.

The above test table reports the result of the one sample t-test. It provides the value of hypothesized population mean which we are comparing with the sample data. The mean value of population is assumed to be 3, i.e. the normal level of stress to be assumed for all the sources under stress is 3.

The observed tabulated value (t column) at 5% level of significance for 144 degrees of freedom for all the sources of stress under study.

For the factors the p value is less than the alpha value .05 that rejects our null hypothesis. In case of academic outcome as a source, it had a mean of 2.13. Here, the null hypothesis is rejected since p value is less than the alpha value (.001<.005) this means that there is a difference in means i.e. academic outcome may affect the level of stress. In case of time management and inadequate study facilities as a source of stressor, it had mean of 3.88 and 3.35. Here, the null hypothesis is rejected since p value is less than alpha value (.001<.005). This means that that there is a difference in means i.e., time management and inadequate study facilities may affect the level of stress. In other words, better time management can reduce the level of stress

and vice-versa. Similarly adequate facilities may also reduce the stress and vice versa. In case of assignments given to students where the mean score is 3.06, the hypothesis is rejected as the p value is .001. However, for other factors the p value is greater than alpha .05, which accepts the null hypothesis, which means that there is no difference between sample mean and population mean. It can be concluded that admission priorities, Health issues, family issues, peer pressure. are responsible for average stress level among students. The t-test also suggests that there is no significant difference the sample mean and population mean.

Conclusion

Stress as a psychological factor had played a prime role in developing a positive or a negative perception towards management programs. The stress management of student depends upon his ability of emotional strongness. The factors that influence the degree of stress as per the present study are extra assignments, academic performance, employability etc. Among the above extra assignment and performance in the exams are the relevant factors with higher means, followed by time management and administrative issues play an important role in increasing the stress among students. The other factors are irrelevant in this discussion. Your ability to deal

with stress, your surroundings, association with people and stress releasing activities are crucial in

undergraduate medical students of Nepal. BMC Medical education.7(1) 26.

Yuda, A.K., Resita, C., Nurwansyah, R., Gani, R.A., Németh, Z., & Setiawan, E. (2022). Confidence, Academic Stress, Coping Strategies as Predictors of Student Academic Achievement in Physical Education Classes During Covid-19, *Physical Education Theory and Methodology*, 180-187.