

THE ROLE OF STRESS MANAGEMENT EDUCATION IN COPING WITH THE ACADEMIC STRESS AMONG POST- GRADUATE STUDENTS IN RAJASTHAN

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ABSTRACT

Stress is a considerable matter of concern for students in today's competitive world. The main objective of this paper is to identify the impact of stress management education on some students of selected, reputed, post-graduate professional degree colleges in Rajasthan. Stress can be beneficial if it is up to a certain level and that stress is known as Eustress, beyond that level, stress can harm a student's physical as well as mental health, and also the success of a student can be affected negatively. Fifty healthy students both male and female were selected for the study from the four most reputed colleges of Rajasthan. All students were studying professional degree courses like MBA, MCA, and MTECH. Participants were divided randomly into two groups, one was Group A- Experimental group (n=25) and another was Group B- The control group (n=25). Stress management education was given only to the participants of the experimental group. The participants of the control group were not given any stress management education. T-test measures significance between pre and post data of the study. The findings of the study showed that a high level of stress can affect the performance of students negatively and stress management education helps them to handle their academic stress effectively as well as to develop their stress management skills. With the help of this study, it can also be concluded that stress management education helps students in developing their creativity and problem-solving skills.

Keywords: Stress, Stress Management Education, Performance of the Students, Professional Courses, Stress-Coping Strategies.

Introduction

Stress is a considerable matter of concern for students in today's competitive world. Stress is not negative always, if we want to survive in this demanding world then we have to take some stress for our work-related deadlines. If we talk about higher educational professional degree students then they have to work daily for their professional growth and sustainability in the career. Stress for placements, for exams, for scores is very common in today's students. Students have to excel in all the areas of their studies, they have to be more focused and concentrated in their education. With the increasing level of stress in students, it is becoming imperative to give stress management education to students for helping them in coping with their academic stress. Stress affects both the physical and mental health of the students. Beyond certain levels, stress can harm a student's performance. Excessive stress also impacts a person's personal life and relationships. Stress-bearing capacity differs from person to person, also stress affects in different ways to different individuals. We can say stress depends on the personality styles of the individual. In the covid-19 era stress-bearing capacity getting less in individuals. People cannot go to their friend's, relatives' homes, they cannot share their feelings, their problems with each other so their stress level is increasing nowadays. Students taking online classes cannot interact properly with their classmates and teachers so getting more and more academic stress. Students even cannot identify that they are under stress so they don't go for the stress-bearing treatment, therefore they got depressed after a certain level of stress. Stress is found more in college students they are much stressed about their placements and job-getting opportunities after their education. Regrettably, this problem is still

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uncovered in our educational curriculum. We should include stress management education in our curriculum. Stress management interventions are very helpful in developing problem-solving skills, creativity in students which helps them in coping with their academic stress. We should also provide counseling or one-to-one session to the students to discuss their academic-related problems and provide solutions to them. We can provide some informal discussion forums to students where they can interact with their educators informally and share their problems. Students differ in their learning capacity, cultural or emotional background so educators should treat them differently. Some studies also suggest that minority students are facing more levels of academic stress because of ignorance and some unavoidable behavior, comments received by the lecturers. We can also take feedback from students at the end of the semester through which we as an educator or management can assess their problems.

In colleges, there must be some extra-curricular activities, games, and physical or mental exercises that should be provided to the students for stress reduction. Some intervening agents should be employed in our colleges or we can also appoint some students as leaders or monitors to help their batch mates in stress management. In this era of technology, we can also provide some online stress management interventions to shy students who cannot share their feelings in person. Entertainment is also necessary with education for stress reduction and the well-being of the students. Emotional intelligence is also an important part of a student's life to become successful in their career. Self-efficacy and self-leadership are important to develop in students for coping with academic stress. Some stress-management training also can be given to students. Many expectations are lying on the shoulders of students these days. Stress is the reason for some psychological and social disturbances in the life of students. Stress management training programs should be implemented in educational institutes for helping students cope-up with academic stress. Stress management training helps in increasing the achievement of students by decreasing their academic stress. Yoga and meditation also help in decreasing academic stress in students.

Nowadays there are many expectations on students for their scores, achievements, and performance. In this technological era, we can also provide some mobile apps for stress reduction of students. Meditation and mindfulness exercise helps students in reducing their academic stress. Various internal and external expectations are lying on students due to that students are facing academic stress in their educational life. Stress taking and stress-bearing capacity differ from the personality styles of a person. Each individual has different stress-bearing abilities. Educators or educational institutions should focus on the emotional quotient with the intelligent quotient. An emotionally strong person or student is the need of today's life. Research has shown that a higher emotional intelligent person has lower perceived stress. Stress management intervention helps in making students emotionally strong.

Review of Literature

A review of literature done by us for the above-mentioned topic is as follows.

- According to the study done by Ervasti, M., Kallio, J., Määttänen, I., Mäntyjärvi, J. and Jokela, M., 2019. After a certain level stress can negatively affect our life. The main objective of their study is to analyze the impact of students' personalities on stress-bearing capacity. The findings of the study showed that a higher level of extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness was caused by lower self-reported stress. They have shown that personality traits may influence the adoption of stress management apps.
- As per the study done by Benjet, C., 2020. Stress management interventions moderately influence stress and anxiety. They have shown by the study that CBT-based interventions have greater effects than other interventions.
- According to the study done by Manning-Geist, B., Meyer, F., Chen, J., Pelletier, A., Kosman, K., Chen, X. and Johnson, N., 2019. A high level of stress in college students may negatively affect their mental health. Stress management programs especially CBT-based intervention programs significantly impact stress and help students in reducing their stress level and anxiety.
- As per the study done by Juniar, D., van Ballegooijen, W., Karyotaki, E., van Schaik, A., Passchier, J., Heber, E., Lehr, D., Sadarjoen, S. and Ripper, H., 2019. Web-based stress management interventions help students in coping with their academic stress.
- According to the narrative review done by Pascoe, M., Hetrick, S., and Parker, A., 2019. Academic-related stress impacts students' learning capacity and performance.
- As per the study done by Sun, W., 2021. Stress is caused by societal factors. They identified the impact of academic stress and coping strategies with the intervening effect of social and emotional support.

- Flinchbaugh, C., Moore, E., Chang, Y., and May, D., 2011. Identified the impact of stress management techniques on students in four separate sections of a management course.
- Jin, S., 2010. Evaluated the significant and positive impact of enjoyment on the educational performance of the students.
- According to the study done by Petosa, R., and Oldfield, D., 1985. Stress management techniques impact classroom on-task behavior of students.
- Houghton, J., Wu, J., Godwin, J., Neck, C., and Manz, C., 2011. Emotional regulation and self-leadership strategies help students in cope with stress.
- According to the study MoghimIslam, M., Jafari, P. and Hoseini, M., 2013. Stress management education impacts student achievement in academics. Stress management training helps students in the achievement of students.
- As per the study done by Yang, E., Schamber, E., Meyer, R., and Gold, J., 2018. Meditation programs help medical students in reducing their perceived level of stress.
- Daya, Z. and Hearn, J., 2017. Identified impact of mindfulness-based interventions on reducing psychological stress. They found mixed results for the above research. Further studies should also suggest identifying the impact of mindfulness-based interventions.
- As per the study done by Jayasankara Reddy, K., Rajan Menon, K. and Thattil, A., 2018. Stress has become part of the university or higher education students due to the expectations placed upon students. They identified the sources of stress and the impact of academic stress to identify the stress management strategies.
- Harrer, M., Adam, S., Fleischmann, R., Baumeister, H., Auerbach, R., Bruffaerts, R., Cuijpers, P., Kessler, R., Berking, M., Lehr, D. and Ebert, D., 2018. Identified the impact of internet and mobile based intervention on reducing stress in college students.
- Enns, A., Eldridge, G., Montgomery, C., and Gonzalez, V., 2018. Identified that students who have higher emotional intelligence have lower perceived stress. They suggested that interventions should be aimed at increasing emotional intelligence which further helps in reducing stress.
- As per the study of Pitt, A., Oprescu, F., Tapia, G., and Gray, M., 2017. Stress is increasing over the semester. They analyzed the influence of timing of the stress. The findings of the study showed that the start and end of the semester are the riskiest time when negative consequences of stress are the highest.
- Denovan, A., Dagnall, N., Dhingra, K. and Grogan, S., 2017. Identified that perceived stress scale is not significantly affected by gender.
- As per the study of Breedvelt, J., Amanvermez, Y., Harrer, M., Karyotaki, E., Gilbody, S., Bockting, C., Cuijpers, P. and Ebert, D., 2019. Meditation, yoga, and mindfulness moderately affected the stress in tertiary education students.
- According to the study done by Adams, R. and Blair, E., 2019. Effective time management significantly reduces the stress level in higher education students.

Research Objectives

Objectives of the study are as follows:

- The main objective of the study is to analyze the impact of stress management education in coping with academic stress among post-graduate students in Rajasthan.
- The secondary objective of the study is to analyze the causes of stress among post-graduate students of Rajasthan.

Research Hypotheses

Based on the literature review we have constructed two following hypotheses.

- Students who have received stress management education better handle their academic stress.
- Stress management initiatives in colleges help students in coping with their academic stress.

Research Methodology

The research methodology used in this paper is as follows-

Data Source

We have selected the four most prestigious colleges of Rajasthan as our sampling unit for the study. We have developed semi-structured questionnaires for the collection of data, after pre-analysis of the questionnaires, they were sent to the fifty students from all the colleges. The questionnaire used a 7

point Likert scale. Questionnaires were divided into five parts containing Personal information, Educational qualification, Pursuing degree course, Stress level, Stress management initiative taken by the college if any. Questionnaires were constructed through google forms and sent to the email-id of students.

Some questionnaires asked from the participants are as follows:

- Does stress influence your health?
- Do you respond rather than react?
- Do you feel positive feedback?
- Do you Balance your scale of emotions?
- Do you learn to resolve issues and concerns with others when they arise?
- Do you frequently complain about the disorder?
- Your self-esteem/ confidence is lower in negative situations?
- Do you have a greater dependency on alcohol, caffeine, nicotine, or drugs?
- You don't have time for many interests/ hobbies outside of work?
- You seem to listen even though you are preoccupied with my thoughts?

Sampling Method used in the Study

Convenience-based random sampling was used in the study for the selection of students.

Variables

Two main variables were used in the research study-

- **Independent Variable:** Stress management education was given to the post-graduate students in their colleges was taken as IV.
- **Dependent Variable:** Ability to cope with their academic stress was taken as DV in the research.

Data- Analysis

Participants were divided randomly into two groups, one was Group A- Experimental group (n=25) and another was Group B- The control group (n=25). Stress management education was given only to the participants of the experimental group. The participants of the control group were not given any stress management education. T-test measures significance between pre and post data of the study.

Table showing the analysis

Content	Options 1	Option 2	Total
Stress influence health	Yes 35	No 15	50
Respond or react	Respond 20	React 30	50
Positive feedback	Yes 35	No 15	50
Balance scale of emotions	Yes 25	No 25	50
Resolve issues and concerns	Yes 30	No 20	50
Complain frequently	Yes 25	No 25	50
Self-esteem/ confidence	Self-esteem 25	Confidence 30	50
Dependency on alcoholic habits	Yes 30	No 20	50
Time for the interest of work	Yes 25	No 25	50
Preoccupied with own thought	Yes 30	No 20	50

P-value and Statistical Significance

The two-tailed P value equals 0.0274 by conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be statistically significant.

Confidence interval: The mean of Group One minus Group Two equals 5.50. 95% confidence interval of this difference: From 0.69 to 10.31

Intermediate values used in calculations' = 2.4004, Degree of freedom = 18

Standard error of difference = 2.291

Group	Group One	GROUP TWO
Mean	28.00	22.50
SD	4.83	5.40
SEM	1.53	1.71
N	10	10

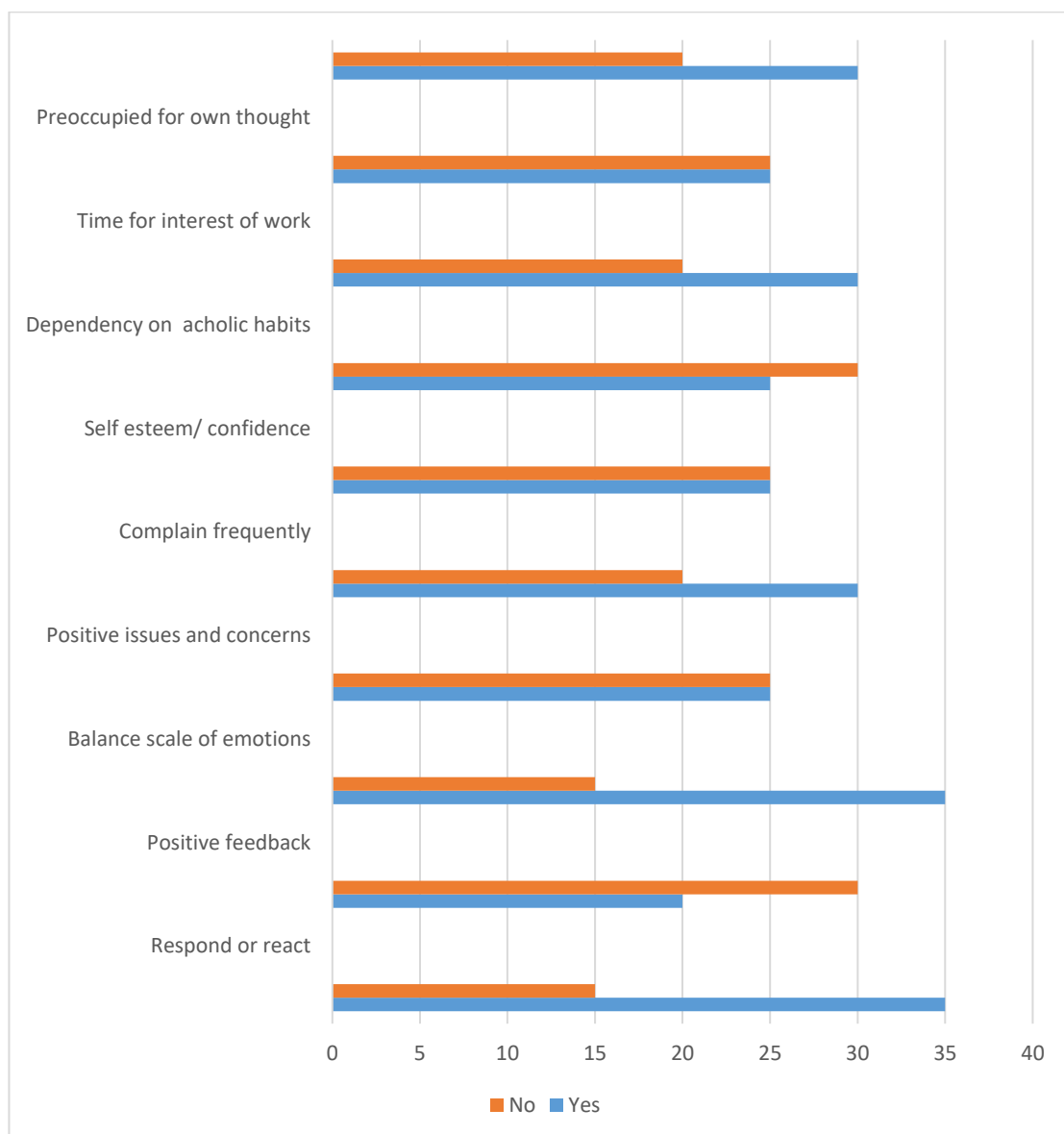


Table showing Experimental Group Survey

Content	Options 1	Option 2
Stress influence health	Yes 20	No 5
Respond or react	Respond 5	React 20
Positive feedback	Yes 20	No 5
Balance scale of emotions	Yes 10	No 15
Resolve issues and concerns	Yes 20	No 5
Complain frequently	Yes 10	No 15
Self-esteem/ confidence	Self-esteem 5	Confidence 20
Dependency on alcoholic habits	Yes 15	No 10
Time for the interest of work	Yes 15	No 10
Preoccupied with own thought	Yes 15	No 10

Table showing the Control Group

Content	Options 1	Option 2
Stress influence health	Yes 15	No 5
Respond or react	Respond 15	React 10
Positive feedback	Yes 15	No 10
Balance scale of emotions	Yes 15	No 10
Resolve issues and concerns	Yes 10	No 15
Complain frequently	Yes 15	No 10
Self-esteem/ confidence	Self esteem 20	Confidence 5
Dependency on alcoholic habits	Yes 15	No 10
Time for the interest of work	Yes 15	No 10
Preoccupied with own thought	Yes 15	No 10

Conclusion

With the above research we can conclude that stress is a very common problem in today's students. There are internal and external expectations are lying on the shoulders of students because the students are facing so much academic stress. Stress can harm students' physical and mental health. Stress is not negative always, up to certain level stress is beneficial in surviving this competitive world. Beyond a certain limit, stress can negatively affect students' achievement. With the above study, we can conclude that in our post-graduate degree colleges there must be some stress management education or interventions that would help students in the stress-bearing capacity of students. Stress management education helps students cope with their academic stress. In higher education students stress is a common issue which students are facing nowadays. We should provide some extracurricular activities or skill enhancement courses to students other than their theoretical bookish courses. Enjoyment should also be a part of their curriculum. We can conclude with the above research that stress management education helps students in coping with their academic stress.

Limitation of the Study

The limitation of the study lies in the selection of the sampling unit or the sample size. We have focused only on the four most prestigious colleges of Rajasthan. Future research is also suggested by taking a larger sample size or taking some more colleges. Larger sample size is needed to analyze stress management education in higher educational institutes of Rajasthan.

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