A Study of Impact of Stress upon Academic Performance and Health of MBA Students

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Abstract:

India has one of the largest education systems in the world. The Indian education system is divided into two major segments: core and non-core businesses. The core group consists of schools and higher education, while the non-core business focuses on segments such as pre- schools, vocational training and coaching classes.

This paper discusses stress and coping mechanisms among MBA students. The purpose is to understand stress related problems and suggest suitable solutions for resolving it. Simple Random Sampling was assigned to 40 MBA students. Hence, their levels of stress were measured three times (beginning, middle, and end of semester).

The objective of this study is to explore the components of academic stress and the impact on performance and health among the MBA students. Academic stress among students has long been researched on, and researchers have identified different stressors. The study further tries to make an in-depth investigation into each component of academic stress such as curriculum and instruction, team work related issues, assessment, and placement, to identify the micro issues that are causing stress. The sample comprises of 40 MBA students from various management institutes spread in Kolhapur City. Data was collected through self designed academic stress questionnaire based on previous models available.

Keywords: MBA, Stress, Academic stress, Student stress, Stress among students, Stress Management, Coping Mechanisms, Stress among students, stress and coping, Stress Impact

Introduction:

Stress can refer to experiencing events perceived as endangering one s physiological, physical or psychological wellbeing or a combination of these and when there is excessive pressure its intensity and chronic nature can lead to mental and physical ill health including depression,

nervous breakdown and heart disease (Quick, Nelson and Hurrel, 1997).

The word stress" is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as "a state of affair involving demand of physical or mental energy". A condition or circumstances which can distribute the normal physical and mental health of an individual. Stress is the tension and pressure that result when an individual views situation which present a demand that threatens to exceed his or her capabilities or resources.

MBA is one of the most common career choices amongst the youth in India today. There are 1600 business schools in India offering two-year MBA programs and various universities have also formed. Academic institutions have different work settings compared to nonacademic and therefore one would expect the difference in symptoms, causes, and consequences of stress in the two set up. Stress seems to be very common in college student s life.

College students have many obstacles to overcome in order to achieve their optimal academic performance. It takes a lot more than just studying to achieve a successful college career. Different stressors such as time management, financial problems, sleep deprivation, social activities, and for some students even having children, can all pose their own threat to a student s academic performance.

Review of Literature:

From the literature **Andrews, B. and J. M. Wilding (2016)** an apparent increase in seriously disturbed students consulting student health services in the UK has led to concern that increasing financial difficulties and other outside pressures may affect student mental health and academic performance.

According to **Lazarus & Folkman (1984),** stress is a mental or physical phenomenon formed through one s cognitive appraisal of the stimulation and is a result of one s interaction with the environment. The existence of stress depends on the existence of the stressor.

Feng (1992) and Volpe (2000) defined stressor as anything that challenges an individual s adaptability or stimulates an individual s body or mentality. Stress can be caused by environmental factors, psychological factors, biological factors, and social factors. It can Journal of Academic and Adolescents are mostly concerned about their physical appearances than about other aspects. Many of them are even dissatisfied with their physical appearances **(Siegel and Lane, 1982).**

Wang and Ko (1999) pointed out that girls feel upset more easily than boys, mainly because of their concerns about physical appearances. Girls may perceive themselves as very ugly , feel that they are too fat, too short, too high, or dislike their hair color or skin color.

Lan (2003) mentioned that some physiological symptoms such as headache were signals of a mental overload.

Chiang (1995) proposed that school is one of the main sources of stress among adolescents. Such stress comes from too much homework, unsatisfactory academic performance, preparation for tests, lack of interest in a particular subject, and teacher s punishment. Generally, parents are very concerned about their children s academic achievement and moral behaviors.

Objectives of Study:

1.   To understand the   Impact of stress on academic performance and mental health of MBA students in Kolhapur city.

2.   To identify the stressors which affect the performance of students and consequences faced by Stress.

Hypotheses:

1.   That different component of academic work results in stress among management students.

2.   That the team related work environment creates stress among management students.

Data Base and Methodology:

1. Study area:

The study is conducted and restricted to MBA students only in Kolhapur city.

2. Sample Design:

The samples were drawn from M.B.A. students of different MBA colleges in Kolhapur city for the academic year 2021-2022. Their ages ranged from 21- 25. Formerly self-administered multiple-choice questionnaires were given to a sample of 40 postgraduate students. Out of this all questionnaires were duly completed and returned, giving 100% return rate because these questionnaires were filled by students after their examination. For this study self-administered questionnaire was constructed. The whole questionnaire divided into five parts; demographic, stress symptoms, academic stressor, interpersonal stressor and an open-ended question which include only one major source of stress. At the end of questionnaire there is an open-ended question, in which responded were asked to mark only one major source of their stress. Simple random sampling method was used for this study. Before circulating the questionnaire to the students, they were informed about the purpose and importance of the study and their participation.

3. Sources of Data:

Primary sources:

The present study is based on the primary sources since the data is collected from the horses mouth. Primary data from the MBA students were collected by using a pre-tested and pre-coded schedule by personal interview.

Secondary sources:

Secondary data is collected from published and unpublished sources. It is collected from

www.irjhis.com   ©2022 IRJHIS | Special Issue, March 2022 | ISSN 2582-8568 | Impact Factor 5.828
International Conference Organized by V.P. Institute of Management Studies & Research, Sangli (Maharashtra, India) "Revival Strategies and Business Policies for Sustainability and Development" on 23rd March 2022

books, journals, reports and published documents.

4. Statistical Analysis tools:

Microsoft -Excel 2018

Table 1

Major Impact of Stress on Academic Performance of MBA Students

Symptoms of Stress among Students	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree
Change in sleeping habits	91%	4.5%	4.5%
Indigestion	74%	26%	------
Experience Anxiety	81.4%	18.6%	------
Having pain in neck and shoulders and suffer from migraine or difficulty in breathing	24%	45%	31%
concentrating on what I"m worrying	100%	-----	-----
Academic Stressors	36.5%	26.5%	37%
Poor Performance in Internal Tests	18.6%	32%	67.4%
Uncertainty about getting job after completion of MBA course	100%	-----	-----
Inadequate resources to do assignments	60%	30%	10%
Overcrowded lecture halls/ class room	22.6%	24%	53.4%
Lower marks than anticipated	11%	42.6%	46.4%
Missed too many classes	19%	40%	41%
Text and examination	27%	31.4%	41.6%
Having difficulty to understanding the contents	48.6%	26.6%	24.8%
High expectations from Parents	92.%	8%	-------
Serious arguments with faculty	10%	15%	75%
Competition with fellow students	95%	5%	------
Faculty biases	10%	20%	70%

(Source - Field Survey, Compiled from Questionnaire & Personnel Interview)

Table 2

Major Causes of Stress for MBA Students

Major sources of Stress	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree
Academic performance pressure	90 %	10%	----

Fear of failure	100%	------	------
Fear of getting job	95%	5%	-----
Financial difficulties	75%	10%	15%
Coping with present environment	48.6%	26.6%	24.8%
Academic overload	35%	30%	35%
Family Life	22.6%	24%	53.4%
Curriculum & Instruction	26.6%	14%	59.4.%
Team work related	38.6%	32.6%	28.8%
Assessment related	39%	50%	50%
Placement related	85%	15%	----
Health Problem	55.6%	26.6%	17.8
Working a part-time job	11%	10%	79%
Nutrition	90.6%	9.4%	-----
Sleeping too much	24%	26%	50%
Not getting enough sleep	81.4%	18.6%	------
Class Attendance	22.6%	24%	53.4%
Problems with roommate	15%	18%	67%
Not exercising enough	75%	25.%	----
Finances	66.6%	24%	9.4%
Course load	38.6%	32.6%	28.8%

(Source - Field Survey, Compiled from Questionnaire & Personnel Interview)

Major Findings and Interpretation:

1. Assessment:

Sometimes students feel anxious when they are assessed because they are afraid of failing the exam. Other causes could be the exam overload (many exams at the same time or the preparation for the exam comprises a large amount of information) and ambiguity (uncertainty about the way that the exam will be evaluated by the teacher).

2. Work overload:

Excessive assignments, excessive class hours, difficulties in planning time, lack of free time, difficulties in combining academic life and personal life, difficulties in keeping concentration, demands of practical activities, and failed or lost courses.

3. Other conditions of the learning process:

Relationship between the teacher and the students that involves variables such as teacher

style, teacher expertise, teacher personality, feedback and support to students, expectations and conflict in the objectives, role ambiguity, and so on. On the other hand, organizational variables such as schedule, course plan, class size, physical conditions and resources, and student participation in the decision-making process could create a stressful environment.

4. Adaptation and transition problem in education:

Students make an effort when they have to adapt to a new role, rules, responsibilities, and demands in a competitive academic environment. Stressful situations in the studies have negative effects on both student health and performance (*ibid.*). Considering health, stress has negative effects on student immune system. In the short term, students could experience changes in their emotional state (anxiety related to exams) and cognitive and emotional responses and coffee, dream alterations, appetite alterations, and so on).

5. Teacher/Pupil relationship:

Class size and ability mix, lack of discipline as perceived by teachers, changes in pupil motivation and attitude, and anxiety over test and examination results.

6. Relationships with colleagues:

Uneven distribution of work loads, personality clashes/differences, poor systems of communication at every level, lack of community spirit, and scarce or no social interaction between different staff groupings.

7. Relationships with parents and the community:

Parental pressure to achieve good results, the threat of performance management systems, poor status and pay, biased media coverage, being obliged to accommodate unrealistic expectations, and general societal cynicism about the role of teachers.

8. Innovation and change:

Apparent lack of rationality behind constant demands for change, feelings of powerlessness and of failure, and lack of resources and information to facilitate change.

9. Administration:

Scarce real involvement in the decision-making process, poor overall school organization, poor models of communication, lack of appropriate training to meet new job demands, poor technical and administrative support, and poor staff facilities.

10. Time factors:

Increasing variety and number of tasks, additional work demands outside the normal school hours, and frequency and ineffective organization of meetings.

11. Performance at work:

Feeling like staying off work, inability to manage time well, inability to meet deadlines,

inability to concentrate, having a heavy workload, inability to delegate, feelings of inadequacy related to performance at work, job dissatisfaction, taking work home more frequently, and low level of Productivity.

12. Relationships with colleagues:

Increased feelings of irritation or aggression, becoming increasingly introverted, inability to relate to colleagues, unwillingness to cooperate, frequent irrational conflicts at work, inappropriate humor, demotivation, withdrawing from supportive relationships, lying, role ambiguity, and role conflict.

13. Behavioral and emotional indicators:

Loss of appetite, reduced self-esteem, increased use of drugs (alcohol, tranquillizers, coffee, and so on), insomnia or nightmares, being unduly fussy, feelings of alienation, loss of confidence, too busy to relax, frequent illness (colds, influenza or other infections) pains, or palpitations, accident prone, and persistent negative thoughts.

14. Individualism and Collectivism:

Individualism represents the subordination of group goals to personal goals. Individualistic cultures have a sense of independence and a lack of concern for persons who are not part of their immediate family. Collectivism represents the subordination of personal goals to group goals. Collectivistic cultures have a sense of harmony and interdependence, and concern for other.

15. Power Distance:

This dimension is related to social inequality and the amount of authority of one person over others. In low power distance cultures, persons disagree with the unequal distribution of power. In this kind of culture, the consultation and participation are preferred. In high distance cultures, low power groups accept the unequal distribution of power. In this kind of culture, authority is highly respected and obeyed.

16. Uncertainty/Avoidance:

This dimension emphasizes on individuals feelings in an uncertain situation. In a low uncertainty/avoidance culture, persons value change, risk taking, and adventure. In a high uncertainty/avoidance culture, persons value tradition and they are resistant to change.

Major Impact of Stress on Health:

1. General irritability
2. Elevated heart rate
3. Increased blood pressure
4. Increased accident proneness
5. Floating anxiety-anxious

6. feeling for no specific reason

7. Trembling

8. Insomnia

9. Headaches

10. Indigestion

11. Pain in neck and/or lower back

12. Changes in appetite or sleep pattern

Suggestions:

1. Structure each day to include a minimum of 20 minutes of aerobic exercise.

2. Eat well-balanced meals, more whole grains, nuts, fruits and vegetables. Substitute fruits for desserts.

3. Avoid caffeine. The substance may aggravate anxiety, insomnia, nervousness and trembling.

4. Reduce refined sugars. Excess sugars cause frequent fluctuation in blood glucose levels, adding stress to the body's physiological functioning.

5. Get at least 7 hours of sleep nightly.

6. Spend time each day with at least one relaxation technique - imagery, daydreaming, prayer, yoga or meditation.

7. Take a warm bath or shower.

8. Go for a walk.

9. Keep your space and consequently your mind organized.

10. Go to class.

11. Keep up with course work (the rule of thumb is two hours of study per one hour in class).

12. Get involved with campus activities.

13. Maintain communication with your family.

14. Take advantage of campus resources and choose a career path.

15. Form healthy relationships.

16. Talk to someone about your problems (family member, friend, college counselor).

17. Get to know your professors.

Conclusion:

Stress in academic institutions can have both positive and negative consequences if not well managed. Academic institutions have different work settings compared to nonacademic and therefore one would expect the difference in symptoms, causes, and consequences of stress. By identifying the sub issues of each component of academic stress among the MBA students, the study could provide better insights to the academic administrators for initiating efforts to reduce the intensity of academic

stress. From the findings, the results clearly indicate that students are stressed. The well-known symptoms of stress among the students are indigestion, changing in sleeping habit, anxiety, nervousness, shoulder or neck pain, tension etc. Psychological pressure to perform well in examinations, tests, attending of lecture and expectation from family, uncertainty of getting job, competition with fellow students, and lower grade than anticipation were among common sources of the students stress. From the study it was also clear that, the major causes of stress among MBA students are academic workload, inadequate available resources, continuous poor performance, low motivation etc. And if these stresses are at their high level students felt lot of pressure which create problem to students for preparing and passing the examination. The colleges need to develop a stress free and academic conducive environment for learning. To overcome the problem of stress among students, colleges should employee more qualified and experienced lecturers to recover the staff shortage. Colleges try to carry out the facilities of internet and computer station for the students which help them in submitting assignments, presentation and other related tasks.

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