

## Impact of Academic Stress Among MBA Students of Sardar Patel College, Hyderabad

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**Abstract:** The main aim of the study is to investigate the academic stressors experienced by the MBA students. A total sample of 50 students have participated in this study were from Department of MBA, Sardar Patel College. Data were collected through self- administered questionnaire which was randomly distributed to the students during lecture time. The data obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistics, analysis of variance (ANOVA). The result showed that academic workload, meeting deadlines of course assignments, inadequate time to study, workload every semester, exams awkward, balancing job and study, low motivation, financial problems and high family expectations were drive moderately stress among students. It was also found that fear of failure is the major source of stress among the students. Lastly, the study found that there were no significant differences in academic stress among students with education background and specializations.

**Keywords:** Academic Stress, Stressors, MBA Students, ANOVA.

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### INTRODUCTION

Stress has become an important subject in academic contain as well as in our culture. Many researchers in the field of behavioral science have carried out extensive research on stress and its consequences and concluded that the subject needed more concentration[1-3]. Stress in academic institutions can have both positive and negative consequences if not well managed [4-7]. Management education is such an important medium that facilitates improvement of leadership qualities leading to excellent future Managers and Entrepreneurs. However, it is important to the society that students should learn and obtain the essential knowledge and skills in order to make them contribute positively to the development of the nation from different aspects.

Student entering into Professional education need to face many challenges to which they have never been exposed earlier. The pressure to earn good grades and to earn a degree is high [8]. The idea of this research came by observing the students and their interaction during the teaching learning process; and the number of students who are looking for help; to draw the attention of officials to the institute and help them control of the stress factors for students, Which also helps in developing the preferable methods to enable students to cope with this stressor during the period of their studies. Management Students are at a high risk

for increased stress. Demanding academic pressure and limited social and personal time can add to the normal stress of life and begin to have a negative effect on a person. It is important for the students to learn and acquire the necessary knowledge and skills that will enhance the general economy of the country.

Moreover, universities and institutes should take clear steps to make the students learn and face serious psychological stress during their education. Stress is a common element in the lives of every individual, regardless of race or cultural background [9]. Over the past few decades, there has been significant investigation on the issues of stress and management of stress [10]. In addition, college students have been shown to possess a unique set of stressors which can affect their daily experiences [9]. Researcher Campbell [11] defines stress as the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demands placed on them. Stress occurs when an individual is confronted by a situation that they perceive as overwhelming and cannot cope up with. Academic stress among students have long been researched on, and researchers have identified stressors as too many assignments, competition with other students, failures, lack of pocket money [12], poor relationships with other students or lecturers, family or problems at home. Institutional (university) level stressors are overcrowded lecture halls [13, 14] semester system, and

inadequate resources to perform academic work. Moreover, college students have a unique cluster of stressful experiences or stressors [9]. According to Ross, Neibling and Heckert [15] there are several explanations for increased stress levels in college students. First, students have to make significant adjustments to college life. Second, because of the pressure of studies, there is strain placed on interpersonal relationships. Third, housing arrangements and changes in lifestyle contribute to stress experienced by college students. In addition, students in college experience stress related to academic requirements, support systems, and ineffective coping skills. Whereas these factors have been found to be responsible for stress, it is worth noting that in order to minimize the stress among students; the University/Institute administrators must develop appropriate strategies that will enable them to detect in advance the symptoms and causes of the stress.

### RESEARCH PURPOSES

Based on the review of the existing stress literature, the researcher addressed the following specific questions, which will guide this study;

1. What is the academic stressor of management students?
2. What are the major sources of stressors among the students?
3. Is there any significant difference in academic stress among students that can be attributed to education background and specializations?

### MATERIALS AND METHODS:

The aim of this section is to clarify the methodology of this research. This gives an account of the research sample, research design and the instrument that were used for data collection. The reliability and the procedures for data analysis were also discussed in detail.

#### Sample

This study adopted simple random sampling. The population of the study included 50 students (N=50) from MBA department, Sardar Patel College (Affiliated. to Osmania University, Hyderabad). The sample of the study included both previous and final year students. Formerly self-administered questionnaires were given to a population of 50 management students, which were duly completed and

returned. The questionnaire was divided into 4-parts; demographic, stress symptoms, sources of academic stressors, major source of academic stress.

Demographic examined (education background and specializations); Symptoms consisted of 11 items, Academic stress sources consisted of 14 items, major source of academic stress consisted of 9 items. All items measured on 5-point Likert scale ranging from 5 (Strongly agree) to 1 (Strongly disagree).

### Research Design

This study was non-experimental in nature and employs a cross-sectional design. In this study, survey research design was used [16]. Survey research designs are procedures in quantitative research in which investigators administer a survey to a sample or to the entire population of people in order to describe the attitudes, opinions, behaviors or characteristics of the population. In this procedure, survey researchers collect quantitative, numbered data using questionnaire and statistically analyze the data to describe trends about responses to questions and to test research questions. They also interpret the meaning of the data by relating results of the statistical test back to past research studies. It was nonetheless appropriate in a study that aims at investigating different kind of academic stress among MBA students at Sardar Patel College.

### Instruments

Self-administered measure was developed. The questionnaire was divided into 4-parts; demographic, stress symptoms, sources of academic stressors, major source of academic stress. Demographic examined (education background and specializations); Symptoms consisted of 11 items, academic stress sources consisted of 14 items, major source of academic stress consisted of 9 items. All items measured on 5-point Likert scale ranging from 5(Strongly agree) to 1 (Strongly disagree). To ensure the reliability of the instrument, the reliability test was carried out and measured 0.90 Cronbach's alpha for all the 34 items.

### Reliability

The Cronbach's alpha analysis for reliability was conducted and it was found that all the reliability values for the instrument and reliability for the domains as below in Table 1:

**Table-1: Reliability Values for stress scale**

Category Domain	N of Items	Alpha Values
Academic Stress	14	0.78
Stress Symptoms	11	0.81
Main Stressors	9	0.75
Total Instrument	34	0.90

## Data Analysis

The quantitative data collected through the survey questionnaire were analyzed statistically using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 17. In relation to the interval data collected, relevant measures of descriptive statistic and Analysis of variance (ANOVA) were engaged. This process of deriving statistical results would lead to the interpretation and drawing of conclusions.

## RESULTS

**Research question 1:** What is the academic stressor of management students?

Table 2 shows clear differences in academic stress of the students, and this result is very clear through the mean and standard deviation, this finding reflects that, most of the students are experiencing stress in their daily academic activities differently. However, Table 2 indicates that item 14 (academic overloads) were moderately effect of causing stress with mean= 3.86 and std. deviation = 1.24, and the second item 12 (Course awkward) were moderately effect of causing stress with mean = 3.50 and std. deviation = 1.12. On the other hand, item 4 (lateness) indicate low effect which cause the academic stress with mean = 2.04 and std. deviation = .995.

**Table-2: Mean and Standard Deviation of academic stress**

Items	N	Item No.	Items	Rank	Mean	Std. Deviation
Academic overloads	50		14	1	3.86	1.240
Course awkward	50		12	2	3.50	1.120
Meeting Deadlines of course assignments	50		10	3	3.46	1.210
Workload every semester	50		1	4	3.40	1.230
Exams awkward	50		9	5	3.34	1.220
Low motivation	50		13	6	3.33	1.130
High family expectations	50		7	7	3.27	1.050
Inadequate financial resources	50		8	8	2.97	1.310
Teacher weakness	50		11	9	2.84	1.120
Competition with fellow students	50		5	10	2.82	1.090
Balancing Job and Study	50		6	11	2.78	1.250
Overcrowded lecture halls	50		2	12	2.63	1.090
Absences	50		3	13	2.32	1.140
Lateness	50		4	14	2.04	0.995
<b>Total</b>	50				3.04	0.590

**Research question 2:** What are the major sources of stressors among the students?

Table 3 indicates that fear of failure was the main major sources of students stress with mean = 3.90 and std. deviation = 1.277, then university policy of

accumulative average with mean = 3.40 and std. deviation = 1.25. Nonetheless, the lowest sources of stress among the students was Inadequate resources e.g. Computers, Books, Lecturers, with mean = 2.76 and std. deviation = 1.04.

**Table-3: Mean and Standard Deviation of major sources of stressors**

Items	Std. Deviation	Mean	N
Fear of failure	1.27	3.90	50
University policy of Accumulative Average	1.25	3.40	50
Family Stressors	1.35	3.30	50
Overload Hours Every Semester	1.25	3.21	50
Mid-exams/Internals and Exams	1.26	3.00	50
Financial problems	1.28	2.98	50
Teachers fairness	1.31	2.97	50
Inadequate Resources (E.g. Computers, Books, Lecturers etc.,)	1.04	2.76	50

**Research question 3:** Is there any significant difference in academic stress among students that can be attributed to education background and specializations?

stress among the students due to specializations, and there is no significant differences ( $F (0.544), p=0.093>0.05$ ) of academic stress due to different education background.

Table 4 indicates that there is no significant differences ( $F (0.623), p=0.152>0.05$ ) of academic

**Table 4: ANOVA for academic stress among students according to education background and specializations**

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	9.374	17	0.5514	0.623	0.152
Specializations Within groups	28.320	32	0.885		
Total	37.694	49			
Between Groups	4.125	17	0.243	0.544	0.093
Education Background within groups	14.322	32	0.447		
Total	18.447	49			

## DISCUSSION

Regarding academic stressor that effect the students in research question 1, academic overloads, course awkward, inadequate time to study, workload every semester, exams awkward, low motivation, and high family expectations were moderately causing academic stress for the students, and this finding is in close agreement with Ongori and Agolla [3], who reported that (81%) of the students agreed with the statement that academic workload is stressful. Moreover, this finding is consistent with earlier findings by Fairbrother [12] and Stevenson [5]. One more study by Elizabeth [17] who agreed and reported that, the workload of college is significantly more involved than the high school workload, and it comes with less hand-holding from parents and teachers. With challenging classes, scheduling issues to coordinate, difficult tests and other academic obstacles, coupled with the more independent nature of the college learning structure, many new and returning students find themselves studying long, hard hours. Moreover, statements, inadequate financial resources, teacher weakness, overcrowded lecture halls, lateness to do assignments, competition with fellow students, absence and lateness were causing academic stress for students lower than the other items mentioned above.

In summary, the majority of the students experience moderate level of stress. This indicates that academic stress is not acute; it is just reasonable and moderate. However, being student, it is common to have normal level of stress that drives the student doing their work and duties at college as being mentioned by Smith et. Al [18]. He submits that stress encourage us to do things. It gets us out of our chair, think about things differently, and seek solutions to problems. Sometimes it makes us sensitive to what others may think of us and our actions.

Regarding the major source of students stress in question 2, the result reveals that the major source of students' stressor is fear of failure. This result is in close agreement with findings by Awino [14], who reported that students' stressors are fear of failing, academic workload, and academic performance.

On the other hand students also indicated financial problems, inadequate resources (e.g. Computers, Books, Lecturers, and overload hours every semester) as stressors sources. This finding is in close agreement with study by Fairbrother [12] who reported that inadequate resources such as computers, overcrowded lecture halls, lecturers, and text books were mentioned since their availability or in availability leads to success or failure in academic pursuits.

However, question 3 intends to look at the differences in academic stress among management students with different demographic variables; education background and specializations. The result indicated that there were no statistically significant differences among management students' different education background and specializations that can be attributed to academic stress.

However it could be attributed that the students participated in this study from the same faculty who have the same teaching approaches (independent study and self-directed learning) which allow them to study through group discussions and use the cooperative learning style with other students. Thus, the teaching approach used in this system where the students are asked to do assignments or report instead of stressful exams will certainly be reflected to the students' academic stress according to different education background and specializations. In summary lecturers and institute administrators should help the students manage their time and coping strategies during

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their studies. These strategies to empower the students to manage stress may prove to be beneficial. According to Dziegielewski et al [10] programs that identify stressors and provide information on stress reduction and burnout prevention can help students learn to better cope with stressful experiences. Subsequently, better coping skills are associated with decreased anxiety levels and decreased risk for academic failure. The literature suggests that stress is a common theme among college students, and when stressful experiences are greater than the coping resources, multiple problems often arise [9]. Hence, programs which assist in the identification of stressors, and focus on prevention of burnout, and counseling regarding coping strategies should enhance student success [9]. However, this study adds to the body of knowledge concerning students' academic stressors and reactions to stressors.

#### **Limitations of the study**

One important limitation of this study was used a small sample of students, drawn from just one institute in Hyderabad. This finding cannot be generalized for students in other institutes and university programs. Repeat of this study with a larger, stratified random sample would expand knowledge of stress among management students.

#### **Recommendations for future research**

Interventions for these students are needed and repeating this study in other institutes/universities is recommended. Therefore, the researcher recommends that further research would develop the understanding of stress among management students of various universities. Specifically, future research should use larger sample size from other institutions to support these findings which help university officials to control the stress factors for students.

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