



RESEARCH PAPER

A Study to Investigate the Stress Level of College Students in District Attock

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to investigate students' stress levels in relation to academic, social and physical stress. Further, the study also aimed to determine the difference between the stress levels of male and female college students. The quantitative data was collected using a survey method. Data was analyzed by using descriptive statistics, i.e., mean, standard deviation, and t-test, by using SPSS version 26. The population of this research study consisted of all public college students (male and female) in all six tehsils headquarters of district Attock. A convenient sampling technique was used for sample selection. Six hundred students were selected as the sample of the study out of which three hundred participants were male students and three hundred were female students. The self-developed questionnaire consisted of twenty-five items, that were categorized into three domains (academic, social, and physical). Reliability and validity of instrument were ensured with Cronbach alpha and experts' opinions. The result revealed that there was a high level of stress among college students. In one out of three domains, it was found that female students have higher academic stress as compared to male students. In terms of social and physical stress, it was found that both male and female students have high level of stress. Offering students counselling programs for academic, social, and physical stressors will help reduce the stress level and leave them in a healthy mental state.

KEYWORDS College Students, Stress, Stressors

Introduction

Stress has been a topic of discussion in both academic circles and in our culture. "Stress is the energy the body uses to overcome the challenges of our rapidly modern life," while "for others, it is an unwelcome raw material for the production of such a life." Stress has been connected to life changes, everyday concerns, and lifestyle changes. Excessive physical and social pressures have necessitated ongoing effort and correction, which causes stress. As mentioned before, the usual event that is not removed from daily life is stress. Individuals might be motivated to accomplish and test their maximum potential by their positive response to stress. Many children experience sorrow instead of challenge, which makes them scared and powerless.

Stress is a physical and mental reaction to everyday responsibilities, particularly those that are related to change, says the Marthoenis, Meutia, Fathiariani, & Sofyan, (2018). According to Mckean et al. (2000), stress is not the main cause of distress, pressure, or depression, but rather a synergistic impact. It's vital to remember that stress can affect learners in both positive and negative ways. Because it draws people's attention toward stress, stress can be a useful and adaptive response to a threat (Khan, Lanin, & Ahmad, 2015). In short, stress is highly common among college students, even though they may be

assured of their educational preservation while also preparing for their future careers. Pursuing a degree and furthering one's education frequently comes with a lot of stress. Studying, homework, testing, laboratories, reading, and quizzes are all part of the learning process. There's the pressure of finishing all the assignments, balancing time, and fitting in extracurricular activities. Students in college, who frequently live away from home for the first time, are especially vulnerable to academic stress. Teachers expect their students to finish their assignments within a reasonable time. Students sometimes misunderstand how much time it takes to finish reading and writing tasks, as well as print files related to their task. It is defined by situations that cause people to feel uneasy, stressed, or depressed (Bernstein et al., 2008).

Academic responsibilities can be stressful, as can the persistent emotions of being on the verge of failing a further deadline. Pressure from parents on children to achieve academic and extracurricular goals has reached a peak. The often-exploited urge to achieve in college degrades morale and is one of the primary consequences of depression, loss, and breakdown. Parents struggle to demonstrate that their child is a top performer in all areas, but they end up as victims rather than conquerors. Lack of funding, as well as a lack of engagement with parents and teachers, are major sources of stress in children. These factors contribute to a child's doubts and confusion, which eventually lead to stress. Students diagnosed with depression indicated managing with stress by talking to friends, talking to a counselor, taking part in physical activities, and listening to music, according to an analysis of interviews with them. (Aselton, 2012).

Literature Review

A large percentage of students who are preparing to start college are looking forward to the experience. Students are looking forward to meeting new people and being away from their parents. After a few years in college, the upbeat tone is frequently supplanted with negative ones. Many, if not all, students find the adjustment and move to college to be stressful. Due to the obligations connected with the adjustment, many students experience significant stress. The new environment will have different characteristics, and the learner will have to adjust to new locations, people, and habits. College students sometimes experience stress related to their families. Some parents put their kids under a lot of stress by reminding them that they'll have to obtain good grades.

Some students are the first in their families to graduate from college, puts them under a lot of stress. Families will often recall the student of this, especially if they are having difficulty in class. Going through these procedures can be a stressful process. Many college students are required to work while attending classes. As a first-year student, you may find that adjusting to college is even tougher. Researchers have mostly used questionnaires to identify potential stressors for college students. For example, Dusselier and colleagues (2005) conducted a survey of 462 undergraduate students to determine what events and conditions indicated how regularly students experienced stress. Chronic disease and frequent confrontations with peers, family, or professors were both stress signifier. An open-ended question in this survey allowed students to indicate their primary cause of stress.

Academics were cited by more than half of the students as a major source of stress (for example homework, task preparation, or classroom time). Similar forms of stressor have been found using qualitative methods (Aselton, 2012). According to an analysis of interviews with these students (Aselton, 2012), academic success, familial pressure, and financial concerns were the top stressors for students diagnosed with depression.

Hamaideh (2011) Studied to detect stressors and responses to stressors across university students, and to also investigate the interaction between student difficulties and study qualities. The researchers utilized a correlational descriptive design. The stressors and responses to stressors were measured using the student-life Stress Inventory (SSI). To find participants, stratified random sampling was used. The result indicates that the personality' stress factors

were the most likely type of stressor encountered by students, followed by 'pressure. The most significant adaptive responses were determined to be students' cognitive actions.

The Kranz (2008) study had been used to measure the stress levels of students participating in a pharmacy program. An individual interview that was used to collect data, and demographics and stress questionnaires were used. The study showed that students perceived stress as ordinary to above average, with a mean score of 3.8 out of 5, and that 70.5 percent of the students reported using an active strategy to cope with stress, such as exercising, playing basketball, or swimming.

Razia (2016) discovered that students in tuition-based schools face more scholarly pressure than their counterparts in public schools. The unsteadiness of these feelings effectively initiates unusual conduct, which then influences the learning accomplishments and change capacity of students if proper convenient advising isn't given by the foundations, instructors, and guardians, or if they can't get suitable worry from their companions or family members. (Chen et al., 2006).

Material and Methods

Population and Sample

The population of this research study consisted of all public college students (male and female) in all six tehsils headquarters of district Attock. There are twelve public colleges for males and females, respectively.

Convenience sampling was employed during this study. In the sample fifty (50) students from each college were selected to become participants. The estimated sample comprised 600 students from 12 public colleges in district Attock.

Research Instrument and its validation

A self-developed questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale was used for getting relevant and correct data from respondents. The content of the questionnaire was selected keeping in mind the research objectives of the study. The questionnaire consisted of twenty-five (25) statements to gather information regarding the stress level of college students in district Attock. These statements were categorized into three (3) main domains; the first was about "Academic factor" which contained (9) statements. The second was about "social factor" which contained eight (8) statements. The third was about "physical factor" which contained eight (8) statements.

To ensure validity the questionnaire items are approved by the education research department. They had omitted errors in the questionnaire items and approved the questionnaire items for a further survey to conduct the research. This was further ensured by conducting a pilot study to make it obvious that the questionnaire covered the objectives of the study. Internal consistency of items was ensured by using Cronbach's alpha by using the statistical pack of SPSS 26. Internal consistency was between 0.59-0.91. Overall average reliability was 0.72.

Data analysis

The researcher personally visited the selected institutions to collect the data. The obtained data was analyzed by using descriptive statistics, i.e., mean, standard deviation, and t-test, by using SPSS version 26.

Results and Discussion

Table 1
Mean, Standard deviation, and t-value for the academic factor items

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	p
Male	300	29.64	6.79	-3.33	.001
Female	300	31.45	6.27		

Table 1 shows that the results found that ($P < 0.05$, $t = -3.33$). So, this value shows that there is a significant difference between male and female students regarding academic stress. It was concluded that female students have higher academic stress as compared to male students.

Table 2
Mean, Standard deviation, and t-value for the social factor items

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	p
Male	300	27.18	4.17	-1.97	.48
Female	300	27.84	3.99		

Table 2 shows the results about the students' social stress based on gender. The results found that ($P > 0.05$, $t = -1.97$). There is no significant difference between male and female students regarding social stress. Furthermore, both male and female students have a higher social stress.

Table 3
Mean, Standard deviation, and t-value for the physical factor items.

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	p
Male	300	27.33	3.94	-1.82	1.89
Female	300	27.91	3.90		

Table 3 shows the result about the students' physical stress based on gender. The results found that ($P > 0.05$, $t = -1.82$). There is no significant difference between male and female students regarding physical stress. It was concluded that both male and female students have higher physical stress.

Discussions

The purpose of the study was to investigate students' stress levels in relation to academic, social, and physical stress. Further, the study also aimed to determine the difference between the stress levels of male and female college students. Students who experience academic stress perform inadequately in academic coursework.

According to the current study, the majority of participants have moderate academic stress, and some of them have a high level of stress. The excessive amount of homework and insufficient educational resources were observed to be the most common causes of academic stress.

The findings of this study indicate that the majority of students at this level experience high levels of social stress, inflicted as a result of social stressors such as conflicts with teacher; students prefer to be alone; and they struggle with social communication.

In the physical factor of stress, the majority of participants reported a high level to very high level of physical stress. Students are dissatisfied with the college environment and require more academic counselling to resolve their issues. As a result, their academic

grades decreased, which made them concerned about their academic performance. These factors cause numerous physical issues such as difficulty sleeping, and a headache every day.

It was found that female students face more stress than male students. In one out of three domains, it was found that female students have higher academic stress as compared to male students. In terms of social and physical stress, it was found that both male and female students have high level of stress.

Conclusion

Stress affects people in different ways. A student faces a new beginning, additional obligations, and the task of positioning themselves for success throughout college. College is the next stage in some people's lives after high school, while it is a time of sacrifice for others to have a better outcome. Stress affects students for a variety of personal and social reasons.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the stress level of college students. It also showed that the physical, academic, and social components of stress were found to be higher among college students. The academic stressors that cause significant academic stress include academic overload, financial difficulties as a result of educational costs and insufficient educational resources.

Sleep issues, social isolation, an inability to focus and concentrate, and headaches were found to be the physical sources of stress that students experienced at the highest level. Effective time management and making sure to complete at least one physical activity each day can help reduce stress, increase attention span, and boost academic productivity.

No matter which paths a student chooses, they will bring their problems with them and compound them by having to deal with the stress of adjusting to campus life, making new friends, getting involved, having conflicts with teachers, being unable to resolve conflicts, and attempting to balance them. These were found to be the social sources of stress that students experienced at the highest level.

Recommendations

It was therefore recommended that college administration should include courses on stress management in the curriculum as well as conduct forums and campaigns on the subject. The student union should have organized competitions and social events for students in cooperation with the sports council and management. The college administration system should include a guidance and counselling section so that students can go there to talk about matters that are important to them. In the end, it is the student's duty to take care of their mental and physical health, but it is the staff and faculty of a college's role to show concern and notice when a student is having trouble.

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