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# Assessment of Stress Management Techniques Utilized By College Students: A Quantitative Study

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**ABSTRACT:** This study investigates the stress management strategies employed by college students, seeking to assess their effectiveness through a comparative analysis. A mixed-methods approach was adopted, with quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews given to a diverse group of college students. Five major solutions emerged: mindfulness practices, physical activity, time management skills, social support networks, and cognitive-behavioral therapy. The findings revealed disparities in the adoption and utility of these strategies across demographic groups and academic disciplines. Furthermore, significant associations were discovered between the employment of various strategies, levels of perceived stress, and academic accomplishment. The findings highlight the need for customized interventions and support mechanisms to meet the diverse stress management needs of college students, hence increasing their overall well-being and academic performance.

**KEYWORDS:** Stress management, College students, Comparative analysis, Effective strategies, Exploration

## I. INTRODUCTION

Stress is a complex, dynamic process in which a person interacts with his or her environment. During the battle, one responds physically, psychologically, and emotionally to various situations. Stress is a negative influence caused by prolonged strain at work and home. In other words, stress is an external force that exerts control on internal emotions. Although stress is an unavoidable part of many activities at work and at home, it can be harmful if it gets severe enough to interfere with daily activities.

Student life is a transitional period. They enroll in a course because they believe it will help them achieve or have what they desire, such as better professional opportunities or greater enjoyment of life. Studying is part of the evolving process, which can be demanding at times. Stress is an inherent aspect of life, and it can harm students' physical health, emotional well-being, and academic progress unless they learn to manage it well. Changes in lifestyle, increased workload, new responsibilities, and interpersonal relationships all contribute to stress among college students. Extreme levels of stress can reduce work effectiveness, resulting in poor academic performance and attrition. Introducing good coping strategies can help children avoid the detrimental impacts of chronic stress.

Stress is how people physically and emotionally respond to changes, events, and situations in their lives. Stress affects people differently and for a variety of reasons. The reaction is defined by how you interpret an incident or setting. If you perceive a situation negatively, you are likely to feel distressed—overwhelmed, oppressed, or out of control. Distress is the most prevalent sort of stress. The opposing form, eustress, results from a "positive" view of an event or situation, hence the name "good stress." Eustress prepares you for a challenge and can be used to relieve boredom because it needs focused concentration. That enthusiasm, however, can quickly turn into distress if something causes you to see the situation as unmanageable or out of control. Many people find public speaking or airplane journeys stressful, leading in physical symptoms such as elevated heart rate and loss of appetite, whilst others like the experience. It's frequently a matter of perception: what one person considers a positive stressor may be perceived negatively by another.

College is a fascinating adventure filled with opportunities for growth and learning. Despite the excitement, students frequently experience a variety of challenges that can lead to stress. Academic pressures, social adjustments, and personal duties can be daunting. Stress management for college students requires not only dealing with challenges, but also cultivating resilience and maintaining a healthy balance.



Hans Selye was one of the pioneers of stress research. In 1956, he said, "Stress is not necessarily a bad thing; it all depends on how you interpret it." The stress of exciting, creative, and effective labor is helpful, but that of failure, humiliation, or infection is detrimental." Selye believed that the physiologic effects of stress would be felt regardless of whether the situation was positive or unfavorable. Since then, much more research has been conducted, and ideas have developed. Stress is currently seen as a "bad thing" having a number of detrimental biochemical and long-term effects. These consequences are rarely noticeable in positive situations. The most widely accepted definition of stress (attributed mostly to Richard S Lazarus) is a circumstance or feeling in which a person believes that "demands exceed the personal and social resources the individual is able to mobilize."

In a word, it describes how we feel when we believe we have lost control of the situation. This is the major phrase used in this section of Mind Tools, but we also recognize a related innate stress response to unexpected situations. As a result, our stress reaction is both innate and shaped by cognitive processes.

### **STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES**

Stress is the strain generated by a disagreement between our external environment and ourselves, which causes emotional and bodily pressure. Stress is inherent in today's fast-paced world, whether you are a student or a working adult. Stress can be either positive or negative, depending on how each individual perceives the tension between the two forces. Not all stress is bad.

Positive stress, also known as eustress, can help a person function to their full potential. As a result, it is apparent that some form of positive stress can add color and life to our lives. The presence of a deadline, for example, can drive us to make better use of our time and work faster. It is critical to remember that stress management is using stress to our advantage rather than eradicating it from our life. On the other hand, negative stress can create mental and physical strain. The person will experience stress, headaches, irritability, and, in severe cases, heart palpitations. As a result, while some stress can be beneficial, it is vital to manage stress levels so that they do not negatively impact your health or relationships. Stress management includes learning about how stress affects you emotionally and physically, as well as determining whether you are functioning at your optimal stress level (OSL) or experiencing negative stress. This understanding will enable you to realize when you need to take a break or seek professional support. It also acts as the first step in developing stress-management strategies.

### **EFFECTS OF STRESS ON COLLEGE STUDENTS**

College life is typically portrayed as a time of enthusiasm, independence, and self- discovery. However, it also brings with it a bevy of challenges and responsibilities, which can generate significant stress among students. Stress can have a wide-ranging impact on college students' lives, affecting academic performance, physical health, emotional well-being, and social relationships.

- 1. Academic achievement:** Stress can have a negative impact on academic achievement. High stress levels typically lead to poor concentration, reduced memory recall, and difficulty problem solving. This can lead to decreased productivity, lower grades, and academic underperformance. Chronic stress can also cause procrastination, missed deadlines, and a general decline in academic motivation.
- 2. Physical Health:** The physical effects of stress on college students should not be overlooked. Chronic stress can weaken the immune system, leaving students more vulnerable to ailments such as colds, flu, and infection. Furthermore, unhealthy stress coping strategies such as poor eating habits, a lack of exercise, and insufficient sleep can worsen physical health issues. Long-term stress may also contribute to the development of more serious health problems, such as cardiovascular disease and gastrointestinal difficulties.
- 3. Mental Well-Being:** Stress is a common cause of mental health issues among college students. The pressure to achieve academically, mixed with concerns about the future and social pressures, can cause increased stress, anxiety and depression. Students may experience overwhelming feelings of inadequacy, despair, and low self-esteem. Chronic stress, if not handled, can lead to more serious mental health issues and have a substantial impact on overall well-being.
- 4. Social Interactions:** Stress has a negative impact on college students' relationships and social interactions. Those experiencing high levels of stress may retreat from social activities, distance themselves from friends and peers, and struggle to maintain constructive relationships. Interpersonal disputes can arise as a result of intense emotions and communication breakdowns in stressful settings. As a result, students may feel distant, lonely, and unsupported, which might increase their stress.
- 5. Financial Burden:** Financial difficulty can be a major stress for college students. Balancing tuition, living expenses, and part-time employment can be difficult, causing additional stress. Financial problems may interfere with





students' ability to focus on their studies, participate in extracurricular activities, and maintain a healthy work-life balance.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

**Amanvermez, Y., Zhao, R., Cuijpers, P., de Wit, L. M., Ebert, D. D., Kessler, R. C., ... & Karyotaki, E. (2022).** College students face several sources of stress. Self-guided stress management interventions offer an excellent opportunity for scaling up evidence-based interventions for self-management of these stresses. However, little is known about the overall effects of these interventions. Increasing this understanding is essential because self-guided stress management interventions might be a cost-effective and acceptable way of providing help to this important segment of the population during a critical life course stage.

**'Sharma, M., & Rush, S. E. (2014).** Stress is a global public health problem with several negative health consequences, including anxiety, depression, cardiovascular disease, and suicide. Mindfulness-based stress reduction offers an effective way of reducing stress by combining mindfulness meditation and yoga in an 8-week training program. The purpose of this study was to look at studies from January 2009 to January 2014 and examine whether mindfulness-based stress reduction is a potentially viable method for managing stress. A systematic search from Medline, CINAHL, and Alt HealthWatch databases was conducted for all types of quantitative articles involving mindfulness-based stress reduction.

**Winbush, N. Y., Gross, C. R., & Kreitzer, M. J. (2007).** Sleep disturbance is common and associated with compromised health status. Cognitive processes characterized by stress and worry can cause, or contribute to, sleep complaints. This study systematically evaluated the evidence that sleep can be improved by mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR), a formalized psychoeducational intervention that helps individuals self-manage and reframe worrisome and intrusive thoughts.

**Turner, K., & McCarthy, V. L. (2017).** Undergraduate nursing students experience significant stress and anxiety, inhibiting learning and increasing attrition. Twenty-six intervention studies were identified and evaluated, updating a previous systematic review which categorized interventions targeting: (1) stressors, (2) coping, or (3) appraisal. The majority of interventions in this review aimed to reduce numbers or intensity of stressors through curriculum development (12) or to improve students' coping skills

**Bamber, M. D., & Schneider, J. K. (2016).** The primary purpose of this paper was to narratively review the research testing the effects of mindfulness meditation on stress and anxiety in the college students; reviewing the inclusion of mindfulness was a secondary purpose.

**Byrley, A. (2016).** This study compared the sources of stress between first-generation and continuing-generation freshman female students, Caucasian and non-Caucasian freshman female students, and straight and non-straight freshman female students. This study was conducted at a rural, Midwestern, four-year, public institution, 101 first time freshman students living in on-campus housing participated in this study.

**Hurst, C. S., Baranik, L. E., & Daniel, F. (2013).** A total of 40 qualitative studies were reviewed and coded according to the college student stressors they represented. These studies utilized a variety of qualitative methods to examine stressors representing the following themes: relationships, lack of resources, academics, the environment, expectations, diversity, transitions and other stressors. Relationship stressors were the most commonly reported theme and covered areas including stress associated with family, romantic, peer and faculty relationships.

**Ogoe, J. (2022).** This paper adopted the cross-sectional quantitative approach to examine the effects stressful activities have on clothing selection and dressing among students. A sample of 280 university students were reached by adopting the purposive and convenience sampling techniques. Thirty-seven (37) itemized questionnaire was used to obtain information from respondents. The descriptive analysis carried on three main variables presented high mean values of  $M=2.91$ ,  $SD=0.14$  for Stressful Activities,  $M=2.92$ ,  $SD=0.21$  for Clothing Selection Mode and  $M=2.68$ ;  $SD=0.18$  for Clothing Practices to Manage Stress.

**Owusu, P., & Essel, G. (2017).** This thesis examines the impact of stress on students' academic performance and stress management among students of Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences. The main objectives were to ascertain or identify the extent to which stress affects students' academic success, health and general lifestyle, as well as to inquire



and bring to light measures to counteract the effects of existing stress in students.

Arza, A., Garzón-Rey, J. M., Lázaro, J., Gil, E., Lopez-Anton, R., de la Camara, C., ... & Aguiló, J. (2019). Social and medical problems associated with stress are increasing globally and seriously affect mental health and well-being. However, an effective stress-level monitoring method is still not available. This paper presents a quantitative method for monitoring acute stress levels in healthy young people using biomarkers from physiological signals that can be unobtrusively monitored. Two states were induced to 40 volunteers, a basal state generated with a relaxation task and an acute stress state generated by applying a standard stress test that includes five different tasks.

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY OBJECTIVE

- To determine ways by which student’s stress can be reduced.
- To determine some common reasons of stress amongst college students.
- To examine at what level stress can affect the mental peace of college students.
- To identify impact of stress on student’s academic performance

#### Hypothesis :

**H0** : Stress create a negative impact on students’ performance.

**H1** : Stress create a positive impact on students performance.

- Sample size : - 100 (No. of Respondent)
- Sampling technique : Simple Random Sampling

Analysis and Interpretation Factors that add stress

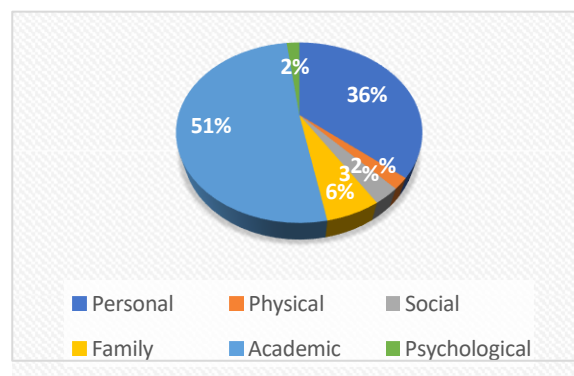


Figure 1.1 shows that the majority of respondents (51%) feel stressed due to academic features. 36% of respondents experience stress due to personal circumstances. 6% of respondents are due to familial factors, whereas 3% of respondents are stressed due to circumstances. 2% of stress is due to physical reasons.

#### Effect of stress on Body

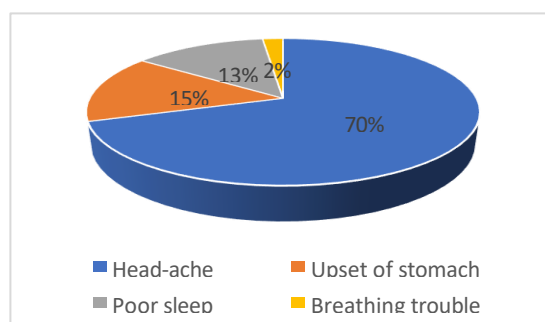


Figure 1.2 shows that the majority of responders (70%) suffer from headaches, whereas 15% have stomach trouble. 13% of respondents have poor sleep. A smaller minority of responders (2%) had breathing problems.



Effect of stress on mind

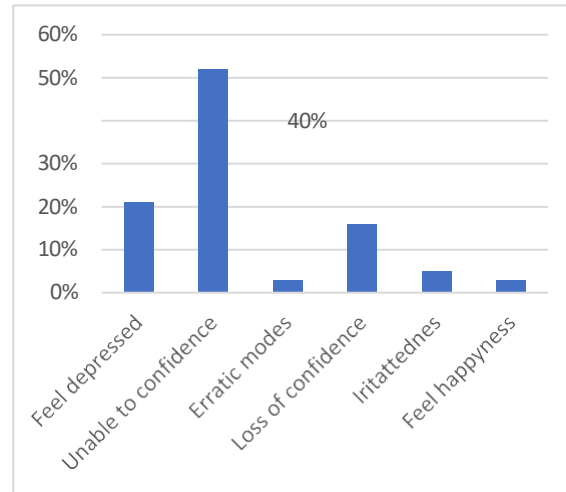


Figure 1.3 demonstrates that 52% of students are unable to concentrate owing to stress. 21% of students experience depression. 16% sense a loss of confidence, and 5% are irritable. 3% of respondents suffer from irregular behaviors, and 3% feel helpless.

IV. CONCLUSION

In today's fast-paced world, stress cannot be avoided. In this age of globalization, competition is everywhere, and people will take any risk to achieve. Especially Stress in academic institutions can have both positive and negative consequences if not managed properly. Because academic institutions have distinct work environments than non-academic institutions, it is reasonable to assume differences in the symptoms, causes, and effects of stress among college students when determining the subissues of each stress component. Academic work, future worries, interpersonal interaction difficulty, dating troubles, self-doubt, family issues, and so on are all examples of college stresses.

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