Stress and Anxiety on Students Life

Shaw N[1], Adhikary S[2*]

[1] Neha Shaw, BBA(Hons.) Student, Semester-V, THK Jain College, Kolkata, West Bengal, India.

[2*] Soumyatanu Adhikary, Assistant Professor and HOD, Department of Business Administration, THK Jain College, Kolkata, West Bengal, India.

Stress and anxiety are significant mental health challenges faced by students at various educational levels, impacting their academic performance, emotional well-being, and overall quality of life. This paper examines the causes and consequences of stress and anxiety in students, with a focus on academic pressures, social expectations, and personal struggles. The research investigates how factors such as workload, deadlines, exams, and the transition to higher education contribute to heightened stress and anxiety levels. Additionally, it explores the physiological, emotional, and cognitive effects of these conditions on students' mental health. The paper also reviews the role of coping strategies, including time management, social support, and mindfulness practices, in mitigating the negative impact of stress and anxiety. Various interventions, such as counseling services, peer support networks, and school-based mental health programs, are discussed as effective means of addressing these issues. The findings highlight the importance of fostering a supportive environment within educational institutions to promote mental well-being and help students manage stress and anxiety effectively. This research aims to provide insights for educators, parents, and mental health professionals to better understand and support students facing these challenges. This paper aims to investigate the multidimensional nature of stress and anxiety among students using different factors. The study identifies underlying factors contributing to students' stress and anxiety, such as academic pressures, social influences, and personal life challenges. By understanding the key components that contribute to students' mental health, this research provides valuable insights into the development of targeted interventions to reduce stress and anxiety in academic settings.

Keywords: stress, anxiety, student life

1. Introduction

In recent years, stress and anxiety have become increasingly prevalent among students at all educational levels. The pressures of academic achievement, social expectations, and personal challenges often create a complex environment where students struggle to balance their academic responsibilities with their emotional and mental well-being. According to numerous studies, the demands of exams, deadlines, and the fear of failure can trigger or exacerbate feelings of stress and anxiety, which can negatively impact students' cognitive functioning, emotional stability, and overall health. In particular, college and university students are frequently faced with the added pressure of transitioning into a more independent phase of life, leading to increased vulnerability to mental health issues.

The impact of stress and anxiety on students is far-reaching, affecting not only their academic performance but also their social interactions, self-esteem, and long-term mental health. This research aims to explore the root causes of stress and anxiety in students, examining both external pressures (such as academic workloads and societal expectations) and internal factors (including personality traits and coping mechanisms). Moreover, the paper seeks to understand the implications of these mental health issues on students' academic success and well-being.

In addressing these concerns, this paper will also investigate various strategies and interventions designed to alleviate stress and anxiety. From school-based mental health programs to self-care techniques like mindfulness and exercise, effective coping mechanisms are crucial in helping students navigate the demands of education without compromising their mental health. The goal of this research is to provide valuable insights into how educational institutions, educators, and mental health professionals can better support students in managing stress and anxiety, fostering a healthier, more balanced approach to student life.

Additionally after the covid-19 pandamic the stress and anxiety level of the students have also changed due to the growing virtuality of studies.

2. Literature Review

Subramani and Kadhiravan (2017) revealed the link between academic stress and mental health among students. He endorsed that academic stress and mental health are correlated and that students are cramped with the academic structure. Parents and schools pressurize the students way too much for the higher grades that disheartens the students, further to add on there is not enough support from the parents and school in terms of guidance. The students are mentally healthy when they perform constructively in the academic forums. They also propounded that students from private schools are more pressurized as compared to students from government schools due to the excess of homework and other academic related assignments. Significant difference in mental health of students from private and government schools was found. He asserted that students from private schools have a different nurturing and vast exposure as compared to government school students who belong to poor socio economic background and lack of exposure. This is one of the reasons for the escalation of stress. Sharma et al. (2016) in their study stated the use of various methods to curb stress. Doing one physical exercise on daily basis can address the concern of stress. One can also adopt to various time management tools and get involved with leisure activities which can benefit students. Also, it was suggested that colleges should have a conducive ambience to curtail the stress. Change in the style of delivery from teachers end and providing mentors can bring fresh air to the teaching style. Prabu (2015) researched on the higher secondary students and implied that male students are more stressed than the female students. Urban student's academic stress is greater than the rural students. Government school student's stress is lower than the private school student's stress. Students from Science stream are more stressed than the students from Arts. Deb et al. (2014), studied on 400 male students from five private secondary schools in Kolkata who were studying in grades 10 and 12. 35 percent students were found to have high academic stress and 37 percent were found to have high anxiety levels. Students with marginal grades were said to have higher level of stress as compared to students with better grades. Also, students involved with extra-curricular activities were noted to be more stressed as related to those students who were not involved with it.

Kaur (2014) acknowledged that mental health of teenagers get affected due to the academic stress. Girls with academic stress were found to have poor mental health as compared to the boys. This was accounted on the study that parents at times put pressure and strain on students that leads to deteriorated mental health.

Students are usually conditioned in a way that makes them fearful to take up upcoming challenges as the focus is only the academics and not the development of a go getter mentally. There are not many choices for the medium of education. English being the only option available can pose as a hindrance for the students from rural background. There are not many courses available that are employment centric. Fresh graduates need more communication skills development for better placements.

3. Research Objectives

Studying in
16 responses

- Post Graduation
- Under Graduation
- School
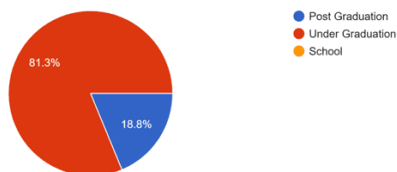
I made a question blank asking in about how many students are from post-graduation and under graduation along with school students. The above was the result obtained from them.

Do you think personal factors (e.g., family dynamics, financial status) influence student stress and anxiety levels?
16 responses

- Yes
- No
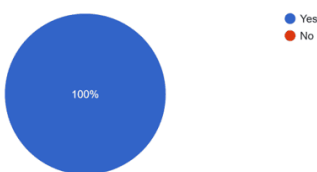
The next thing that I was focused was about personal factors alike whether they influence or not.

Most of the students were absolutely agreeing to it.

Personal factors significantly influence student stress and anxietydue to their impact on a student's perception, coping mechanisms, and overall well-being, including factors like self-esteem, social support, and past experiences.

Following is the personal reasons that affects and influence the stress and anxiety of a student:

1. Self-Esteem and Self-Perception.

2. Lack of Social Support: Students with limited social support may struggle to cope with academic and personal challenges, leading to increased stress and anxiety.

3. Family Dynamics: Unhealthy family dynamics, such as conflict or high expectations, can negatively impact a student's mental health and contribute to stress and anxiety.

4. Peer Relationships: Peer pressure, bullying, or social isolation can also contribute to stress and anxiety.

5. Past Experiences and Coping Mechanisms:Past trauma or stressful experiences can make students more vulnerable to anxiety and stress in the future.Students with poor coping skills may struggle to manage stress and anxiety effectively, leading to negative consequences.

As we know that the student life was affected and has changed to a level after the pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on students' mental health, contributing to increased stress and anxiety levels.

Has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the levels of stress and anxiety in students compared to pre-pandemic times?
16 responses

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree
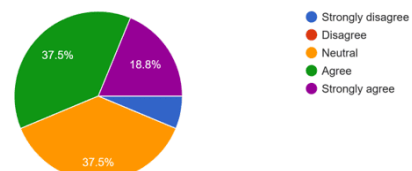
- Disruption of Routine and Uncertainty: Many students were forced to adjust to remote learning, which disrupted their routines and sense of normalcy. This disruption, combined with uncertainty about the future (e.g., when schools would reopen, how classes would proceed, etc.), led to feelings of anxiety and stress.

- Transition to Online Learning: Students had to adapt to online learning quickly, which led to challenges such as lack of access to reliable internet, unsuitable home environments for studying, or struggles with navigating new technology.

- Health Concerns: Students worried about their own health and the health of their loved ones, especially those who were at higher risk of contracting COVID-19.

- This constant worry, combined with the stress of adapting to new learning conditions, led to heightened levels of anxiety.

- Impact on Emotional Well-being: The loss of daily routines, school events, and connections with friends and family contributed to feelings of grief. Many students struggled with the emotional toll of being distanced from loved ones.

Do you think that the role of university/college counseling services is helping students manage stress and anxiety?
16 responses
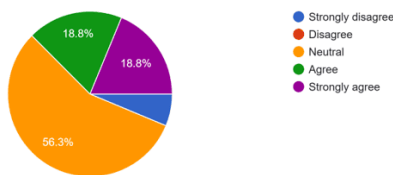
I had questioned the students whether the support from university and colleges help the students in managing stress or anxiety or not? And the response came as the above pie chart shows. Mostly people are agreeing thatYes, university and college counseling services play a crucial role in helping students manage stress and anxiety, and their importance has grown even more in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the extent to which they help can depend on several factors, including the resources available, the demand for services, and how effectively these services are utilized.

4. Factors Analysis

By doing a question pattern I would obtain that the factors affecting stress and anxiety on students are mostly the followings:

- Academic Stress

- Peer Pressure

- Fear of Judgment

- Social Comparison

Factor analysis Could provide a structured way to understand the multidimensional nature of stress and anxiety among students, offering deeper insights into how these stressors manifest and how they interact. This helps universities and researchers create more effective, targeted solutions to improve students' mental health and well-being. Also focusing on the social media platform. And following is the data obtained:

To what extent does social media use contribute to anxiety among students?
16 responses
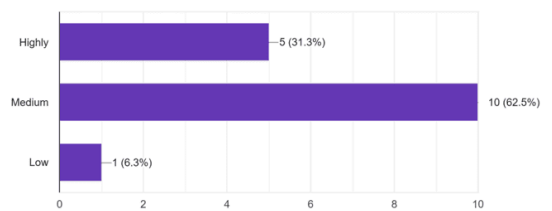
My research paper also made an emphasis and worked on whether what are different factors that causes stress and anxiety to them as a students and below is the responses covered:

- Well, the academic pressure plays a huge role for stress and anxiety in a student's life. Academics brings up burden for a student. The stress of getting good grades and the anxiety of not having good grades make their life hell.

- It prevents students from enjoying their academic life fully and thus contribute to stress and anxiety.

- While academic pressure, if in the right balance, can create a healthy studying environment, it can also inculcate stress resulting from peer pressure and unrealistic expectations. All the cut-throat competition and persistent expectations causes a lot of anxiety and stress in students.

- Fear of failure.

- The academic pressure really suffocates some students...specially demotivating teachers and constant comparison..every student shoul feel heard nd understood as they also have mental and emotional issues.

- Students face fear of failure, overloaded schedule, lack of sleep, pressure of career etc.

- Sometimes it does affect our stress and anxiety. Too much pressure of assignments sometimes leads to absolute stress.

- By creating high expectations, excessive workload, competition, and fear of failure, leading to mental and physical exhaustion.

- Depends on the Situation basically.... Sometimes it is Pressure, sometimes it's not. Depending on the Student.

- Fear falling short of expectations the academic workload is overwhelming sometimes.

- It adds upon more stress. Sometimes become the sole reason to be stressed.

5. Findings

This study investigated the factors influencing the stress and anxiety of students at different levels are family issues, peer pressure, academic pressure, relationship issues, financial stress, personal life. Recognizing these factors can help universities, educators, and students themselves identify specific stressors and develop appropriate coping strategies. A holistic approach—addressing academic pressures, promoting mental health resources, fostering social support, and encouraging healthy lifestyle choices—can significantly reduce stress and anxiety, improving overall student well-being and success.

By doing and analysing this paper I could identify that the students can reduce their stress and anxiety by the following:
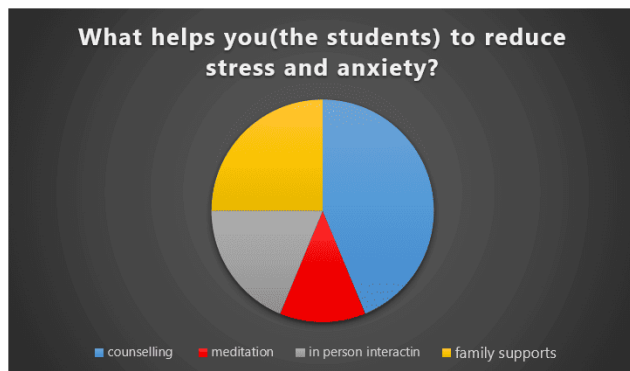
6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, stress and anxiety have become prevalent aspects of student life, affecting both mental and physical well-being. These challenges arise from a complex interplay of factors such as academic pressures, social expectations, financial concerns, personal issues, and the broader societal environment. The demands of achieving academic success, coupled with the pressure to manage social relationships, family expectations, and future uncertainties, create a multifaceted stress experience for students.

While stress can be a motivating force for performance, excessive or chronic anxiety can have detrimental effects on students' health, leading to burnout, sleep disturbances, poor academic performance, and emotional strain.

The ongoing global events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, have further exacerbated these challenges, highlighting the importance of addressing mental health in educational settings.

Given the significant impact stress and anxiety can have on students, it is crucial for universities and institutions to prioritize mental health by providing accessible counselling services, offering stress-reduction programs, and fostering a supportive and understanding campus environment. Students themselves must be equipped with effective coping strategies and resilience-building skills to manage stress in healthy ways. Furthermore, creating a culture where seeking help is normalized and supported is essential for ensuring students' well-being.

Ultimately, the ability to manage stress and anxiety is not just about academic success but about nurturing holistic well-being. By addressing the underlying factors contributing to stress and anxiety and promoting resources for students, we can help ensure a healthier, more balanced student experience, equipping them to face challenges both during their academic journey and in their future endeavours.

References

1. Foroughi, B., Griffiths, M. D., Iranmanesh, M., & Salamzadeh, Y. (2021). Associations between Instagram addiction, academic performance, social anxiety, depression, and life satisfaction among university students. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction.*

2. Hjeltnes, A., Molde, H., Schanche, E., Vøllestad, J., Lillebostad Svendsen, J., Moltu, C., & Binder, P. E. (2017). An open trial of mindfulness-based stress reduction for young adults with social anxiety disorder. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*.

3. Lin, X. J., Zhang, C. Y., Yang, S., Hsu, M. L., Cheng, H., Chen, J., & Yu, H. (2020). Stress and its association with academic performance among dental undergraduate students in Fujian, China: a cross-sectional online questionnaire survey. *BMC Medical Education, 20*(1), 181.

4. Geng, G., & Midford, R. (2015). Investigating first year education students' stress level. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 40*(6).

5. Yang, C., Chen, A., & Chen, Y. (2021). College students' stress and health in the COVID-19 pandemic: The role of academic workload, separation from school, and fears of contagion. *PloS one, 16*(2).

Disclaimer / Publisher's Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of Journals and/or the editor(s). Journals and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.