

Mental stress of college students across gender

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ABSTRACT

Mental stress is a very familiar condition faced by students when they are unable to bear the risk involved in higher education. College students are exposing to very stressful situation. Some researcher found that stressful situation faced by student when leaving home for the first time and going away for school can be very difficult for some people. The study aimed to assess the level of mental stress among college students. A study was conducted in the Lucknow city of Uttar Pradesh. A total of 120 sample were collected from the selected college using the simple random sampling method. A sample comprised 40 students from each selected colleges including both of the sexes. A mental stress questionnaire used to assess the level of mental stress used by college students. The study findings revealed that majority (80%) of respondents had moderate level of stress and there are significant difference between gender and mental stress. Boys had more stress than the girls.

INTRODUCTION

Today, education has been assigned as an industry for human resource development for different phases of life. The student constitutes the heart of the education system (Ramya and Parthasarathy, 2009). Many people experience stress as they combine busy life and the demands of study and work while trying to also save time for friends and family. For some people, stress becomes almost a way of life. We all experience episodic stress-getting ready for a major exam, completing an important paper, perhaps getting ready for an important interview. However, a continuous "state" of stress should not become way of life (According to National Health Ministries, USA 2004). Stress seen as modern society's by professional from different sectors. It has effects on people's behaviours, communications and efficiency. Stress was described as a relationship between individuals and their environment that is appraised as dangerous and evaluated as beyond their ability to deal with stress (Naggar *et al.*, 2009). Stress is a term in psychology and biology, which in the more recent decades, has become a common place of popular parlance. It refers to

the organism-human to respond appropriately to emotional or physical threats, whether are either actual or imagined. The term "stress" was first employed in the 1930's by the endocrinologist Hans Selye (Mannapur *et al.*, 2010). Selye defined stress as physiological non-specific reaction to external and internal demands. While researcher defines stress as the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demands placed on them. Stress occurs when an individual is confronted by a situation that they perceive as overwhelming and cannot cope up with.

Stress provides the means to express talents and energies and pursue happiness, it can also cause exhaustion and illness, either physical or psychological; heart attacks and accidents (Pearlin, 1999). The important thing to remember about stress is that certain forms are normal and essential. As the body responds to various forms of physical or psychological stress; certain predictable changes occur. These include increased heart rate, blood pressure (systolic and diastolic) and secretions of stimulatory hormones. These responses to stress will occur whether the stress is positive or negative in nature. In lay term, it is known as the "Fight or Flight" mechanism (According to

National Health Ministries, USA 2004). Stress as a positive influence can help compel you to action; it can result in a new awareness and an exciting new perspective and other hand stress as a negative influence can result in feeling of distrust, rejection, anger and depression, which in turn can lead to health problem such as headaches, upset stomach, rashes, insomnia, ulcers, heart disease and stroke. This is where stress management techniques can make a crucial difference to your health and well being. Indeed, employing effective stress management may become a life or death decision.

Hamaideh (2011) studied stressors and reactions to stressors among university students. Results indicated that the highest group of stressors experienced by students was 'self-imposed' stressors followed by 'pressures'. Cognitive responses were found to be the highest responses to stressors experienced by students. Negative correlations were found with student's perception of health, and father's and mother's level of education.

Britz and Pappas (2010) in their study sources and outlets of stress among university students: Correlations between stress and unhealthy habits. He reported that the major causes of stress were found to be academic workload and time management. High stress levels among participants correlated with many unhealthy behaviours, including compromised quality of diet and decreased quantity of sleep.

Shah *et al.* (2010) has conducted study Perceived Stress, Sources and Severity of Stress among medical undergraduates in a Pakistani Medical School. The result revealed that a higher level of perceived stress was reported by the students. The overall mean perceived stress was 30.84 (SD = 7.01) and was significantly higher among female students. The most common sources of stress were related to academic and psychosocial concerns. 'High parental expectations', 'frequency of examinations', 'vastness of academic curriculum', 'sleeping difficulties', 'worrying about the future', 'loneliness', 'becoming

a doctor', 'performance in periodic examinations' were the most frequently and severely occurring sources of stress.

Gaderi *et al.* (2009) studied depression, anxiety and stress among the Indian and Iranian students. The findings revealed that the depression, anxiety and stress level of Indian students are significantly higher than those of Iranian students. Furthermore gender differences are not found significant.

Mental stress is a very familiar condition faced by the students when they are unable to bear the risks involved in higher education. The main sources of stress are academic and time concerns, fear of failure, classroom interaction, and economic issues. Apart from this, the parental system also affects a lot of these students. The parents have unlimited expectation from their children and therefore they impose their own desires on them the impact of these influences results in number of students reporting emotional problems, anxiety, stress and other neurotic problems. They are often found in frightening, abusive, depressing, threatening, competitive, unpredictable and confusing situation. The percentage of studies is more among the college students compared to the other ones and these suicides are mostly associated with academic failure or under achievement (Ramya and Parthasarathy, 2009). College students are exposing to very stressful situation. Some researcher found that stressful situation faced by student when leaving home for the first time and going away for school can be very difficult for some people. In many cases for college freshmen this is their first time being away from their home and parents. Many times they get home sick and want to isolate themselves. They have got into a new routine of going to school and change can be very difficult. Scholars (Ornelas and Kleiner, 2003; Jaramillo *et al.*, 2004; Verment and Steesma, 2005; Ongori, 2007; Ongori and Agolla, 2008; Agolla, 2009) for instance identified the symptoms and the causes of stress in work environments as sitting for a long period of time, poor work performance, poor interpersonal

Table 1 : Assess the level of mental stress among college students

Sr. No.	Level of mental stress	Boys (n=60)		Girls (n=60)		Total (n=60)	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1.	Low stress (25-48)	3	5	2	3.3	5	4.1
2.	Moderate stress (49-72)	49	81.6	47	78.3	96	80
3.	High stress (73-96)	8	13.3	12	20	19	15.8
Total		60	100.0	60	100.0	120	100.0

Note: F=Frequency, %=Percentage

Table 2 : Assess level of mental stress with their gender

Sr. No.	Level of mental stress	Boys		Girls		t value
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
1.	Low stress	47.66	0.46	46	2	2.13
2.	Moderate stress	62.77	6.50	61.91	4.20	
3.	High stress	78.25	4.68	76.33	2.09	

Indicate significance of value P=0.05

relationship, inadequate or lack of resources, inadequate time to perform particular assignments, poor working conditions, overcrowded work stations, excessive paperwork, and many others. Whereas these factors have been found to be responsible for stress, it is worth noting that in order to minimize the stress among students; the University administrators must develop appropriate strategies that will enable them to detect in advance the symptoms and causes of the stress. Academic stress among students have long been researched on, and researchers have identified stressors as too many assignments, competition with other students, failures, lack of pocket money (Fairbrother and Warn, 2003), poor relationships with other students or lecturers, family or problems at home. Institutional (university) level stressors are overcrowded lecture halls, (Ongori, 2007; Awino and Agolla, 2008), semester system, and inadequate resources to perform academic work. Hence, the present study was taken up with the following objectives:-

- To assess the level of mental stress among college going students.
- To find out the difference between gender with their mental stress.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study was conducted in the Lucknow city of Uttar Pradesh state during 2010-2011. The sample size of the study was restricted up to 120 samples. Simple random sampling method was used to assess the level of mental stress among college students for this study. Sample comprise of 120 college students including equal number of boys and girls from three colleges such as Aryavart Institute of Technology and Management (Utrahtia), Azad Institute of Engineering and Technology (Bijnaur), Awadh Institute of Management and Technology, Azadnagar (Bijnaur) in Lucknow city. The data were collected with the help of pre-tested mental stress questionnaire. Collected data were scored, tabulated, analyzed and interpreted with the help of suitable statistical tools.

OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

Table 1 shows the mental stress of the college students. It was found that majority 81.6 percentage of respondents in boys sample had moderate stress and rest 13.5 percentage of respondents had high stress only 5 percentage respondents had low mental stress whereas percentage 78.3 of girls respondent had moderate stress and 20 percentage respondents had high stress only 3.3 percentage of the girls respondent had low stress. Thus it was found that most of the respondents 80 percentage had moderate stress.

Table 2 It was evident from the Table 2 that there was significant difference found in the mean score between the levels of mental stress. The mean score of boys were more than the mean score of girls that means boys reported more

stress comprising to girls.

From Table 2 it was determine that boys and girls students had significant difference for stress level which is t value (118) = 2.13, p. Similar work related to the present work was also done by Cheng *et al.* (1993); Misra *et al.* (2000) and Mori (2000).

Conclusion :

Stress provides the means to express talents and energies and pursue happiness, it can also cause exhaustion and illness, either physical or psychological; heart attacks and accidents. Majority 100 percentage of respondents in was equally distribution of boys and girls in the study. Results of the study showed that students experience stress at different level. Majority 81 percentage of boys respondent had moderate stress and 78 percentage girls respondent had also moderate stress. This study determines that boys and girls have significant difference in level of mental stress at 0.05per cent level. Boys respondents have more stress than girls.

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