

Level of Stress among Students Studying in Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) in Dubai

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Abstract

This paper adopted a convenience sampling by approaching five different universities/higher education institutes in Dubai International Academic City (DIAC) to explore and examine the level of stress among students studying in those institutes. Three main factors of stress i.e., academic, financial and social support have been identified through the literature and a valid questionnaire was developed to capture their responses in all three factors of stress. By using descriptive statistics, an average (mean) values are computed. Recommendations and limitations of the study have also been discussed.

Keywords: Stress in HEIs; UAE universities; Stress among students; Stress management

Background of the Study

Students at higher level education institutes play a crucial role in country's development and prosperity, once they use their talent equipped with the acquired knowledge and skills in the university and colleges at graduation. It is perceived that government universities in the U.A.E are better than the private universities and free for the local Arabs. In United Arab Emirates, the demographics are very diversified and only 19% are the Emirati in the U.A.E, 23% are the Iranian and Arabs, 50% are South Asians, 8% are the Westerns and East Asians. This statistics further validates the fact that in, majority of the local studying in government universities. Therefore most of the student's from different part of the world living in U.A.E. face financials, social and academic challenges. Students in the U.A.E are also come across with the renewal visa policies every year.

The cost of international campuses and cost of living is also high for the international students in the U.A.E. The government of U.A.E doesn't allow the students to work part-time which are on the student visa. Considering the overall dynamic and new off shore international campuses in Dubai, students encounter high pressure because on one side they have to carry on their studies, they have to secure good grades in the subjects, maintain the GPA, they have the assignments, presentations, quizzes, research projects, group discussions and many other activities that need the attention of students towards academics meanwhile they have different challenges like entering in a diverse culture, food issues, travelling issues, family issues, and there is a class of students in U.A.E living without their families so they feel homesickness and they were expecting the changes more stressed than the local students. Therefore, considering overall discussion so far, this research paper attempts to explore and examine the level of most important factors of stress among students in HEIs in Dubai.

Literature Review

Stress

The people who are facing stress react in very depressing way. Strain seizes locale after a person is grasped alongside an aim to find out as desecrating [1].

Cox et al. [2] stated strain is a vision affair that aftermath from a difference amid the plea set and skill of person of influence to finish the obligation successfully.

"Teachers often emphasize the acquisition of knowledge, so they often neglect the emotional feelings of students during the teaching process, which can cause emotional stress and learning problems for students. In addition, students may feel unfamiliar situations like nervousness, worry, frustration, abasement, depression, etc. The instability of these emotions easily initiates unusual behavior, which then affects the learning achievements and adjustment ability of students if appropriate timely counseling is not given by the institutions, teachers and parents, or if they cannot obtain appropriate concern from their peers or siblings." [3].

In this section, a brief relevant review of the literature has been conducted to come up with the most important factors of stress may face by students in HEIs.

Stress related to academics: Many researches are done for the strain that students take in their academics. They find strain as too countless home works, competitions alongside supplementary enrollments, wrecks connections alongside supplementary students or lecturers. Intellectual academics have disparate career nature contrasted to nonacademic. It is forecasted to have contrasts in signals, components, and aftermath of strain to graduates [4]. Researchers suggest there must be counselors available in the university who take care of the stressful students. Consequently, university must to uphold adjust intellectual nature helpful for improved discovering that fit with the requirement of every single student. Personality and background of students also affects that how they handle the stress.

Consequently supplementary scrutiny, we find out that student self-impose the stress due to the personality factor. Students who are consistently exceedingly committed, stable, perfect, expose avidity for their earth, and are success-oriented [5]. "Self-oriented perfectionism describes the trend of a person to target and accomplish marvelous

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work. Other-oriented perfectionism is concerning the customs of someone who always anticipate that the others must to present ideally in their tasks. Socially counseled perfectionism is concerning the exercise of someone to always contemplate that the area anticipates flawlessness from him or her” [6].

Students bear the excessive level of stress due to the intellectual prospect set by their teachers. For countless graduates, intellectual expectations are melodramatically larger by their professors as compare to teachers in elevated school.

Stress related to financial status: Financial strain has been denoted to by reviewer as commercial strain, commercial adversity, commercial stress and commercial pressure. Commercial stress is an appraisalment of present commercial rank such as observed commercial capacity, commercial affairs, arrangements to differences in a person commercial status and person is advised commercial status. Fiscal stress is a vital basis of anxiety in people’s lifetimes because countless frank hobbies of common living and convenience for accomplishment are firmly attach to present elevations of confidential commercial means [7].

Feedback to commercial strain additionally contain emotional components. Jackson et al. [8] inspected the bound of psychological anxiety of a person in constant agony contrasted to lively segment. Graduate commercial strain additionally leads to emotional replies such as executive promise and comfort in the discovering climate. Commercial strain was encompassed as strain and factors connected to commercial strain and replies were founded. Strain connected to confidential resources is observed to be one of the most prominent origins of emotional strain because frank existence hobbies are linked alongside confidential commercial finance and their association [7].

Stress related social support: A frequently proclaim purpose is that social support is data managing individual to belief he or she is protect for, admired, and an associate of a accompany of contact and public duty. Social support can categorize as pursuing three:

- Impress
- Adoption
- Help

Kahn et al. [9] clarify communal support alongside three as: alter, confirmation, and benefit. Alter is support that contains the explanation of kind and emotive confidence, assertion is the ability of data concerning the correctness or wrongdoing of individual deeds, and assistance is the potential and use of absolute aid across fund, period, and achievement.

Many scholars have recognized the connection amid sensitivity of communal connectedness amid students and stress levels. Hodgson et al. [10] upheld this in their discovering that negligence of communal prop is connected to anxiety among students.

Lower level of communal support is one of the evocate of emotional issues. It is affiliated alongside maximum level of slump, apprehension, scrutiny setbacks, believed setbacks, communal setbacks and actual criticism. These assumptions are upheld by the discovery of Friedlander et al. [11] on 128 early year undergraduate students. It was discovered that students who observed that their communal sources increased had decrease the level of emotional issues. This displays that the encounter of a depressive condition for example can be cut after students have good communal backup. Counsel and motivation from origins of prop could additionally raise the trend that a person will depend on

alert setback resolving and data searching. These could help students in dealing alongside assorted stressors in the nature and enable an affirmative correct development.

Since communal prop was discovered to be shielding results of strain, it might cut the benefit of adverse severing struggling actions such as prevention, removal, and prohibition among students. In a cross-sectional discovery, Holahan et al. [12] discovered first-year students alongside higher levels of observed parental prop were larger adjusted (i.e., higher well-being and happiness) and less distressed than those alongside lower levels of observed parental support.

Stress from students point view

Strain is playing a vital role in our present existence, due to the quick adjustments made by the students like just one night study in the exam days, such era is yelled the period of strain, the enrollments tolerate related to intellectual strain arose from assessing, residence activity and supplementary discipline necessities that could enhance the skills of students, parents also take the strain of their children studies, operatives, heads, and all area have disparate kinds of strain, from time to time the alike individual endure from disparate kinds of strain at the alike period [13].

In U.A.E, most universities are multicultural and have different kind of relations among the students. There are a lot of barriers like language is one of the barrier which effects them in understanding each other and also become the cause for stress especially then when they are together working on the projects or assignments irrespective of that English is the common language between the students but their assent are different which effects in their understanding. So this factor affects the students academically. Due to this barrier they are not much socialized in the co-curricular activities and the events held in the universities. So this factor affects the students socially as well. This factor also leaves a physical stress on the students when they don’t understand each other.

Research Methods

This research is the cross sectional study in which we focus on the level of stress in HEIs students only in the Academic City Universities in the Dubai, U.A.E and keeping the short time period and limited cost under consideration. In this research the data has been gathered by approaching five institutes in DIAC. The total 120 respondents participated in the survey by adopting a convenience sample method [14]; however, only seventy (70) usable surveys were considered for data analysis. The instrument that is used in this research is the questionnaire. Questionnaire is categorized in three sections one section is for the demographics. The second section consists of the academics, financial and social support questions. In total it consists of 27 questions. Nominal scale is used to measure the demographic questions and likert scale is used to measure the stress factors academics, financial and social status questions including the overall stress. A valid questionnaire for this study has been adopted by Holahan [12]. SPSS 13.0 has been used for the descriptive statistics.

Results

Background of respondents

Table 1 shows that respondents are categorized among five universities which are Amity University, MENA College, American university, Murdoch University and Szabist. The total number of responses are 70 from which 5.7% responses are collected from Amity, 11.4% responses are collected from MENA, 14.3% responses

are collected from American university, 17.1% responses are collected from Murdoch University and 51.4% responses are collected from Szabist.

Table 2 represent the total number of responses are 70 from which 27 are females and 43 are males.

Table 3 describe that the total number of responses are 70 from which 53 are single and 17 are married. So 24.3% are married and 75.7% are single.

Table 4 describe that the total number of responses are 70 aged between 20 years to 30 years. The mean is 25 years.

Table 5 shows that respondents are categorized among four nationalities which are Arab-Emirati, Indian, Pakistani and others. The total number of responses is 70 from which 40 are Pakistanis, 12 are Indians, 11 are Emiratis and 7 are from other nationalities.

Table 6 shows that respondents are categorized among three level of education which are Diploma, Bachelor and Masters. The total number of responses are 70 from which 38 are doing Masters, 29 are doing Bachelors, 11 are 3 are doing Diploma.

Table 7 describes the income level of the respondents. There are 5 categories of income level and total number of respondents is 70. 18 respondents have more than 8000 AED income.17 respondents have income range between 6001-8000 AED. 15 respondents have 1 less than 2000 AED. 13 respondents have income range between 4001-6000 AED. At last 7 respondents have income range between 2000-4000 AED.

The Table 8 describes the living status of the respondents. The total number of respondents is 70 from which 45 lives with their families. 17

	University/ Institute	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Amity University	4	5.7	5.7	5.7
	MENA College	8	11.4	11.4	17.1
	American university	10	14.3	14.3	31.4
	Murdoch university	12	17.1	17.1	48.6
	Szabist	36	51.4	51.4	100.0
	Total	70	100.0	100.0	

Table 1: Responses from respondents categorized among five universities.

	Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	30	42.9	42.9	42.9
	Male	40	57.1	57.1	100.0
	Total	70	100.0	100.0	

Table 2: Responses from males and females.

	Marital status	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Married	17	24.3	24.3	24.3
	Single	53	75.7	75.7	100.0
	Total	70	100.0	100.0	

Table 3: Responses from single and married.

Descriptive Statistics	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Age	70	20	30	24.81
Valid N (listwise)	70			

Table 4: Responses from age groups.

	Nationality	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Others	7	10.0	10.0	10.0
	Arab-Emirati	11	15.7	15.7	25.7
	Indian	12	17.1	17.1	42.9
	Pakistani	40	57.1	57.1	100.0
	Total	70	100.0	100.0	

Table 5: Responses from nationalities.

	Education	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Diploma	3	4.3	4.3	4.3
	Bachelor	29	41.4	41.4	45.7
	Masters	38	54.3	54.3	100.0
	Total	70	100.0	100.0	

Table 6: Responses from level of education.

	Income Level (Monthly)	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	AED 2000-4000	7	10.0	10.0	10.0
	4001-6000	13	18.6	18.6	28.6
	1Less than AED 2000	15	21.4	21.4	50.0
	6001-8000	17	24.3	24.3	74.3
	More than 8000	18	25.7	25.7	100.0
	Total	70	100.0	100.0	

Table 7: Responses from income level.

	Living With	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Alone	1	1.4	1.4	1.4
	Relatives	7	10.0	10.0	11.4
	Roommate (Friends)	17	24.3	24.3	35.7
	Family	45	64.3	64.3	100.0
	Total	70	100.0	100.0	

Table 8: Responses from living status.

respondents are live with their friends, 7 respondents live with relatives and only 1 respondent live alone.

Descriptive statistics of stress level:

Stress related to academic issues: Table 9 highlights descriptive statistics of the stress levels in terms of academic stress, a student perceived. An overall mean of 3.28 at the scale of 5.0, indicates that the respondent level of stress relating to academics and dealing with academic issues are not too high, however, they experience a relatively higher level of stress, if their CGP gets low (Mean 3.7).

Stress related to financial issues: Table 10 highlights descriptive statistics of the stress levels in terms of financial stress, a student may perceive. An overall mean of 3.3 at the scale of 5.0, indicates that the respondent level of stress relating to financial issues and dealing to cope with those issue are not at higher side, however, an overall mean (4.1) has been reported that shows an average higher level of stress caused because of the expenses and cost in the university. In addition, it also indicates that students are also not able to manage the issues related to tuition fees (Mean 3.9).

Stress related to social support: Table 11 highlights descriptive statistics of the stress levels in terms of social support, a student may perceive. An overall mean of 3.8 at the scale of 5.0, indicates that the respondent level of stress relating to social support issues and dealing to cope with stress while social systems is available are at lower side. This

Academic Issues			
	Question	N	Mean
1	I lack self confidence	70	3.2
2	I act with hostility when I exposed to harassment and ridicule from students and teachers	70	3.0
3	I find it difficult to reach practical solutions to my academic problems	70	2.9
4	I am worried about my academic progress	70	3.6
5	I feel depressed because of my low cumulative average	70	3.7
	Overall Mean		3.28

Table 9: Stress related to academics.

Financial Issues			
	Question	N	Mean
1	I have a financial problems because of the expenses of the university	70	4.1
2	I am unable to managed my university fees	70	3.9
3	I don't have any financial support from my family/relatives	70	2.9
4	I am doing part time job to manage my financial problems	70	2.2
5	Sometimes I have financial supports from my friends	70	3.5
	Overall		3.8

Table 10: Stress related to financial issues.

Social Support			
	Question	N	Mean
1	My family and I have a good relations	70	4.1
2	My social life become unlimited	70	3.2
3	I enjoy meeting people	70	3.8
4	I spend a budget for entertainment and recreation	70	3.9
5	I have relationships with other relatives and friends	70	4.0
6	I never have conflict with others	70	3.9
	Overall Mean		3.8

Table 11: Stress related to social support.

indicates that a moderate level of social support is always there from friends, relatives for students that surpass the effect of higher level stress.

Discussion of Stress Level

The overall stress levels of all the respondents were relatively low. However it is evident that stress related to academic issues the level of stress is (Mean 3.2) and fanatical (Mean 3.3) are crucial to discuss. These two issues are being reported at relatively lower in a scale of 5.0. This further validates the issue that students stress out once they feel pressure from their financial and academic related issues.

Recommendation

The descriptive study's result shows that financial and academic related issues may lead to higher level of stress and anxiety among students. So it is recommended that universities that they must have student counseling department in their universities so they can listen understand and help the students for their problems. Students have different kinds of problems and they don't want to disclose some of them to all because of hesitation. Further, it may also be recommended that there must be some financial plans such as academic merit scholarship, need based scholarships or any other financial findings must be available to the students on a case to case basis.

Limitations and Future Direction

Current research opens the way to explore the level of stress and its factors on the macro level of all the universities in the U.A.E. This research executed in the universities of academic city in Dubai, U.A.E. The findings of this study can't generalize with the other universities in the U.A.E.

A further research must be carried out by looking into the impact of these three factors on students overall motivation/satisfaction level to in completing their studies.

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