

Original Article

Sources of Academic Stress: Stress Management among Regular and Executive MBA Students

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ABSTRACT

Background Stress is the wear and tear a human body experience in order to adjust to the continually changing environment. However, too much stress affects health, productivity and relationships. There is increase recognition of stress in academic literature. Stress is basically an emotional imbalance incurred due to multiple reasons e.g. test, projects, paper competitive nature within your chosen field, future projects prospects and financial worries about school. **Study Design** Cross Sectional Study **Survey Size** Surveying 100 of Regular and Executive MBA students **Survey Side** Business Institute of Karachi **Duration** Four months from Sep to Dec 2014 **Sampling Technique** Random Sampling Technique **Statistical Analysis Include** Frequency, Mean±SD and Chi Square **Statistical Analysis Tools** EpiData, SPSS and Excel **Main Outcome Measure** Stressors and Stress Management **Result** Data were collected using Random sampling techniques from 100 participants through a cross sectional survey. The significant stressors reported were pressure due to vastness of curriculum, numerous assignments and dissatisfaction with the class lectures. Major stress reactions were found to be pressure trembling, crying and excessive smoking. Coping strategies were organizing and prioritizing task, getting enough sleep and even taking antidepressants. **Conclusion** This study provides an insight for initiating efforts to reduce the intensity of academic stress and work out of counseling trial to aid in the sound progression of students' mind and bodies.

KEYWORDS

Stress, Stress Management, Regular Students, Executive Student

INTRODUCTION

Hans Selye, was one of the founding fathers of stress examine, defines stress "The non-specific response of body to any demand made upon it" Stress may incur from an event, e.g. failing an exam, but from how we respond to it. It is basically wear and tear a human body experience in order to adjust to the continually changing environment (Selye, H., 1976). Stress is a crucial and likely response of daily living, indispensable since without pressure we would be enervated and unavoidable because it related to any external incident, be it satisfying or worry producing. A person reactions towards stress found on whether an event is judged as a challenge or a warning (Lazarus, R S., 1984). Challenging stimulus can bring constructive outcome for instance improved task performance and increase motivation. In other way threatening ones can lead social discomfort, depression, anxiety, and even develop suicidal intention. Rapid development of information and improvement of scientific era increasing competitiveness among students, as a result people become busier and eventually, stress as a normal consequence. Even though right level of stress is a stage for self-growth, work as a stimulus to grow actively and rapidly. It not only affects our feelings and perception but our behavior as well. Nevertheless, overstress generates soreness and Problems, and peoples get affected. Particularly, Students develop stress when they come into a complete new globe of practiced education.

In advanced learning society where demand positioned on students based on time limit and pressure for stand out in test and exam, the students are expected to be the sufferer of stress. This places of interest to do research to identify the general sources of academic stress looked by students at variety of management institutions. With such facts, educationists may able to pay further consideration to the sources of academic stress and utilize counseling procedures to assist students in the enhancement of their bodies and mind. This study was carry out to evaluate the factors related to the causes of stress and coping strategies adopt that might be projected among MBA students of business institute of Karachi.

Stress has become an imperative topic in academic loop. Wide-range of research carried out on stress and its outcomes in the field of behavioral sciences and concluded that area of stress required

more attention (Agolla, J.E., 2009) Stress can produce positive and negative outcomes in academic institution if not well managed (Stevenson A., 2006). Academic body have special work situations to judge against nonacademic and therefore one would suppose the dissimilarity in causes, symptoms and outcomes of stress (Chang & Lu., 2007). It is essential to the society student should try to learn and adopt the sound facts and skills that will in turn build them to put in positively to the expansion of economy of nation. It is also imperative for the institutions to up hold unbiased academic climate favorable for better learning. With the main concern on the students individual needs. Students have different values, goals and expectation that they wish to fulfill, which is likely when student's goals, values and expectations are incorporated with institutions.

Academic Stress

There have long been researched academic stress among students; stressors identified by researchers include too many assignments. Competition among students, poor relationship with peers or lecturers and failures (Fair B. K., 2003). Students report the greatest causes of academic stress resulting from overloaded curriculum in a small amount of time, grade competition, taking and studying for exams (Abouserie, R., 1994). When stress is revealed negatively or become excessive, students develop physical and psychological impairment.

Strategies to reduce stress by students include social support, effective time management, helpful reappraisal, and commitment in leisure activities (Murphy., 1996). The merely scientific investigation that specially shares leisure satisfaction to academic stress was that of McKinney and ragheb (1993). Who recognized a pessimistic connection between academic stress and spare time satisfaction. Academic level stressors include semester system, overloaded lecture halls and inefficient resources to perform academic work (Awino., 2008). The demand to perform well in the test or examination and time allocation makes academic climate very stressful (Erkutlu , 2006) This is likely to influence the public relations both inside and outside the institutions which eventually effects individual life in terms of assurance to achieving goals and objectives (Fair., 2003).

Knowing the grounds of students stress will support the learning administrator to develop proficiency to monitor and manage the

stress issues that are accountable for student's stress. Time and again, graduates students identify that faculty exercise immense control over their lives and believe that they live in a situation of considerable helplessness (Alta., 1970) one more reason of stress is the complicatedness of attaining social intimacy. It is hard to come across mate or keep relationship with an accessible one. Graduate students might be short of the time and/or occasion to build up interpersonal affairs (Hartshorn., 1976). Alarm of academic breakdown to these tasks is specific stressors (Kolko., 1980). Therefore, stressors disturbing students can be classified as financial, academic, health and time related, and self-imposed (Goodman., 1993)

College students encompass many barriers to defeat in order to attain their best favorable academic performance. It gets hold of many more than just studying to accomplish a booming college career. Many stressors for instance social activities and time managing can all create their own risk to a student's academic performance.

The method that academic performance measured is over the ordinal scale of grade point average (GPA). Research has been done looking at the relationship of much stress aspects that college students know how and the sound effects of stress on their GPA. Prus and hatcher referred to these strain features as academic situational constraints. Their study considers a variety of aspects that can lessen a student's educational performance (Hatcher., 1991). Neumann et al. done an undergraduate study and concludes that college students may in reality experience the breakdown incident due to learning circumstances that demand extremely high level of effort.

Stress among Management Students

As management education play vital role to assist improvement of leadership persona and turns out brilliant prospect managers, which is relatively obvious. When students initiate proficient education they face many confront to which they have never been uncovered earlier. The demand to get good grades and to receive a degree is very high (Hirsch., & Ellis., 1996). Additional sources of stress contain extreme homework, uncomfortable classroom and ambiguous assignments (Kohn, & Frazer., 1986). With academic requirements, time pressures and relations with faculty may also be sources of stress (Sgan-Cohen., & Lowental., 1988). It is imperative to the culture that students should learn and get hold to sound knowledge and expertise that will in turn build them contribute actively to the advancement of the broad economy of any nation.

OBJECTIVES

- To investigate the associated factors correlated to causes of stress and stress management strategies between regular and executive MBA students of Business institute, Karachi, Pakistan.
- To evaluate the impact of academic stress among students of business institute.
- To Assess stress management practice, helpful for managements students of business institute

METHODOLOGY

Study Design

Cross sectional study was conducted to assess sources of academic stress and stress management strategies by applying self-administered questionnaire.

Survey Size

The samples were selected from MBA students, self-administered questionnaires were given to 150 MBA students, and out of this 100 questionnaires were duly completed and return.

Survey Side

This study was conducted at Business Institute of Karachi.

Duration

Study duration was four months from Sep to Dec' 2014.

Sampling Technique

Convenient random sampling was used in this study. The participants were informed before questionnaire administered and were educated about the purpose of research.

Statistical Analysis Include

Frequency, Mean±SD and Chi Square

Statistical Analysis Tools

EpiData, SPSS and Excel

Main Outcome Measure

Stressors and Stress Management

RESULT

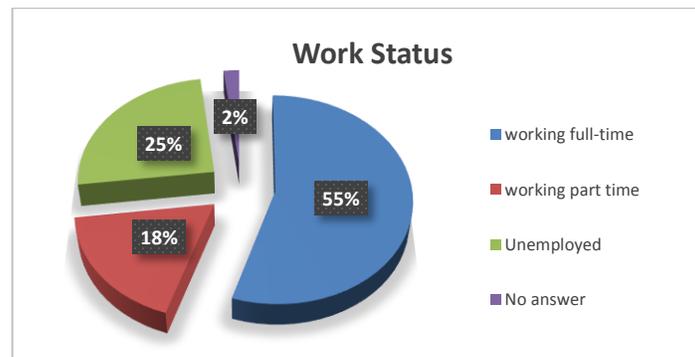
A total of 100 MBA students were selected as respondents. The source of Students stress or stressors assessed in the study were academic related stress and coping strategies adopted to manage stress. Table I Specifies the summary of demographic profile, Out of 100 students 64% were female and most of the students were in age between 20 to 30years. Majority of the respondents were senior and working as a full time employee as shown in Graph 1. The mean CGPA of students were 2.97±0.37.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

| Demographic Factor | Frequency(n) | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|--------------|----------------|
| Age | | |
| 20-30yrs | 81 | 81 |
| 30-40yrs | 18 | 18 |
| 40-50yrs | 1 | 1 |
| Gender | | |
| Male | 64 | 64 |
| Female | 36 | 36 |

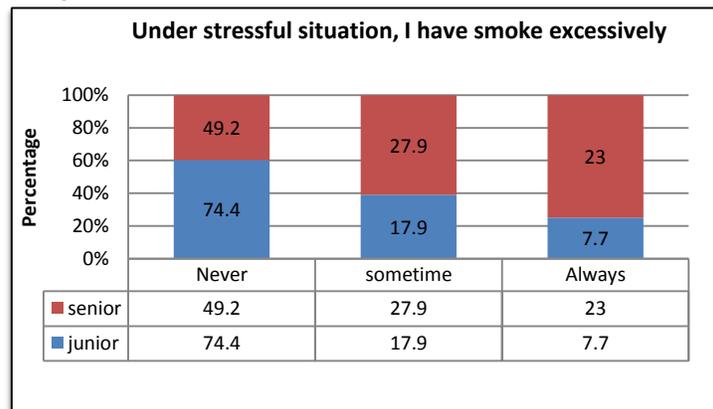
| | | |
|----------------------------------|----|----|
| Marital Status | | |
| Unmarried | 65 | 65 |
| Married | 33 | 33 |
| No Answer | 2 | 2 |
| College Enrollment Status | | |
| Junior | 39 | 39 |
| Senior | 61 | 61 |
| MBA Program | | |
| Regular | 50 | 50 |
| Executive | 50 | 50 |
| Work Status | | |
| Working Full Time | 55 | 55 |
| Working Part Time | 18 | 18 |
| Unemployed | 25 | 25 |
| No Answer | 2 | 2 |

Graph 1: working status



During the correlation between MBA students with stressors, responses to stressors and coping strategies, The significant stressor reported by most of the regular students were pressure developed due to vastness of curriculum 48% (p=0.009), numerous assignment, and 60% (p=0.048) students sometime dissatisfied with the lectures. Major stress reactions reported by respondents were pressure trembling 52% (p=0.024), crying under stressful situation 46% (p=0.017) and as compare to junior, senior students smoke excessively. (Graph 2)

Graph 2: Relationship b/w smoking and stress



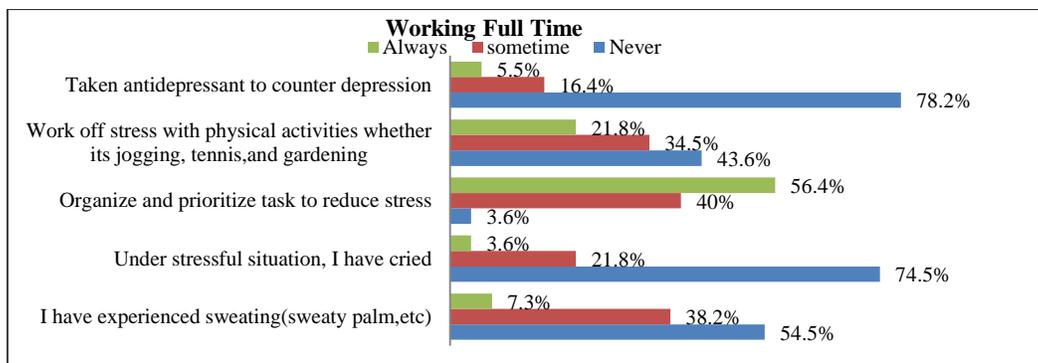
Coping strategies adopted by respondents were always getting enough sleep 38% (p=0.016) and 28% (p=0.001) organized their task, only 18% (0.001) always taking antidepressant to reduced stress. The stressors, Reactions to Stressor and Management Strategies of Executive students summarized in Table II

Table II: Predictors of Stressors, reactions to stressors ad management strategies in Regular and Executive MBA Students

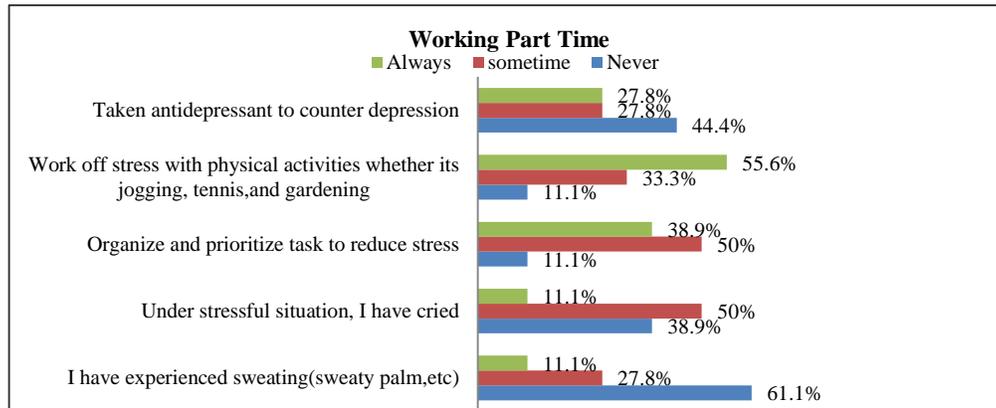
| Variables | Regular MBA | | | Executive MBA | | | P-Value |
|--|----------------|-------------------|-----------------|----------------|-------------------|-----------------|---------|
| | Never n (%) | Sometime n (%) | Always n (%) | Never n (%) | Sometime n (%) | Always n (%) | |
| Stressors | | | | | | | |
| Dissatisfaction with the Class Lecture | 17(34) | 30(60) | 3(6.0) | 7 (14) | 41 (82) | 2 (4.0) | 0.048 |
| Pressure Due to Overload (Vastness of Syllabus) | 11 (22) | 15 (30) | 24 (48) | 8 (16) | 30 (60) | 12 (24) | 0.009 |
| Reactions to stressors | | | | | | | |
| Experienced Pressure Trembling | 16 (32) | 26 (52) | 8 (16) | 25 (50) | 24 (48) | 1 (2) | 0.024 |
| Under stressful situations, I have Cried | 23 (46) | 23 (46) | 4 (8) | 37 (74) | 11 (22) | 2 (4) | 0.017 |
| Under stressful situations, Smoke excessively | 23 (46) | 15 (30) | 12 (24) | 36 (72) | 9 (18) | 5 (10) | 0.027 |
| Coping Strategies | | | | | | | |
| Get Enough Sleep | 14 (28) | 17 (34) | 19 (38) | 5 (10) | 30 (60) | 15 (30) | 0.016 |
| Organize and Prioritize Task to Reduce Stress | 10 (20) | 26 (52) | 14 (28) | 1 (2) | 19 (38) | 30 (60) | 0.001 |
| Taking Antidepressant to Counter Depression | 24 (48) | 17 (34) | 9 (18) | 41 (82) | 8 (16) | 1 (2) | 0.001 |

In Cross tabulation, possible relationship between working status and academic stressors and coping strategies were observed, Graph 3, 4 and 5 showing significant stressors reaction and coping strategies.

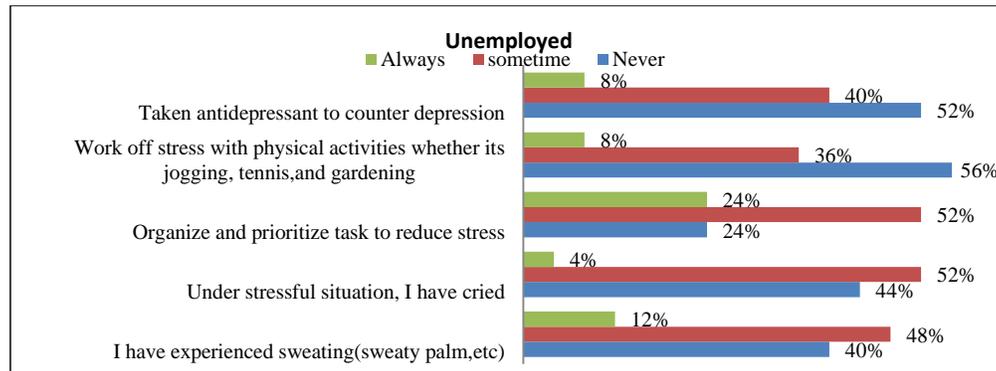
Graph 3: Relationship between working status and academic stressors and coping strategies



Graph 4: Relationship between working status and academic stressors and coping strategies



Graph 5: Relationship between working status and academic stressors and coping strategies



DISCUSSION

The findings of the research showed that the main sources of stress or stressor identified among students were the academic related stress. These findings similar to studies reported by Wright (1967), kohn and Frazer (1986), Hirsch and Ellis (1996), and Byrne, Davenport and Mazanov (2007).

The study was conducted in students of age 20 years to 50 years including both males and females. Maximum of students were from 20-30 years and males were in majority. Demographic data also revealed that 55% students were fully employed, 25% were un-employed and 18% were part time employed. We found that most of the students affected by overloaded work, this finding is in conformity with preceding studies (Fairbrothers, 2003; Stevenson, 2006; Ongori, 2008; Agolla, 2009).

When the core curriculum and teaching related areas were studied we found that group presentation, achieving academic targets, timely submission of term report and assignments were the stressors which causes the stress among the students of business institute.

MBA regular students experienced more pressure due to overload than MBA executive students. It is also evident that under stressful situations Executive students smoke less excessively as compared to regular students.

As regards strategies to manage stress among MBA regular and executive students, some of these approaches may lessen the problem or decrease the consequential stress, others may worsen the existing problems or become problem or hinder with the results, and other may not provide any benefit. Thus, it is not possible to shape which of the stress management tactic that are used by regular and executive students is the most helpful.

Taking into consideration their own demanding experiences in studies, Executive students are less prone to take antidepressants as compared to regular students. Another coping strategy include getting enough sleep which is found more in regular students as compared to executive students which might be due to the more busy schedule of executive students as they have to manage both jobs and studies. It is also noticed that executive students are more capable to organize and prioritize their task to reduce stress. Concerning the capability in managing academic stress, most of the MBA regular students believe that they cannot handle it. Another significant feature is that most of the MBA executive students, who can deal with demanding situations, have learnt this by themselves.

As we know Pakistan is one of the developing states where teaching system has not updated. In Pakistan students acquire entrance in universities following intermediate, at intermediate stage annual method is practicing where assessment conducted after a whole calendar year and weighted of exam is 100%, in this system student only face nervous tension of assessment one time in

a entire academic year or we can say only feel stress two to three weeks a year which is completely opposed universities system, in universities of Pakistan, semester structure is practicing where students have to fulfill presentations, assignments, term projects and exam separately used for mid and final term, also they have to participate in team and group work. In this study we realized that this semester system is a source of stressors in Pakistani students.

A study conducted in Karachi found that, Pakistan has reported that more than 90% of students experienced stressed at single time or the other during their course (Kahloon., 2004). A comparable finding from India stated that 73 % of the students had supposed stress at one time or the other throughout their medical school (Moffat., 2004). Saipanish stated that 61.4% of students in a Thai medical school had experienced some grade of strain as measured by the Thai stress test (Saipanish; 2003). Studies from the United Kingdom, Australia and Singapore which have reported different rated of psychological illness among students (Moffat., 2004, Ross Kua 1999, Willcock S.M., 2004). There are also distinction in the socio cultural contexts and the curriculum of the settings where such studies were such studies were carried out.

There are some limitations of our study. One of the major limitations of our study is the time limit. Due to limited time in data gathering, number of participants for the study was 100. This may not precisely disclose the populace of the chosen group. Secondly, the likelihood of stress studied should be broaden to other feasible variables.

CONCLUSION

Stress is one of dilemma in modern lives that affect the health and performance of students and teachers. Nevertheless, individuals cannot imagine having an existence without stress, as Selye states, absolute freedom from stress is death. Consequently, (Appley; 1986), things which is necessary is to give persons opportunities to be trained in strategies necessary to manage stressful circumstances in order to get better their performance and improve their well-being. By identifying the associated factor related to academic stressor and management strategies between regular and Executive students, Study provides an insight for initiating efforts to reduce the intensity of academic stress and employ counseling measures to aid in the sound development of students' mind and bodies.

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