

The levels of stress in university students



Stress is the expressive and physical strain caused by our response to pressure from the outside world. Common stress reactions include anxiety, bad temper, inability to concentrate, and a variety of physical symptoms that include headache and a fast heartbeat. It's almost impossible to live without some stress. (Whitman, 1985)

The ability to identify when we are under stress and what is stressing us can greatly improve both our mental and physical well being. A model that is useful in understanding stress among students is the person-environmental model. According to a variation of this model, stressful events can be appraised by an individual as "challenging" or "threatening" (Lazarus, 1966).

Students respond to college in a variety of ways. For some students, university is stressful because it is a rapid change from high school. For others, separation from home is a source of stress. Although some stress is necessary for personal growth to occur, the amount of stress can devastate a student and affect the ability to cope.

Often, undergraduate students perceive that faculty exert great power over their lives and feel that they live in a state of substantial powerlessness (Altbach, 1970). Another source of stress is the difficulty of achieving social intimacy. It is difficult to find a friend or maintain a relationship with an existing one.

The solution to reduce a student stress is providing students with a sense of control over their education, information about what to expect, and feedback regarding what can be done to improve their performance. Students who do

not feel powerless will adopt their own coping strategies. (Whitman, 1985) Immediate coping such as dealing with one's own thoughts and feelings, can be facilitated by accessible professional and peer counseling, student support groups, and adequate faculty advising. Active coping, that is, dealing with the actual stressful situations or events, can be strengthened by providing students with early success.

Excellent teaching cannot be overrated as a key to preventing and minimizing stress among students. Sometimes, faculty may not be good teachers if they are themselves stressed and if they feel unrewarded for good teaching. How to reduce stress among faculty and reward good teaching are questions for further study.

Solutions for alleviating stress include improved orientation for new graduate students, more flexibility in core requirements, and expanding the role of faculty advisors. Solutions suggested for reducing stress in college students include “ stress inoculation” — for example, informing students in advance of what difficulties they might face and encouraging them to develop their own strategies to achieve personal goals. Other suggestions include improving campus mental health services and organizing peer counseling and self-help groups. (Falk 1975; Hirsch and Keniston 1970; Katz and others 1969).

Stress is a necessary thing in human beings' lives because stress adds flavor, challenge and opportunity to our world. Nearly no one feels free from stress and each of us defines stress somewhat differently (Youngs, 1986). It is also a part of every student's daily life. In the right dose, stress can be healthy, or even enjoyable. However, it provides many benefits; it can be

very damaging for students when stress becomes excessive. Stress can harm students' health, happiness, work performance, relationships and personal development.

Studying can be as stressful as working because studying is a process that requires a lot of determination. However, stress in learning is also a subjective phenomenon. For some students, making a presentation in front of the class is not stressful while but for others it may mean is the end of the world. Some students consider quizzes as good challenges to their potential while others find them hard to handle. In other words, how one labels, interprets, thinks about and reacts to events in one's life has a lot to do with determining whether those events are stressful (Corey & Corey, 1997). Moreover, students who prepare themselves for such events are most likely to experience less stress than those who fail to do so.

2. 2. 2 Ineffective Time Management

Many students reported experiencing stress during their studies in universities. One of the causes of stress among college and university students is ineffective time management. Quality time is something often neglected by students whether good or average. The good students often over-scheduled their time for study-related tasks while others under planned their valued time with inadequate activities thus increasing their stress level.

Furthermore, a lack of proper time management brings stress to students. With a good time management it will help students become more organized in their academic and social life. Some are lucky enough to be blessed with lecturers who teach them the ways of proper management of time. But for

most, it is left up to them to learn about it the difficult way. Without proper time management, students might have overloaded schedules because they will have a tendency to put things off until the last moment. Managing coursework and preparing for exams are stressful for every student.

2. 2. 3 Expectation of Academic Achievement

Another famous stressor among students is the expectation of academic achievement. This includes the expectation of examination performance and expectation of the academic results. A survey conducted by West and Wood (1970) reported that 65 percent of 331 students in nine American high schools experience stress just by thinking about the examination before they actually sit for it. Meanwhile, 59 percent of the students expressed that low achievement in the examination also causes a high level of stress.

Perhaps one of the obvious mistakes in stress management among students, besides time management, is the inability to plan for upcoming obstacles in the study process. Students should foresee challenges and problems and prepare themselves for anticipatory stress which is more manageable. They can gather information on possible stressors through various ways including discussion with their seniors, advisors, lecturers, counselors and other resources in the university.

However, many students are unaware of the need to prepare in advance for academic challenges. This will lead to reactive stress coping style once they experience situational stress. If the students fail to manage the situational stress effectively, it may later lead to residual or chronic stress. Frustration, conflict, change and pressure have been identified by Weiten and Lloyd

(1994) as the main elements of psychological stress. Continuous stress can result in burnout among students; the students usually feel emotionally exhausted and lose interest in their studies, thus neglecting their pursuit of studies. According to Corey and Corey (1997), the problem with students is that they do not notice the warning signs that they have pushed themselves to the breaking point. They give too much time to their studies and assignments that they fail to realize the importance of maintaining relationships and spending some leisure time for themselves.

2. 2. 4 New University Environment

The cause of stress for university students is the new university environment itself. Human emotion and behavior are influenced by the surrounding. Change of social circumstances can make the university students stress. (Buchanan and Huczynski, 2004, pg. 157-8)

If they go to university straight out of high school, they face the difficult challenges. Leaving home, separating from their parents, and beginning the process of finding their own identity as an adult and their place in the world.

2. 2. 5 New Relationships

Next, relationships among new friends and partners will bring stress to students. Students often seem more interested in the view out of the window or their pretty classmate in the next row than in what the instructor is saying.

2. 2. 6 The Competitive Circumstances and Exams

Moreover, university students want to get good grades and want to have higher scores than their friends since the course evaluation is based on the <https://assignbuster.com/the-levels-of-stress-in-university-students/>

statistics. The stress happens when desires are not the same. They have an intense need to fit in and to be accepted by their friends. The serious competitive environment makes the students try hard to adapt themselves stressfully.

2. 2. 7 Parental Pressure

Parental pressure is also the most important source of stress for the university students. Children do not want to disappoint their parents, so they overwork and do everything to reach the goals no matter how much stress it produces.

To avoid the undesirable disadvantages of stress, students should consider the causes of stress important as it help students make plan to reduce it.

2. 3 Effects of Stress

2. 3. 1 Effects of stress to three categories (Dr. Jay Pearson, 2003)

Stress happens when the body has to react suddenly to certain situations either mentally, emotionally, or physically.

Physically

The heart pumps faster and making the heart pound and blood pressure rise which can be said as some people experience palpitations. Muscle tension increases, leading to headaches, dizziness, jaw ache and even insomnia. The mouth goes dry and digestion slows causing “ butterflies” in the stomach. (Dr. Jay Pearson, 2003)Breathing is faster and less efficient which can lead to over breathing and breathlessness. Changes in the flow of blood to the skin can cause sweating, blushing or clammy hands and feet.

Mentally

A certain amount of stress can be mentally stimulating but too much can affect our thinking ability. Thoughts may become disorderly and confused. Thinking becomes focused on worrying. We may become preoccupied with problems. It becomes much harder to make decisions or find solutions to problems. Thinking negatively and fearing the worst increases worry and stress.

Stress when handled positively is beneficial to us. It helps keep us alert, active, and more energetic. When stress gets too much it turns into distress, and if we handle it in a negative manner, it begins having an effect on us mentally. This is really bad for us because it can strain our relations with everyone around us and deteriorate our mental condition.

When stress is handled in a negative manner it usually leads to depression. To come out of this depression many take the harmful help of tobacco, alcohol, and drugs, all of which give a sense of stress relief. In reality your body and mental still remains stressed, and these substances just help make matters worse.

The body's natural antidote to stress is called the relaxation response. It's your body's opposite of stress, and it creates a sense of well-being and calm. The chemical benefits of the relaxation response can be activated simply by relaxing. You can help trigger the relaxation response by learning simple breathing exercises and then using them when you're caught up in stressful situations. And ensure you stay relaxed by building time into your schedule for activities that are calming and pleasurable: reading a good book or

making time for a hobby, spending time with your pet, or just taking a relaxing bath.

Be absolutely committed to using stress relief exercise almost every day! This is important for health and stress relief. Bodies are built to move and be active. It's much easier to sit patiently in university behind a desk when you have a daily opportunity to run, move and play. It can be sports, or dancing, or weight lifting, or simple walking or jogging. I found that the more hours I spent sitting and studying, the more time I had to spend exercising in order to think clearly and stay healthy. Sport and physical activity helps you to relax physically and also releases endorphins in the body which produce a real feeling of well-being. Walk, cycle, swim, join a gym or a sports team. Joining a club or society, maintaining an existing hobby or learning something new, talking to other people can all help you to take a mental and physical break.

2. 4. 21 Eat Nutritious Food

Avoid eating junk. Eliminate refined sugar and caffeine from your diet. Sure the soda pop and candy bars are fun to eat. And they can give you an immediate energy boost. But it's an artificial energy boost that does not support your long term health.

2. 4. 22 Request Help

Ask for help when you need it. Sometimes an explanation from a classmate, teacher or tutor can help you understand a difficult topic. Lend a similar helping hand to your classmates when they ask for it. Cooperation can help everyone do better. Talk about it, write about it, shout or moan about it. By

expressing your feelings can help to relieve stress. Acknowledging a problem to yourself and to others can be the first step in dealing with it. Sometimes having a good cry or bashing a pillow can release emotional pressure and calm your feelings of anxiety.

2. 4. 23 Pray for Guidance

Remember, prayer for stress relief is always available, and can help with school stress, work stress, family stress, or whatever challenge you may be facing.

Past Researches

Past researches are very important for researcher to do research scientifically. Although college student is Past researches has been done for the related title of student stress in university and colleges.

Research conducted by Ida Hartina Ahmed Tharbe (2003) using the Social Readjustment Rating Scale (Holmes & Rahe, 1967) on 58 subjects identified several changes in lifestyle as the cause of stress for students. Among the changes are: the change in eating habit (66 percent), change in sleeping and living habit (64 percent respectively), change in social activities and change in financial status (50 percent respectively). Using the Teen Scene: Stress Test (Youngs, 1986) the same research found other stressors which include: not performing as well as expected (66 percent), putting too much hope on oneself (64 percent), not being as popular as one wanted (56 percent), fear of being let down by friends (56 percent) and peer pressure (50 percent). Therefore, it is relatively true to say that stress is not merely caused by a single event but rather by a combination of life events.

A study by Samsiah Jayos (2005) among 155 matriculation students found that 91 percent of the students regard not having enough time for revision as the main source of stress. Meanwhile, 65.2 percent argued that they do not have enough time to complete assignments. Academic workload is undoubtedly another source of stress for students. The same research reported that too many assignments and too many subjects to be taken have caused stress for 73.5 percent and 72.3 percent of the students respectively (Samsiah Jayos, 2005). Similarly, a research study on 94 students of an institute in South Alberta found that among the stressors for both female and male students is academic workload (Arthur & Hiebert, 1994).

Factor analysis is a statistical data reduction technique used to explain variability among observed random variables in terms of fewer unobserved random variables called factors. The observed variables are modeled as linear combinations of the factors, plus "error" terms. The analysis will isolate the underlying factors that explain the data.

Factor analysis is an interdependence technique. The complete sets of interdependent relationships are examined. There is no specification of either dependent variables, independent variables, or causality. Factor analysis assumes that all the rating data on different attributes can be reduced down to a few important dimensions. This reduction is possible because the attributes are related. The rating given to any one attribute is partially the result of the influence of other attributes. This analysis will use to analysis and identify the factor, effects and the solutions.

The design of questionnaire was one of the major parts of this research since it is the medium of the information and data gathering. This chapter has described in detail the research of methodology employed to collect and analyze the necessary data. As a conclusion, the findings of the survey will be discussed in the forward chapter.