

TO IDENTIFY THE CAUSES OF STRESS AND ITS ILL EFFECTS ON POST GRADUATE STUDENTS

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the major causes of stress among the students of Post Graduation and the ill effects of stress on them. The study used a convenience sample of female and male college students aging 21 years and above. For taking the data, a checklist for different causes of stress and a scale for measuring the ill effects of stress was developed. The results reveal that the major cause of stress among male respondents was that of loan taken for their degree while in case of female respondents, the cause of concern was that of their personal appearance etc. When it comes to the ill effects of stress, female and male respondents reported the same problems that they frequently suffer from headaches, thirst and hunger, heartburn, acidity and stomach pain. Then comes the problem of increased hunger, frustration and hostility which are experienced occasionally by the respondents. Stress can however be managed by the implementation of stress management courses or techniques, and also by engaging in some extracurricular activities. They are expected to be the elites in the society. Thus, they should enhance their stress management abilities so as to live a healthy life after entering the society.

Keywords: Heartburn, Frustration, Hostility, Stress management, Elites

INTRODUCTION

Stress is a common problem nowadays that affects almost all of us at some point in our lives. It is any situation or event that evokes negative thoughts and feelings in an individual. The same stressful situation is not stressful for all people, and all people do not experience the same negative thoughts and feelings when stressed.

Learning to identify when you are under stress, what is stressing you, and different ways of coping with stress can greatly improve both your mental and physical well being. According to **Shahsavarani (2013)** Stress is the problem of the millennium. Today's life is mixed up with stress in all its aspects.

“Academic stress is a mental distress with respect to some anticipated frustration

associated with academic failure or even awareness of the possibility of such failure”. Academic stress pervades the life of students, and tends to impact adversely their mental and physical health, and their ability to perform schoolwork effectively.

METHODOLOGY

Methodology is the systematic, theoretical analysis of the methods applied to a field of study. It comprises the theoretical analysis of the body of methods and principles associated with a branch

CHECKLIST

1. Causes of stress

Yes	1
No	2

2. Physiological stress

Always	2
Never	0
Sometimes	1

3. Psychological stress

Always	2
Never	0
Sometimes	1

DEVELOPMENT OF THE SCALE

Scale for detecting ill effects of stress among students

It is a five point scale which was developed to know the stress level among the respondents of the study. Depending on their responses about the scale, the following points were assigned to occupants:

Never	5
Rarely	4
Occasionally	3
Frequently	2
Very frequently	1

The overall occurrence of ill effects of stress on the respondents were calculated through excluded method of quantitative classification in which each was categorized into the following scores :

S. No.	Score	Category
1	0-34	Very frequently
2	35-68	Frequently
3	69-102	Occasionally
4	103-136	Rarely
5	137-170	Never

RESULTS

Stress is experienced in day-to-day life and is actually a normal part of every individual's life. It is that situation in which the person is uncomfortable and wants to get out of it. It affects our sense of well-being and also disrupts our quality of life. People can get stressed due to various causes. So, in order to know the major causes of stress among female and male students, this checklist was made.

Table 1. CAUSES OF STRESS AMONG STUDENTS

S.No.	CAUSES	N=120			
		FEMALE		MALE	
		YES	NO	YES	NO
1	The death of a loved one.	40 (66.67)	20 (33.34)	38 (63.34)	22 (36.67)
2	Personal injury or illness	46 (76.67)	14 (23.34)	48 (80)	12 (20)
3	Increase in financial obligations	44 (73.34)	16 (26.67)	50 (83.34)	10 (16.67)
4	Having a heavy workload or too much responsibility	50 (83.34)	10 (16.67)	50 (83.34)	10 (16.67)
5	Having to give speeches in front of colleague	45 (75)	15 (25)	52 (86.67)	8 (13.34)
6	Traumatic event, such as a natural disaster, theft, harassment or violence against oneself or a loved one	48 (80)	12 (20)	42 (70)	18 (30)
7	Being treated unfairly/ biasness	49 (81.67)	11 (18.34)	44 (73.34)	16 (26.67)
8	Little or no acknowledgment or reward	52 (86.67)	8 (13.34)	40 (66.67)	20 (33.34)

		55	5	48	12
9	High expectations from the parents	(91.67)	(8.34)	(80)	(20)
		50	10	47	13
10	Facing every day challenges	(83.33)	(16.67)	(78.34)	(21.67)
		52	8	50	10
11	Deterioration in health of family members	(86.67)	(13.34)	(83.34)	(16.67)
		45	15	54	6
12	Loan taken for the degree	(75)	(25)	(90)	(10)
		44	16	40	20
13	Lack of communication among friends/ family	(73.34)	(26.67)	(66.67)	(33.34)
		58	2	42	18
14	Personal appearance/ body type	(96.67)	(3.34)	(70)	(30)
		50	10	43	17
15	Anti social nature	(83.34)	(16.67)	(71.67)	(28.34)
		52	8	48	12
16	Competition among peers	(86.67)	(13.34)	(80)	(20)
		48	12	45	15
17	Rehashing stressful conditions	(80)	(20)	(75)	(25)
		47	13	40	20
18	Clutter in hostel	(78.34)	(21.67)	(66.67)	(33.34)
		43	17	41	19
19	Personality clash with boyfriend/girlfriend	(71.67)	(28.34)	(68.34)	(31.67)
		44	16	45	15
20	Unrealistic expectations	(73.34)	(26.67)	(75)	(25)
		40	20	40	20
21	Bullying and harassment	(66.67)	(33.34)	(66.67)	(33.34)
		49	11	52	8
22	Excessive demands				

		(81.67)	(18.34)	(86.67)	(13.34)
23	Poor relationship with roommate/ batch mates	50	10	46	14
		(83.34)	(16.67)	(76.67)	(23.34)
24	Homesickness	48	12	40	20
		(80)	(20)	(66.67)	(33.34)
25	Cleanliness and hygiene issues	45	15	40	20
		(75)	(25)	(66.67)	(33.34)
26	High living expenses	44	16	50	10
		(73.34)	(26.67)	(83.34)	(16.67)

According to the data collected, the major cause of stress among female respondents was personal appearance or body type of that individual. Out of the total 60 female respondents, 58 i.e 96.67 per cent stated that they were very conscious about their appearance. So if they fail to look the way they wanted to be, they got stressed. The second major cause of stress noticed among female students was high expectations from their parents. Parents nowadays have too much expectation from their children in terms of studies. So with this, students feel burdened and the result is very dangerous in some cases. After these two, other important causes of stress among female were competition among peers, change in health of any of their family members or parents and also little and no acknowledgement or reward. Other causes like clutter in the nearby environment or facing everyday challenges, poor relationship with peers, friends, roommates etc also causes stress in many female students.

In case of male students, the major cause of stress as reported by the respondents was educational loan taken for their degree; nearly all i.e. 90 per cent of the respondents agreed with this statement. Other major causes were to give speeches in front of everyone (86.66%). A total of 83.34 per cent male students also marked increased financial obligations, having too much responsibility or workload, excessive demands and high living expenses as other major causes of stress that they face in their lives.

Table2. PHYSIOLOGICAL PROBLEMS OF THE STUDENTS

N=120

S No.	PHYSIOLOGICAL PROBLEMS	FEMALE			MALE		
		ALWAYS	SOMETIMES	NEVER	ALWAYS	SOMETIMES	NEVER
1.	Headache	10 (16.67)	38 (63.34)	12 (20)	8 (13.33)	36 (60)	16 (26.67)
2.	Blood pressure problems	2 (3.34)	30 (50)	28 (46.67)	7 (11.66)	31 (51.67)	22 (36.67)
3.	Stomach disorders and ulcer	3 (5)	50 (83.34)	7 (11.67)	10 (16.66)	48 (80)	2 (3.34)
4.	Chest pain	2 (3.34)	30 (50)	28 (46.67)	4 (6.66)	32 (53.34)	24 (40)
5.	Back pain	8 (13.34)	30 (50)	22 (36.67)	12 (20)	28 (46.67)	20 (33.34)
6.	Skin irritation and allergies	5 (8.34)	42 (70)	13 (21.67)	10 (16.67)	38 (63.34)	12 (20)
7.	Asthma	6 (10)	28 (46.67)	26 (43.34)	4 (6.67)	33 (55)	23 (38.34)
8.	Fatigue	8 (13.34)	36 (60)	16 (26.66)	14 (23.34)	34 (56.67)	12 (20)
9.	Sleep disturbance	16 (26.67)	38 (63.34)	6 (10)	16 (26.67)	40 (66.67)	4 (6.67)
10.	Frequent cold and infections	6 (10)	35 (58.34)	19 (31.66)	8 (13.34)	33 (55)	19 (31.67)

The total 120 respondents of the study agreed on maximum problems which they face in their lives. In case of female students, the major physiological problem which they face always was sleep disturbance (26.67%) and headaches (16.67%). In addition to that 83.34 per cent female said that they sometimes have problem related to stomach and 70 per cent agreed on problems related to skin and allergies. Problems related to blood pressure and breathing problems were not faced by 46.67 per cent and 43.34 per cent female respectively.

In case of male respondents, the major physiological problems which they always face were sleep disturbance 26.67% per cent and fatigue 23.34 per cent. The problems which they face sometimes were headaches (60%), infections (55%) and pains specifically pain in the back which accounts to a total of 46.67 per cent and chest pain as reported by 53.34 per cent of male.

Table 3. PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS OF THE STUDENTS

N=120

S No.	PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS	ALWAYS	SOMETIMES	NEVER	ALWAYS	SOMETIMES	NEVER
1	Anxiety/anger/	16	34	10	16	34	10
	moodiness	(26.67)	(56.67)	(16.67)	(26.67)	(56.67)	(16.67)
2	Depression	2	30	28	2	30	28
		(3.34)	(50)	(46.67)	(3.34)	(50)	(46.67)
3	Poor concentration	2	38	20	16	38	6
		(3.34)	(63.34)	(33.34)	(26.67)	(63.34)	(10)
4	Decreased alertness	4	40	16	10	40	10
		(6.67)	(66.67)	(26.67)	(16.67)	(66.67)	(16.67)
5	Tendency to remain alone/ isolation	6	42	12	14	42	4
		(10)	(70)	(20)	(23.34)	(70)	(6.67)
6	Memory problems	8	34	18	10	34	16
		(13.34)	(56.67)	(30)	(16.67)	(56.67)	(26.67)
7	Poor thinking	6	30	24	10	30	20

		(10)	(50)	(40)	(16.67)	(50)	(33.34)
8	Obsessive compulsive disorder	8	30	22	14	30	16
		(13.34)	(50)	(36.67)	(23.34)	(50)	(26.67)
9	Irregular meals	6	28	26	10	33	17
		(10)	(46.67)	(43.34)	(16.67)	(55)	(28.34)
10	Eating disorders	6	40	14	12	40	8
		(10)	(66.67)	(23.34)	(20)	(66.67)	(13.34)
11	Excessive consumption of fast food	12	38	10	16	38	6
		(20)	(63.34)	(16.67)	(26.67)	(63.34)	(10)
12	Sense of hopelessness	4	40	16	12	40	8
		(6.67)	(66.67)	(26.67)	(20)	(66.67)	(13.34)
13	Feeling overwhelmed	10	42	8	6	42	14
		(16.67)	(70)	(13.34)	(10)	(70)	(23.34)

Psychological problems can affect any individual at any stage of their life. These types of problems can be developed after the respondent has experienced a stressful life event. In case of female respondents, the problem that they always face and tops the list is anxiety/ moodiness as reported by 26.67 per cent. Decreased alertness (66.67%), eating disorders (66.67%) and sense of hopelessness (66.67%) were other major problems that were sometimes faced by the female respondents of the study. **Lupien** in his study have shown that stress has many effects on the human nervous system and can cause structural changes in different parts of the brain.

In case of male respondents, the problems are almost same but poor concentration (26.67%) is above all others. Some problems other than these which occur sometimes in male was tendency to remain alone/in isolation under which almost 70 per cent of the total respondents reported. After these problems some other which were reported by the students were poor concentration as

reported by sixty seven per cent of the respondents and nearly fifty seven per cent reported of memory problems.

4. ILL- EFFECTS OF STRESS

Stress may affect any individual's health, even though they might not realize it. Being able to recognize common stress symptoms at an early stage can help one to manage it. Therefore, ill effects such as headaches, jaw clenching or pain, frequent thirst and hunger, gritting, grinding, stuttering or stammering, neck ache, backache, cold, heartburn, constipation and diarrhoea were included in the ill effects of stress scale.

4.1 ILL EFFECTS OF STRESS AMONG FEMALE STUDENTS

n1 =60

S. No.	ILL EFFECTS	VERY FREQUENTLY	FREQUENTLY	OCASSIONALLY	RARELY	NEVER
1	Headaches, jaw clenching or pain	8 (13.34)	16 (26.67)	18 (30)	15 (25)	3 (5)
2	Frequent thirst & hunger	8 (13.34)	12 (20)	18 (30)	19 (31.67)	2 (3.34)
3	Gritting, grinding teeth	5 (8.34)	10 (16.67)	16 (26.67)	23 (38.34)	6 (10)
4	Stuttering or stammering	5 (8.34)	10 (16.67)	15 (25)	28 (46.67)	2 (3.34)
5	Tremors, trembling of lips, hands	4 (6.67)	8 (13.34)	16 (26.67)	30 (50)	2 (3.34)
6	Neck ache, back pain, muscle spasms	5 (8.34)	20 (33.34)	6 (10)	27 (45)	2 (3.34)
7	Light headedness, faintness, dizziness	5	20	8	25	2

		(8.34)	(33.34)	(13.34)	(41.67)	(3.34)
8	Ringling, buzzing or “popping sound”	5 (8.34)	5 (8.34)	18 (30)	27 (45)	5 (8.34)
9	Frequent blushing, sweating	4 (6.67)	10 (16.67)	10 (16.67)	32 (53.34)	4 (6.67)
10	Cold or sweaty hands, feet	6 (10)	10 (16.67)	10 (16.67)	31 (51.67)	3 (5)
11	Nausea, vomiting	5 (8.34)	11 (18.34)	11 (18.34)	31 (51.67)	2 (3.34)
12	Dry mouth, problems swallowing	4 (6.67)	6 (10)	12 (20)	32 (53.34)	6 (10)
13	Joint pain	4 (6.67)	5 (8.34)	14 (23.34)	35 (58.34)	2 (3.34)
14	Frequent colds, infections	7 (11.67)	22 (36.67)	19 (31.67)	7 (11.67)	5 (8.34)
15	Rashes, itching, hives, “goose bumps”	6 (10)	6 (10)	15 (25)	26 (43.34)	7 (11.67)
16	Unexplained or frequent “allergy” attacks	5 (8.34)	12 (20)	14 (23.34)	30 (50)	4 (6.67)
17	Heartburn, acidity, stomach pain	4 (6.67)	25 (41.67)	20 (33.34)	9 (15)	2 (3.34)
18	Excess belching, flatulence	6 (10)	12 (20)	12 (20)	27 (45)	3 (5)

19	Loneliness, solitude	6 (10)	24 (40)	19 (31.67)	7 (11.67)	5 (8.34)
20	Constipation, diarrhoea	6 (10)	20 (33.34)	19 (31.67)	11 (18.34)	4 (6.67)
21	loss of control	5 (8.34)	10 (16.67)	11 (18.34)	29 (48.34)	5 (8.34)
22	Difficulty breathing, frequent sighing	4 (6.67)	8 (13.34)	12 (20)	32 (53.34)	4 (6.67)
23	Sudden attacks of life threatening panic	6 (10)	6 (10)	10 (16.67)	33 (55)	5 (8.34)
24	Chest pain, palpitations, rapid pulse	4 (6.67)	8 (13.34)	8 (13.34)	38 (63.34)	2 (3.34)
25	Blurred vision,	6 (10)	6 (10)	15 (25)	30 (50)	3 (5)
26	redness of eyes	7 (11.67)	9 (15)	18 (30)	18 (30)	8 (13.34)
27	Frequent urination	7 (11.67)	8 (13.34)	19 (31.67)	21 (35)	5 (8.34)
28	Excess anxiety, worry, guilt, nervousness	6 (10)	15 (25)	20 (33.34)	15 (25)	4 (6.67)
29	Increased anger, frustration,	5	14	22	14	5

	hostility	(8.34)	(23.34)	(36.67)	(23.34)	(8.34)
30	Excessive weight gain	4	9	10	38	3
		(6.67)	(15)	(16.67)	(63.34)	(5)
31	Excessive weight loss	7	6	19	22	6
		(11.67)	(10)	(31.67)	(36.67)	(10)
32	Depression, frequent or wild mood swings	6	18	20	12	4
		(10)	(30)	(33.34)	(20)	(6.67)
33	Increased appetite	5	12	24	14	5
		(8.34)	(20)	(40)	(23.34)	(8.34)
34	Decreased appetite	4	15	16	14	11
		(6.67)	(25)	(26.67)	(23.34)	(18.34)

According to the above table, the problems faced most frequently by the female respondents were headaches, frequent thirst and hunger which accounts to 13.34 per cent. The second category consists of heartburn, acidity and stomach pain (41.67%) as the problem was faced frequently. Then comes the problem of increased appetite with a value of 40%, which is experienced occasionally by the female respondents. Almost 63 per cent reported that excessive weight gain was most rarely faced by the respondents. Almost 13 per cent stated that they never faced problems of redness of eyes. Bremner in his study reported that stress also has negative effects on learning. Results from hippocampus-dependent loading data demonstrate that subjects are not as familiar with a new environment after having been exposed to a new environment.

Colby in 1994, in his study reported that, consequences of stress that could provide linkages to health have been identified, such as increases in smoking, substance use, accidents, sleep problems, and eating disorders. Populations that live in more stressful environments (communities with higher divorce rates, business failures, natural disasters, etc.) smoke more heavily and experience higher mortality from lung cancer and chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder.

4.2 ILL EFFECTS OF STRESS AMONG MALE STUDENTS

n2 =60

S. No.	ILL EFFECTS	VERY FREQUENTLY	FREQUENTLY	OCASSIONALLY	RARELY	NEVER
1	Headaches, jaw clenching or pain	10 (16.67)	16 (26.67)	18 (30)	13 (21.67)	3 (5)
2	Frequent thirst & hunger	12 (20)	12 (20)	18 (30)	15 (25)	2 (3.34)
3	Gritting, grinding teeth	10 (16.67)	10 (16.67)	16 (26.67)	18 (30)	6 (10)
4	Stuttering or stammering	5 (8.34)	10 (16.67)	15 (25)	28 (46.67)	2 (3.34)
5	Tremors, trembling of lips, hands	4 (6.67)	8 (13.34)	16 (26.67)	30 (50)	2 (3.34)
6	Neck ache, back pain, muscle spasms	5 (8.34)	20 (33.34)	6 (10)	27 (45)	2 (3.34)
7	Light headedness, faintness, dizziness	5 (8.34)	20 (33.34)	8 (13.34)	25 (41.67)	2 (3.34)
8	Ringling, buzzing or "popping sound"	5 (8.34)	5 (8.34)	18 (30)	27 (45)	5 (8.34)
9	Frequent blushing, sweating	4 (6.67)	10 (16.67)	10 (16.67)	32 (53.34)	4 (6.67)
10	Cold or sweaty hands, feet	6 (10)	10 (16.67)	10 (16.67)	31 (51.67)	3 (5)
11	Nausea, vomiting	5 (8.34)	11 (18.34)	11 (18.34)	31 (51.67)	2 (3.34)
12	Dry mouth, problems swallowing	4 (6.67)	6 (10)	12 (20)	32 (53.34)	6 (10)
13	Joint pain	4 (6.67)	5 (8.34)	14 (23.34)	35 (58.34)	2 (3.34)
14	Frequent cold, infections	7 (11.67)	22 (36.67)	19 (31.67)	7 (11.67)	5 (8.34)
15	Rashes, itching, hives, "goose bumps"	6 (10)	6 (10)	15 (25)	26 (43.34)	7 (11.67)
16	Unexplained or frequent "allergy" attacks	5 (8.34)	12 (20)	14 (23.34)	30 (50)	4 (6.67)

17	Heartburn, acidity, stomach pain	4 (6.67)	25 (41.67)	20 (33.34)	9 (15)	2 (3.34)
18	Excess belching, flatulence	6 (10)	12 (20)	12 (20)	27 (45)	3 (5)
19	Loneliness, solitude	6 (10)	24 (40)	19 (31.67)	7 (11.67)	5 (8.34)
20	Constipation, diarrhoea	6 (10)	20 (30.34)	19 (31.67)	11 (18.34)	4 (6.67)
21	loss of control	5 (8.34)	10 (16.67)	11 (18.34)	29 (48.34)	5 (8.33)
22	Difficulty breathing, frequent sighing	4 (6.67)	8 (13.34)	12 (20)	32 (53.34)	4 (6.67)
23	Sudden attacks of life threatening panic	6 (10)	6 (10)	10 (16.67)	33 (55)	5 (8.34)
24	Chest pain, palpitations, rapid pulse	4 (6.67)	8 (13.34)	8 (13.34)	38 (63.34)	2 (3.34)
25	Blurred vision	6 (10)	6 (10)	15 (25)	30 (50)	3 (5)
26	redness of eyes	7 (11.67)	9 (15)	18 (30)	18 (30)	8 (13.34)
27	Frequent urination	7 (11.67)	8 (13.34)	19 (31.67)	21 (35)	5 (8.34)
28	Excess anxiety, worry, guilt, nervousness	6 (10)	15 (25)	20 (33.34)	15 (25)	4 (6.67)
29	Increased anger, frustration, hostility	5 (8.34)	14 (23.34)	22 (36.67)	14 (23.34)	5 (8.34)
30	Excessive weight gain	4 (6.67)	9 (15)	10 (16.67)	38 (63.34)	3 (5)
31	Excessive weight loss	7 (11.67)	6 (10)	19 (31.67)	22 (36.67)	6 (10)
32	Depression, frequent or wild mood swings	6 (10)	18 (30)	20 (33.34)	12 (20)	4 (6.67)
33	Increased appetite	5 (8.34)	12 (20)	24 (40)	14 (23.34)	5 (8.34)
34	Decreased appetite	4 (6.67)	15 (25)	16 (26.67)	21 (35)	4 (6.67)

According to the above table, the problems faced most frequently by the male respondents were headaches, frequent thirst and hunger as reported by 16 per cent. The second category consists of heartburn, acidity and stomach pain as the problem was faced frequently. Then comes the problem of increased hunger, frustration and hostility in which 37 per cent of male respondents experienced occasionally. Excessive weight gain as well as chest pain, palpitations and rapid pulse gain were most rarely faced by the respondents which are reported by nearly 63 per cent. Nearly 13 per cent said that they never faced the problem of redness of eye.

The prominent challenges that students face are the decisions that they have to make about choosing their career paths in addition to developing and negotiating with new relationships, getting novel ideas that challenge their past-learnt views, and shifting away from home.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Stress is not a new phenomenon but is actually been experienced since the ancient times. Nowadays stress is responsible for more than 50% of all the illness which are occurring in humans. It produces numerous physiological and psychological symptoms which vary from individual to individual according to their situational factors.

FINDINGS:

- The major cause of stress among female students were personal appearance and body type and after that high expectations from parents. Competition among peers and change in health of any of their family members also caused stress to a major group of female respondents.
- The major cause of stress among male students was loan taken for the degree, followed by giving speeches in front of their batch mates or class mates. Some other problems like competition among peers, high expectations from the parents' side and having a heavy workload or too much responsibility also caused stress in students.

- The most frequent physiological problem faced by the respondents were stomach disorders, headaches and sleep disturbances. Pain was also reported by some of the students specifically in the regions like neck, back and in chest.
- From the psychological problems, the most frequent was anxiety and moodiness, poor concentration level while studying, decreasing alertness level of the respondents, feeling overwhelmed, eating disorders and sense of hopelessness.

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