



## PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF STRESS ON COLLEGE STUDENTS

S.Sharmila<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar in Management, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore, Tamilnadu, India



### ABSTRACT

**T**his study is mainly focused on the psychological stress of students in today's scenario. Stress is an inevitable part of life; it can take a toll on students' physical health, emotional wellbeing, and academic success unless they learn to manage it appropriately. College students experience stress related to changes in lifestyle, increased workload, new responsibilities, and interpersonal relationships. Extreme levels of stress can hinder work effectiveness and lead to poor academic performance and attrition. College students who experienced stressful life events also reported worse health outcomes and reduced quality of life. Introducing successful coping strategies may help students to avoid the destructive consequences of excessive stress.

**KEYWORDS:** Academic Stress, College Students, Emotional Well Being.

### INTRODUCTION

Stress refers to the conflict between our external environment and leading to emotional and physical pressure. In our fast paced world it is impossible to live without stress. There are both positive and negative stress, depending upon individual unique perception of tension between two forces.

Part of managing your stress levels include learning about how stress can affect you emotionally and physically as well as how to identify if you are performing at your optimal stress level [OSL] or if you are experiencing negative stress. There are

different causes of stress and that what causes stress is known as stressors. Common life style stressors include performance stressors, threat and bereavement stressors. Performance stressors are triggered when an individual is placed in a situation when he feels a need to excel. Threat stressors are usually when the current situation poses a dangerous threat, such as an economic downturn. Thus there are various stressors and even more varied methods and techniques of dealing with stress and turning it our advantage.



On the basis of clinical impression psychologists have long believed that stress might be a key factor in the causation of many kinds of psychological problems and mental illness. In the domain of common psychological problems it is clear that stress may contribute to the poor academic performance. It's clear that stress frequently plays a role in the onset of full-fledged psychological disorders.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Stress is simply a reaction to a stimulus that disturbs our physical or mental equilibrium. In other words, it's an omnipresent part of life. A stressful event can trigger the "fight-or-flight" response, causing hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol to surge through the body. A little bit of stress, known as "acute stress," can be exciting—it keeps us active and alert. But long-term, or "chronic stress," can have detrimental effects on health. You may not be able to control the stressors in your world, but you can alter the reaction to them.

Stress is a common and inevitable component in the lives of every individual, regardless of race or cultural background (Newth, 2011). Over the past few decades, there has been significant investigation on the issues of stress and management of stress (Dziegielewski, Turnage & RoestMarti, 2004). In addition, university students have shown to possess a unique set of stressors which can affect their everyday experiences (Hall, 2005). The focus of this report is on stress and how it can affect academic performance. We've all experienced it. We can probably describe what it feels like. But, just what is stress? (Newth 2011) makes use of his first complex definition that stress is "an applied force or systems forces that tends to strain or deform a body" and his easy to understand definition that reads "it is a feeling of not being in control".

In essence stress could be described as the pressure or demands placed upon us and how we respond to those pressures.

"The background to modern day stress issues seems to be more widespread than ever and many of the reasons as to why these exist are quite obvious such as more work by less people, financial uncertainty, job insecurity, constant demands for high performance, the increase requirement for information, impossible targets, juggling part-time or full-time work and life/family priorities/children, health issues, the downsides of cyberspace and technology, time management, sleep deprivation,

social activities, the depressing state of affairs in many parts of the world and much more besides" (Newth: 11). He also adds that another reason suggested as we know so much about the subject that some suggest it "encourages unhealthy circumspection" (Newth: 11). He further questions the theory by asking could these stress arise due to the fault of other people on an individual.

Looking at (Selye, 1974) he further suggests on the basis of Newth's research that there are a series of physiological reactions that occurs in response to demands. Some familiar health reactions to demands made on the body include increased heart rate, respiratory rate, blood pressure and blood glucose level. These compensatory reactions occur to ensure the muscles and vital organs have an ample supply of oxygen, energy and nutrients to handle the challenging situation (Selye, 1974). In addition, (Nathan, 2002) also states that prolonged and severe stress may be psychologically damaging in that it may hinder a person's ability to engage in effective behaviour and instead the person might end up distancing and worst case scenario- not engage or be present at all.

Another view of the effect of stress on the body was presented by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), in that they state stress is more than a response to environmental demands, but is also related to personal perception. If an individual perceives a situation as stressful, then it is indeed stressful. All in all, when multiple demands are made on an individual, they usually experience intense feelings of stress (Dziegielewski et al., 2004). The present study is to explain the psychological stress that is being affected mentally and physically to the college goers.

## OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

- \* To analyze the psychological stress among college students
- \* To study the level of stress that effects psychologically
- \* This study particularly brings out the impact of psychological stress among college students.

## HYPOTHESIS

**H1:** There is significant relationship between psychological stress and college students.

**H0:** there is no significant relationship between psychological stress and college students.

## SCOPE OF THE STUDY

In this study the impact of psychological stress among college students is limited to Chennai city. The research in this study covered top five engineering colleges in Chennai city namely Indian Institute of Technology, Anna University, Madras University of technology, SRM University, Alagappa University.

## SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is an issue to be discussed seriously or else there will be drastic changes in the minds of students that is going to adversely affect the society and their education at large.

## LIMITATION OF STUDY

Hindering factor is time as we are required to complete research- through interviews, surveys, questionnaires and literature reviews. As resources are limited and Student are hard to win-over to complete your research with as they do not want to offer up their time for free, This is my first time dealing with such an intense assignment and it is scary as it something I thought of and I need to find the proper answers to it. I feel as stresses and tense about completing my assignment to the best of my ability in my given amount of time. Another great fact is that; I believe that even in my tough schedule I will do well.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### POPULATION

The students of top five universities such as Indian Institute of Technology, Anna university, Madras university of technology, SRM University, Alagappa University are used in my study. The above mentioned universities are private institutions.

### SAMPLE SIZE

The sampling technique adopted here was convenience sampling which is carried out with the sample of college goers. Total of used 375 students were contacted out of which 300 were responded .The response rate is 80%.

Data collection:

Instrument used

→ Perceived Stress Scale [PSS]

→ Psychological Well being Scale [PWS]

### STATISTICAL ANALYSIS:

Statistical Analysis Chi-Square test, Regression and Correlations were used to analyze the data using SPSS.

### Correlation Analysis:-

To test the level of first hypothesis the correlation analysis are calculated. The result

indicated that all the variables have statistically significant relationship. Perceived stress scale has moderate negative relationship (-0.045).

### Regression Analysis:-

To test the level of second analysis regression analysis is used this shows positive and statistically significant ranging the  $F = 10.134$  and  $p = .001$ . Thus the second hypothesis get accepted. The economic conditions have a positive correlation with mental stresses of college students. However, statistical data show that the standard deviation of economic conditions is large. This shows that although economic conditions affect mental stresses of college students, the same economic condition may cause various stresses.

## CONCLUSION

Interventions for these students are needed and repeating this study in other colleges is recommended. Therefore, the recommends that further research would develop the understanding of stress among college students with

Specifically, future research should use larger sample size from other institutions to support these findings which help university and college officials to control the stress factors for students. Lastly, religious orientation seems to be adopted as coping methods by majority of students who experience level of stress and tension due to academic quarrel.

## REFERENCES

1. ALDWIN, C. M. (1994). *Stress, coping, and development: An integrative perspective*. New York: Guilford.
2. ANSHEL, M. H., & DELANY, J. (2001). Sources of acute stress, cognitive appraisals, and coping strategies of male and female child athletes *Journal of Sport Behavior*, 24, 329-353
3. BURNS, K. R., & EGAN, E. C. (1994). Description of a stressful encounter: Appraisal, threat and challenge. *Journal of Nursing Education*,
4. Tweed, R.G., White, K., & Lehman, D.R. (2004). Culture, stress, and coping. Internally and externally- targeted control strategies of European Canadians, East Asian Canadians, and Japanese, *J. Cross Cult. Psychol.*, (35) 652.
5. Rees, C. J., & Redfern, D. (2000). Recognising the perceived causes of stress – a training and development perspective, *Ind. and Commer.*
6. Ellison, K. W. (2004). *Stress and the Police Officer*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., Charles C. Thomas Publishers, Springfield, IL, 71-86.
7. Ongori, H & Agolla, J. E. (2008). "Occupational Stress in Organisations and Its Effects on Organisational Performance, *J. Manage. Res.* 8(3): 123-135.
8. Smith, A. (2002). "The scale of perceived occupational stress", *Occup. Med.* (50): 294-8.
9. Tweed, R.G., White, K., & Lehman, D.R. (2004). Culture, stress, and coping. Internally and externally- targeted control strategies of European Canadians, East Asian Canadians, and Japanese, *J. Cross Cult. Psychology.*