

Causes and effects of examination stress



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CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF EXAMINATION STRESS AMONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN AUSTRALIA

Stress is a state of physical, mental, or emotional factors that may lead to physical or mental illness resulting from demanding circumstances. A major problem throughout the world particularly in Australia is examination stress on students. A state of perpetual tension (both physical and mental) which happens throughout the examinations is “ Examination stress”. It plays a vital role on physical and mental being of students causing negative impacts on academic progress and mental health. The main goal of this essay is to discuss the factors that cause stress and its effects on students. Firstly, the essay begins by the reasons for examination stress. Afterwards, it will examine the physical and mental consequences. Finally, it concludes that student stress should be addressed in order to achieve better educational goals.

The main reason behind exam stress results from pressure and competition from the peer group, family and society. Although it is common among students, it becomes a problem when students lack time to prepare and focus, similar to the students who become overconfident, resulting in poor academic performances. According to an Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) average, nearly 47 % of students in Australia reported moderate to extreme levels of stress during exams even when they prepared for it, compared to an international average of 37 %. (Pascoe, M, 2018). Therefore, it leads to major dropouts, mental illness and suicide attempts among students.

Students often feel stressed when preparing for examinations due to pressure from school and family due to constant competition and comparison with peer group and good performers. Managing this stress is a big concern among young pupils. In order to make children get higher academic results parents criticize children by comparing with better performers in family, friends and society, which makes students panic about exam. Parents force children to study with no relaxation time resulting in an atmosphere where students panic, feel neglected and eventually fall emotionally collapsed. Students when unable to meet the expectations of the parents and pressure from society to be best, lower the self confidence in them and start to develop a feeling of insecurity and also suffer from depression and other mental health problems. Bousted, M, (2018) stated that the constant pressure on pupils to meet up to the demanding standards causes self-harm and mental issues in students who get demoralised and disillusioned. Parental pressure is highly responsible because a majority of the parents put pressure on children by demanding the students to get only the top grade.

School drop outs are an effect of excess work load, personal life and financial issues that creates stress among the pupil. These instances are commonly seen in high school students due the pressure by parents to excel in academics. On one hand, stress can help to deal and face challenges but on the other hand, excessive stress has a negative effect as it leads to early childhood nervous disorders, which remain deep rooted and hinder the growth in academic progress. Hough, A, (2012) states that sometimes “ Students exam stress is creating mental health time bombs”. A major

increase in number of adolescents seeking stress to combat examinations is observed. Due to depression and phobia developed on the declaration of results many suicidal attempts are reported when students suffer from failure. As a result, some students end up as dropouts or some tend to be suicidal.

A further cause in exam stress could be due to negligence and over confidence which leads to consequences such as lack of preparation time and deviation by distraction while studying. Every child has a unique way to understand things and the pedagogy of teaching plays an important role in developing knowledge among students. Difficult task, over loaded homework, continuous exams cause internal pressure on the other hand it leads to demotivation, overwhelming situations resulting to lose focus in studying. Students spent more than five hours on social media, which is the main reason in deviation from studying. Students have problems to overschedule their study plans with their personal time, which makes them unhappy, stressed and frustrated to complete their assignments, prepare for exams, get good grades in academics and finally end up in losing focus to excel in academia when unable to achieve success even then. According to the survey conducted among 13, 500 students in 700 schools by the Australian council for educational research (ACER) and Micheal Bernard, Melbourne university, psychologist, a drop from 76% to 59 % reported in school students who felt confident to perform at school. It also showed that mental health of Australian students became significantly worse when compared to that of 15 years ago. In addition to this, Professor Bernard stated the current worry was the lack of resilience grown among young

students. Furthermore, as per the Mission Australia's youth survey among 24, 055 adolescents in 2017, mental health problems was on the top of the issues for the first time in history, where young people believed that mental health problems was a national concern 33. 7%, which doubled from 14. 9% in 2015. Therefore, this led to occurrence of lower academic performances creating mental health issues.

In conclusion, it is clear that the examinations, though a part of students academic life, become a burden to some students when they are not able to manage it. The essay highlights that more emphasis should be paid to examination stress as it leads to mental health problems, a national concern as reported by Australian students. It also shows that negative impact of stress on students causes suicidal and mental health problems. The essay also explains that excessive work load, internal and external pressure contribute to stress which results in drop outs of pupil and hinders good academic performances. It is highly recommended that educational departments, schools, parents and students should come together for a better way to gain sustainable academic achievements.

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