

LITERATURE REVIEW ON ACADEMIC STRESS AMONG INDIAN STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Stress is definitely a big word with an even bigger impact; however, this can be addressed with small changes we make in our daily lives. Everyone experiences stress at some point in their lives, but nowadays it is most prevalent among students. It is essential to identify the cause of stress so that it can be carefully addressed and effective interventions outlined. Stress is always perceived as a subjective process and involves the individual's personal analysis and struggle against a threatening event. Stress can lead to depression, anxiety and many other dangerous conditions. The increase in the number of stress management workshops conducted, various articles published, research reports, etc. is a result of the escalation of stress-related cases in the last few decades. This study deals with the conceptual framework of stress, the causes of stress in students and ways to manage stress. In this research article, emphasis was therefore placed on the review of the literature, where work was published on the burden of examining school children.

Keywords: Academic stress, Indian students, causes, impact, stress management.

INTRODUCTION

Stress is the perception of emotional or physical tension. There are a number of incidents in a person's life that lead to negative emotions such as anger, frustration and nervousness, which further develop stress in an individual. Stress is the body's response to a challenge or demand. Sometimes it can be positive; however, long-term stress can lead to serious health conditions. Stress is considered a negative, behavioral, physiological process that occurs when a person tries to adapt or compromise stressors. Examination stress is a special type of stress that almost everyone experiences in life, but the causes of such a feeling can be numerous in different situations and environments. The degree to which such stress is felt may also vary from individual to individual.

When a student's aspirations are too high to achieve, but his skills, interests, attitudes, and abilities do not match, a person may experience stress. An individual may excel in limited areas, but sometimes when he wants to excel in every area of life regardless of his own abilities or underestimating his own self, he may suffer from stress. When students do not plan their studies and set their life goals at the beginning of the academic year, they may face difficulties and stress before the exam starts. Many students perceive examinations as a threatening event. Their attitude towards examination is negative instead of working hard and developing confidence in them; they develop fear and remain tensed for one reason or the other which can lead to examination stress. Students learn more and more to achieve excellence. However, when they fail to achieve their goals, they have chosen wrong study methods such as rote memorization etc. which lead to stress.

Psychologists and educators focus their research proposals on the area of stress. They remained mainly in the areas of work stress, stressful life events and stress from some chronic diseases, etc. However, less attention was paid to the issue of investigative stress, which is aware of the current need in the field of education, where the emphasis is on mobilizing and channeling the inner possibilities of students in order to cope with difficulties and achieved better results. Hence, the variable of investigative stress was chosen for investigation mainly because it exists in relation to human cognitive functioning. Other variables selected for this study are personality, intelligence, and performance motivation. Stress levels can vary depending on how a person reacts to a certain situation. Some people just don't care and don't bother; they perceive stress as a trivial knock and move on in life daily. Others actually worry more than they need to, affecting their health. It can vary with different levels of personality, intelligence and motivation to succeed. The examiner therefore took this study into account with the problem of examination stress.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review is an important part of any research. It helps the researcher to know the areas that have been focused on by earlier studies and certain aspects that have not been touched by them.

Reddy *et al.* (2018) in their study suggests that academic streams have no effect on the amount of stress. However, stress should be addressed on a personal, social and institutional level. Various interventions such as psychotherapy, yoga, life skills training, mindfulness, meditation, and the feedback method have been found to be helpful in dealing with stress.

In his study, Dimitrov (2017) suggests that student well-being can be addressed through recreation, regular exercise, and dietary habits, which in turn help manage stress. His study also shows that the current education system places more

emphasis on academic qualifications and does not contribute enough to the holistic development of students. This competitive academic focus makes students more fearful of failure. Fresh graduates need more development of communication skills for better placement.

Subramani and Kadiravan (2017) assessed the association between academic stress and students' mental health. Their study shows a good correlation between academic stress and mental health. Students face a lot of pressure from parents and school for academic performance, but they don't get the same good guidance. Students are mentally healthy when they speak constructively and consistently in academic forums. The study also describes that there is a significant difference in the mental health of private and public school students. He argued that private school students have a different upbringing and a lot of exposure compared to public school students who come from poor socio-economic backgrounds and don't have enough exposure. This is one of the reasons for the escalation of stress.

Sharma *et al.* (2016) in their study outlined different methods to deal with stress. These methods included exercise, time management, leisure activities, etc. The importance of a supportive environment for reducing stress was also mentioned. Changing the delivery style from teachers to providing mentors can also help in creating a stress-free environment.

Prabu (2015) in his study on senior secondary school students found that students are more stressed than students. The academic stress of urban students is greater than that of rural students. The stress of a public school student is less compared to that of a private school student. Science stream students are more stressed than Arts stream students.

Deb *et al.* (2014), studied 400 male students from five private high schools in Kolkata who were studying in grades 10 and 12. 35 percent of students had high academic stress and 37 percent had high levels of anxiety.

Struthers *et al.* (2010) investigated the effect of test stress on grades and measured students' perception of anxiety.

According to Denscombe (2012), it is possible to consider examinations as stressful based on their own characteristics or functions, without having to refer to perceived anxiety and excitement. Denscombe (2012) also suggested that exams are stressful for this group of students for a variety of reasons, such as self-esteem cues, judgments from others, and teachers' appeals to fear.

Putwain (2008) indicated how stress is also used as an umbrella term for any negative affect associated with exams: time constraints, exhaustion from having to take several exams in a single day, preparing for exams while still finishing the course, and interfering with relationships and social activities. The test anxiety construct is too narrow to capture these features of investigative stress, but at the same time, due to its lack of specificity, this broad concept of investigative stress is not always useful.

Kaur (2014) acknowledged that the mental health of teenagers is affected by academic stress. Girls with academic stress have been found to have poorer mental health compared to boys. It was explained in the study that parents sometimes put pressure and burden on students, which leads to deterioration of mental health.

In his study, Bataineh (2013) measured academic stressors experienced by students at university. The results of the analyzes showed that the reasons for the stress include an unreasonable academic overload, a lack of time to study due to the extensive content of the courses, high family expectations and a low level of motivation. Fear of failure is also a major cause of stress. No significant difference was found between students from different specializations.

Khan and Kausar (2013) concluded that stress definitely negatively affects academic performance, although no significant gender difference was found. The difference was noticeable between younger and older pupils. Of course, stress affects the ability to learn and manage time effectively. Studying regularly is important; it helps reduce academic pressure and helps them achieve their goals.

Intelligence is one of the most elusive concepts. Looking at it one way, everyone knows what intelligence is, no one does. Implicit theories of intelligence differ from explicit theories, and the Western perspective on intelligence differs from the Eastern perspective. Concepts of intelligence between different cultures also tend to differ in their emphasis on different characteristics. However, an examination of earlier and newer definitions of the concept shows that common themes in earlier definitions of intelligence seem to be with respect to the ability to adapt to the environment and the ability to learn.

Pahuja (2004) noted that an individual is said to be intelligent in proportion to how successful he is in ordinary life situations. An analysis of the modern concept of intelligence points to these interpretable factors, such as verbal intelligence, problem-solving ability, and practical intelligence.

Kaur *et al.* (2004) found a positive and significant relationship between students' intelligence and science attitudes. Highly intelligent students showed less stress due to their positive attitude. If we look at intelligence in this way, studying it in terms of behavior in real-world settings is of great importance. The investigation is one such case of a real situation.

Student behavior during the exam cannot be taken as a continuation of general behavior in other situations. Different students' perceptions and reactions would vary in this regard. The same would be true of coping and coping strategies.

Busari (2012) found that stress led to depression in high school students and was associated with an effect on academic performance. An introduction to preventive measures, teaching life skills and other therapeutic techniques should be considered.

Nandamuri and Gowthami (2011) studied stress among vocational students and claimed that curriculum and instructional parameters were most responsible for stress with 86 percent, followed by placement-related issues at 63 percent, assessment and teamwork accounted for 41 percent and 24 percent of the percent, respectively. . The study further identified various micro-problems responsible for stress and listed twelve sub-problems related to curriculum and instruction. Once the sub-problems of each parameter are identified, it has provided academic administrators with a better vision for initiating efforts to reduce the severity of academic stress.

Saklofske *et al.* (2016) examined the associations between personality, coping, locus of control, emotional intelligence, and health behaviors in Canadian students. Consistent associations with health behaviors were found for conscientiousness, whereas the pattern of correlations for the other measures was more variable. The emotional intelligence, coping, and health locus of control scales were inter correlated, and scale-level factor analysis suggested the extraction of a super ordinate coping factor. This was found to mediate the relationship between personality and regular exercise and healthy eating strategies. These findings suggest that the links between coping and emotional intelligence and the ways in which emotional intelligence may function as a coping resource should be further investigated.

Austin *et al.* (2010) examined the associations between emotional intelligence, stress management, personality-related stress, and examination in Canadian university students. Stress was measured at the beginning of the semester and again in the pre-examination period. Higher levels of stress were associated with lower scores on emotional intelligence components and higher scores on emotion-focused coping and neuroticism. Factor analysis at the level of the emotional intelligence scale and the coping subscale produced three composite factors, each of which had high loadings on at least one emotional intelligence and one coping subscale. The associations of the emotion regulation factor and the task focus factor with personality, stress and subjective well-being, emotional intelligence were investigated using structural equation modeling. The results showed that these factors mediated the effect of personality on stress, subjective well-being and emotional intelligence.

Personality is the whole integrated pattern of behavior that distinguishes one person from another as uniquely as fingerprints and as distinctively as a photograph. It does not consist of secondary, emotionally neutral features, but of the most important thing we can say about a person. Everyone has a unique personality.

Pahuja (2004) expressed that our personality is a unique organization of the many things that belong to our self. The personality construct can be thought of as a psychological system of structures and functions. It is not a jumble of unrelated properties and different behaviors, but a tightly woven organization of stable structures and coordinated functions. Because of the continuity in man's constitutional makeup and the narrow bending of experience for learning alternatives to behavior, this system develops an integrated pattern of traits and dispositions that are deeply rooted and not easily eradicated, permeating every fact of life. This system means the concept of personality. For each of us, this configuration, representing the interconnectedness of various psychological processes, would determine the disposition that is, how to react to the given situation, behave and cope in both normal and crisis times. Here it would reflect a dynamic pattern of adaptive competencies. It means that the same environmental stimuli tend to induce different reaction tendencies in people. The exam represents one such typical psychological situation that each student takes differently, in some it provokes competition and healthy enthusiasm, in others it prevents, avoids or frightens.

Most of us develop a strong desire to push ourselves to achieve, to gain recognition in some shape or form. This has been called the achievement motive or the mastery motive. When a person expects their performance to be evaluated against some standard of excellence, such behavior is achievement-oriented. Panda and Jena (2000) defined performance motivation as a drive to improve or a psychological factor that provides an internal drive to excel. Desmukh (2000) considered a sense of achievement, self-realization or self-realization as a positive aspect of performance motivation. The term performance motivation has been defined by various psychologists as a tendency to maintain and increase an individual's expertise in a specific work area. It's the urge to improve. It means dissatisfaction with the current state of affairs. Singh (2011) compared the school achievement motivation of adolescents from aided and non-aided schools. The results showed that there is a significant difference in academic performance motivation between assisted and unassisted secondary school boys, a significant difference in academic achievement motivation between assisted and unaided secondary school girls, and no significant difference in academic achievement motivation among boys from assisted secondary schools. and unsupported high school students.

A success-oriented person is one who sincerely tries to improve his life conditions. Reber and Emily (2001) explained achievement motivation as a socially characterized need with two critical components, a set of internalized standards that represent personal achievement or fulfillment, and a theoretical emergent or motivating condition that compels one to attempt to meet those standards.

According to Agolla (2009), stress has become an important topic in academic circles. Many philosophers have done considerable research on stress and have come to the conclusion that this topic needs much more attention. Radcliff and Lester (2003) studied anticipated stress among final year undergraduate students and recognized that classroom assignments, lack of guidance, and pressure to mix and match were the causes of increased stress.

McKean *et al.* (2000) argue that college students experience higher stress at expected times in each semester. Academic commitments, financial pressures and lack of time management skills lead to the creation of stress. Excessive stress can affect well-being, emotional attitude, and academic performance. This is where it becomes crucial for college students to develop methods to deal with stressful situations.

CONCLUSION

Previous studies have suggested that the level of stress experienced by students is influenced by the characteristics of the education, the teachers, and the students themselves. They remained mainly in the field of work stress, stressful life events and stress from some chronic diseases, etc. However, less attention was paid to the issue of burden during examinations, he is aware of the current need in the field of education. Some students want to achieve a standard of excellence in every area of life, but exam stress plays its role everywhere. It can vary with different levels of intelligence, personality and motivation to succeed. Investigators thus have great opportunities for research in the field of investigative stress.

A major source of stress for students is lack of proper support. There is a standard assessment procedure that does not give students enough room to experiment and push the boundaries of excellence. There are many personal and social factors that lead to stress among students. Ambiguity and unavailability of proper career counselors lead to misdirected goals and even after graduation, students are clueless about their careers and unsure of employment. The pressure of studying on academics, extracurricular activities, assignments, etc. has increased incomparably. Parents expect their children to be part of the rat race and outshine their competitors, strengthening their own social status in society.

Running by the numbers is the new fad in this era of cut throat competition, a sad reality but true. Every child is different, so it's important for parents to make their children realize the importance of identifying their strengths and encouraging them to pursue careers within their abilities. It is important to do what you love or love what you do. Effective time management and ensuring that at least one physical exercise is done daily can discourage stress and improve attention span, thus becoming productive in academics.

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