



Academic Performance and Stress Management: An Investigative Study of College-Going Students in Delhi

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Abstract: *This study observed issues related to stress and its impact on the academic performance of students. No Doubt, the students are overburdened in the present academic system, which results in increased stress and psychological issues. The present paper focuses mainly on the reasons and factors responsible for the stress among college-going students and the solution to deal with such issues. The research also pointed out that the parents' expectations are very high and the education objective is more focused on earning values than learning values. The results of the study showed that stress is becoming a very significant part of students' lives. The present study was based on undergraduate students to understand the reason behind the stress and its impact on students' academic performance. The research used several parameters to see the impact of stress on undergraduate students in the Delhi region. The use of appropriate stress management strategies can have a positive impact on the academic performance of college students, despite the insufficient effort of academic institutions to deal with it. This research also suggests a possible solution to deal with such issues of stress and improve students' academic performance. The methodology used in this study was investigative, and the research data was collected both from primary and secondary sources.*

Keywords: *Stress, Psychological issues, Academic performance, Undergraduate students, Delhi*

Introduction

Although stress has an adverse effect on the body's health, there is no doubt that it also affects academic performance by degrading learning ability. We all know that stress is a part of life and cannot be avoided. In fact, stress is an emotional state of mind experienced by people in certain situations. Surprisingly, stress is normally defined as a complex process of interaction with different situations in life that includes the person's reactions to different situations and his reactions to physical, mental, and emotional considerations. Stress is actually an influence of constant pressure at work and a disorganized lifestyle, and it certainly has an effect on the internal emotions of the person. While stress is inevitably part of professional and personal life, it becomes harmful when its intensity goes very high



and affects the person's emotions. Whether students' or researchers', it's not good to live with a high degree of stress. Specifically, if we consider the student's life, it is normal for students to be stressed at times. Similarly, the students' level and understanding of stress are very different and are associated with lifestyle changes, increased workload, new responsibilities, and people-to-people contacts. Extreme pressure on the one hand reduces work efficiency and contributes to poor academic performance. Implement effective coping strategies that can help students cope with the devastating effects of extreme stress, which should be avoided. Stress is really a big challenge to our daily well-being and mental health.

Stress has its own significance in life, and many scholars have pointed out that stress gives motive to the mission of life. But when stress weakens our mental and physical health, it is harmful. Students are exposed to various types of stress, including academic pressure that forces them to succeed, an uncertain future, and integration problems in the system. Excessive stress can cause severe health challenges; sometimes students have no idea that they are suffering from some severe mental issue, and their academic performance is degrading. In recent years, there has been a growing understanding of stress in the education system. In such situations, the elders must share their experiences to motivate and encourage the students about their roles and responsibilities. Anxiety can be called as an outcome of stress and which is a feeling of emotional or physical stress. Certainly, some situations occur that may provoke to develop the negative emotions such as anger, frustration and nervousness, which further increase the stress in a mind. Stress is the body's response to a situation or question. However, long-term stress can give rise to a lead to serious mental issues. Different levels of stress can have different level of reactions as a particular situation. For the stress related issues, many people do not care and don't feel stress; their experience about stress as a meaningless stuff and never found to have a related impact on the life. Stress is normally measured as an adverse physiological condition (Bernstein et al. 2008). Stresses are situations that disrupt people's daily activities and force to overthink which ultimately leads to the mental diseases. There is no doubt that the present education system is full of academic loads; there are exams, assignments, academic discussions, and activities that a student has to do regularly. In addition to academic planning's, teachers and academic advisors are encouraging students to work hard for good grades and the students are taking extra sessions, tuitions, classes and do a lot of alternate efforts to support their regular studies. The students are refreshed to work industriously and eventually create even more severe stress. Since researchers, advisors, and educational authorities want students to contribute to high-quality academic activities, the student's current expectations must be different. The lack of good advice channels is causing even more confusion, and students cannot choose a career on their own, even after strict training rules. This demanding approach by parents and teachers leads to confusion and increases stress. Actually, in the college level education, stress plays a very significant role in the formation of a child's overall temperament and viewpoint on life. Peer pressure is also a very common term associated with a child's development. Such pressure can be damaging and persuasive too, as this kind of driving force mainly shapes the personalities of students who are not so vocal and active, and sometimes it also supports nervousness. In a real sense, the students must have their own wisdom and have a positive environment so that they can get positive vibes and become more social in nature, as the mutual pressure must be positive for the holistic development of the students. In the present time, the dependency on digital media leads to mental fatigue, and this is also one of the reasons for the stress. Students are not getting social interaction, but loneliness. This study would focus on the evaluation of different factors that are responsible for the stress in academics and have an adverse effect on the students' performance.



Review of Literature

Dixon and Robinson; 2005 Stress is very normal in most of the professional and it gives rapid changes in the body, such as feelings of emotional anxiety, which causes tension in the body and pain in the body. Constant stressful conditions cause stiffness and pressure on the health, which contributes to the emergence of mental and psychological issues. Morris, Brooks; 2003, Found that perceived stress are different in students in different social conditions. The scholar, McConnell and Jenkins; 2001 pointed out that the report that the in his research survey with students, the responses came that they certainly feel depressed after entering college and blame them for their academic problems, loneliness, financial difficulties and problems in social relationships. Subramani and Kadhiravan; 2017, have identified an association between academic stress and students' psychological health. Research claims that educational stress and psychological health are interrelated, and the academic structure puts pressure on students. Not only do parents and schools put too much pressure on students to get higher grades, which depresses students, but parents and the school do not support orientation enough.

Students have good mental health when they behave positively in educational situations. They also suggested that private school students are under more pressure than public school students due to overwork and other academic responsibilities. Scholars pointed out that student in present academic institutions have different levels of education with poor socio-economic backgrounds. These are the remarkable reasons behind stress. Reddy pointed out have good mental health when they behave positively in educational situations. They also suggested that private school students are under more pressure than public school students due to overwork and other academic responsibilities. Significant differences were found in the mental health of students in private and public schools. He argued that students in private schools have different levels of education and are widely known compared to students in public schools with poor socio-economic backgrounds and little fame. These are the remarkable reasons behind stress. Reddy; 2018 shows in his research that students have a different degree of stress in different courses, and he states that it's really important to deal with the stress at all levels, i.e. professional or personal. Possible treatments of stress are meditation, yoga oriented life styles, and psychotherapies can be very beneficial in dealing with anxiety. This is also very significant to make strategies to know the root cause of such stress, as dealing with such stress is also very important for a healthy lifestyle and peaceful management of professional situations. Overall, the holistic development of a healthy lifestyle is not only based on the individual's nature but also on academic institutes.

Problem Statement

Stress is becoming a major challenge in the present scenario for the youth, especially the college going students as the ill management related to balance the heavy curriculum of professional courses, job crisis and personal issues. Academics and students are not the same as before. The academic demands and scenario have changed drastically in the present time as the focus of education is more on the earning factor and not on learning factors, and students are in a vicious circle of competitions and in a race to reach the top. The expectations of parents and teachers are very high, which results in daily stress and its increasing degrees. The present research study was performed to understand the reasons behind stress and its impact on the academic performance of college students.

Objective of the Study

1. To understand the level of stress in college going students
2. To evaluate the impact of stress on the academic performance of students



Research Methodology

The study is investigative in nature and the data collected was based on both primary and secondary methods. In the primary data, the responses were collected, based on the questionnaire mentioned below in the analysis and discussion section. The secondary data was figured out from the literature available in quality research papers on the same or related topics. Method of sampling were also been used and around 80 samples selected randomly for the study in the Delhi region.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Based on the parameters selected to understand the reason for the stress in the academic environment and its impact on the academic performance of college-going students, the parameters selected were:

- Overload Curriculum
- Lack of concentration
- Support from the academic institutions
- Academic performance of students

The following questions were taken into consideration, and a survey has been conducted with the randomly selected students of the Delhi region.

Table 1: Gender Wise Participation

Gender	Percentage	Frequency
Male	60	80
Female	40	50

As mentioned in Table 1, out of the total number of samples, 60% were male and 40% were female who took part in the survey.

Table 2: Free relax time while Academic Engagements

Description	Percentage	Frequency
Agree	37	46.25
Not Agree	43	53.75

As mentioned in Table 2, 43% of the people are not comfortable with their academic engagements as they are so busy with the classes and assignments that they do not have time to breathe, whereas 37% agree with the point that they are busy but they manage to take out the time to relax.

Table 3: Overloaded Curriculum

Strongly disagree	disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
21	21.2	7	28.2	22.6

Table 3 clearly shows that 28.2 percent of respondents stated that the curriculum design is not appropriate and is really overloaded. Besides, the students also pointed out that, apart from the curriculum, the career prospects and tension for a job are also reasons for the stress.

Table 4: Lack of Concentration

Strongly disagree	disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
19	16.3	8	32.2	24.5

From the data mentioned in Table 4, the maximum number of respondents, i.e., 32.2, agrees with the



facts that stress causes poor concentration in the study, as the most probable reason is the overload of study-related tension and the relative lack of time to complete the study, as well as the job-related stress in the present market.

Table 5: Lack of Support

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
13.4	13.2	5.3	42.6	34.5

From the data mentioned in Table 5, a maximum respondent, i.e., 42.6, agrees with the variable that the supports from the educational institutions are not up to par and do not provide enough support to handle the stress situation. Many students suggested that concrete plans are missing in academic institutions, and only some counsellors have been provided. There are many cases among students who are showing signs of stress, but the institutions are not taking them seriously.

Table 6: Academic Degradation

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
16.4	14.2	5.3	32.6	31.5

As mentioned in Table 6, the students are facing severe issues in terms of academic progress, as the challenges are really big for the students who are having stress issues due to a heavy curriculum, a lack of support, and poor concentration. The majority of the respondents, i.e., 32.6 and 31.5, replied that the issue of stress certainly affects the academic performance of the students.

Result and Discussion

Stress is a big challenge in the present scenario, as stress is responsible for poor academic performance. The students who were taken as respondents represented almost the same opinion of academic degradation. The students mentioned their point of view in terms of practical issues like poor concentration, poor academic management, and the overburden of the syllabus, which creates a scenario of stress interfering with the student's capability to focus on academic achievements and certainly affects the academic productivity and intellectual development of the students. The research pointed out the various values associated with the stress of academics for students. Academic engagements are so intense in the present education system that the time for intellectual thinking is very limited, and in the research survey, the respondents mentioned very clearly in every point with high agreement, i.e., an average of 40 percent, that most of the stress issues are due to the overload of academic work. The research outcome revealed that there is certainly a close relationship between stress and poor academic performance, as social interaction and interpersonal relations are also badly influenced by stress and changes in behaviour. The present study also included academic institutions that can encourage cognitive behaviour skill training to support and develop such stress management skills among the students to cope with anxiety and social isolation, as evidently 50 percent of the respondents said they are not getting sufficient support to manage stress. Psychological positivity is very important to perform well in academics by having high grades and the best results. Overall, based on the analysis of the literature and the survey, the research data found evidence that stress is a major issue for the students and that the quality of academics and student's performance is greatly compromised.



Conclusion

The issue of stress is very common in education and academic activities. The results of this study illustrated that students with high and low academic performance differed significantly in terms of education, family, and different and common sources of stress. Students are really facing issues like the course burden, social pressure, career prospects, job-related overthinking and other related health issues, and general sources of stress. The different students have different levels of psychological crisis depending on the sources of stress. It is necessary to eliminate these stressors for both educational institutions and psychologists.

The research concluded that stress can affect the core abilities of students and degrade their psychological positivity, and it is very obvious that if stress is not treated effectively, it can lead to feelings of loneliness and nervousness. The analysis of the data received from the respondents clearly pointed out that the students are facing severe stress due to social factors and different pressures. The curriculum also has diverse demands, and it's totally overburdened.

In any academic institution, it's very important to have stress management plans and trained professionals, as in the present scenario, the academics are not so simple and the students are going through multiple situations and social conditions. Based on the research data and its analysis, it can be concluded that the research has achieved both objectives.

Therefore, the academic institutions must make suitable strategies and plans for the students so that they can accept the complex course system and balance their personal lives for better academic performance. The adaptive skills chosen by the student must meet his or her personal needs. Lastly, it can be said that the overall negative impact of stress on students requires effective stress management programmes where students need to listen carefully to what they are going through and what their psychological needs are.

Recommendation

Well-planned stress management is very much needed in an academic setting to balance the changing scenario of an educational institution. It's really important to create awareness about the different levels of stress. Academic institutions must hold consultations, but that alone is not enough; proper follow-up and regular monitoring is also required to support stress management planning. There must be a plan and proper orientation for the teaching staff to engage students in a different field and broaden the horizons of interactive teaching and learning. A concrete plan is also needed to strengthen the teacher-student relationship.

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