

**“A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK ON STRESS AMONG
UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS – A LITERATURE
REVIEW”**

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ABSTRACT:

Nowadays, students go through stress in colleges at different levels. Stress is the physical or mental disturbance caused to students due to various stressors. This study is a conceptual or literature review study based on stress among college students. The purpose of this study is to make college students understand the stress increases among them and the causes of stress and also the solutions for coping up with stress. Initially, the terms “eustress” means positive and “distress” means negative stresses are discussed in detail in the present study. Also the acute and chronic stress is mentioned which relates to time period of stress. The stressors are namely academic performance, finance, social relationships, time management are discussed in detail. Also how the college students should cope up with their stress is detailed in this study. This study will help college students to understand and find out their stressors and will teach how to deal with the stress. Various techniques are recommended for use in practice to reduce, avoid and manage the stress. The present approach is built on the existing theory to distribute new construction that will help to explain the stressors in college students and in reducing their stress.

KEY WORDS: Stress, Causes of stress, Academic students, Manage stress

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INTRODUCTION:

The concept of Stress has been evolved from the field of physics by one of the fathers of stress research Hans Selye (1907-1982). In physics, “*Stress describes the force that produces strain on a physical body, i.e.; bending a piece of metal until it snaps occurs because of the force or stress exerted on it*”. After completing the medical training from the University of Montreal, Hans Selye started using the concept of “Stress” in 1920’s. He proposed that stress resulted in release of stress hormones. He named it as ‘General Adaptation Syndrome’. Stress produces different physical and mental symptoms which depend on each individual’s surrounding factors. The concept stress management is the key of happy and stress less life of an individual. This review paper highlights on different aspect of stress related issues and the solutions for stress among college students.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Stress is a conscious or unconscious feeling of an individual that affects the individual physically or mentally in positive or in negative ways. Stress is characterized by psychological responses that are directed towards version. Stress is a psychological process started by actions that threaten or harm the individual. The father of stress research Hans Selye named the factors causing stress as stressors. He mentioned that the stressors could be physical, physiological, psychological or socio-cultural.

A person typically is said to be stressed when there is an output of positive or negative reactions. “*Stress depends on variables such as the novelty, rate, intensity, duration, or personal interpretation of the input, and genetic or experiential factors*”. One person’s stressor may be due to another person’s fun.

STRESS AMONG UNDERGRADUATE COLLEGE STUDENTS:

At what age do students have the greatest stress? Most agree that the stress of university life is very great. Stress management among university students is a hit-or-miss matter. Some universities schedule optional stress management classes, but students often lack the time to attend. If they have the time, they lack the interest. Students who do not understand clearly what stress is cannot be expected to succeed as stress management. They may be trying to manage stressors, thinking they are managing stress. Stress management among students may

begin only after they understand that the extra demands made upon them are stressors, not stress. They then must understand that their response to those demands constitute stress.

Students face stress in college in various ways. The causes and reasons for stress are different for individual student. The sources of stress differ to every individual. We are familiar with that some stress is helpful, the measure of stress can relatively change a student's ability to cope.

Stress in student is defined as "reaction of individual that can be physical or mental in any situation that gives pressure on an individual". Chemicals into the blood are released when students feel stressed due to some reasons according to their surroundings. If the reason of stress causing is physical harm, the extra energy and strength given to individual by these chemicals would be a good thing. But; if the stress is responding emotional, then there is no any way out for it. That means, stress among students can be positive (Eustress) or negative (Distress). Stress can be eustress for a student when its level is very high and enough for motivating you. It plays a role of motivator in your performance. It is essential stress in our life. Eustress or positive stress helps in moving your actions in positive way by motivating you. When a student is facing several physical or mental problems, its said as distress or negative stress. Distress or negative stress is caused when your stress level either too high or too low and this reflects in negative way to the stressors. It's not essential stress in our life. It gives you negativity and is harmful to one's life. It further can cause depression and lead in a very bad way. The stressors causing stress among students can be of different types. They affect a student's life resulting stress. Stressors are nothing but the surrounding due to which stress is caused.

Also, stresses are of other two categories depending on the time it exist in an individual; viz; Acute stress and Chronic stress. Acute stress is called when an individual is suffering from stress for short period of time. Chronic stress is called when an individual is suffering stress for a long time for weeks or months or years. The causes and effects of stress among students differ individually as per their surroundings. Students may face any stress. It's totally related to their present mental and physical situation and also to their surroundings.

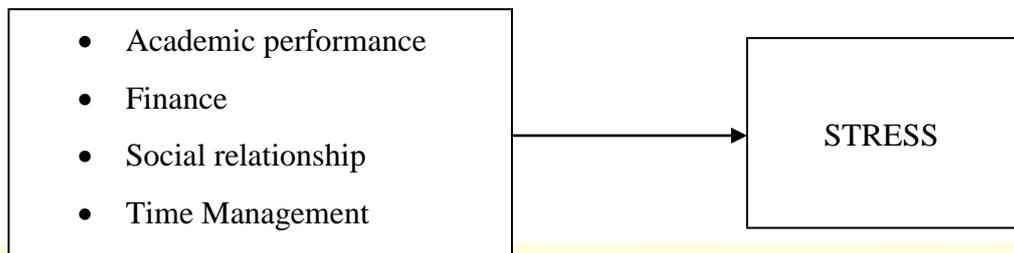
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK ON CAUSES OF STRESS**INDEPENDENT VARIABLE****DEPENDENT VARIABLE**

Figure 1.1 Conceptual framework on Causes of Stress

CAUSES OF STRESS AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS:

The conceptual framework on causes of stress is showed in Figure1.1. The detailed study is done in further context.

1. ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE:

The stress caused due to academic performance tensions is one of the most common causes of stress in college student's life. You join college for learning and gaining knowledge. Practically the course work of college students is very much challenging and demanding. This stage of education is the toughest one and individual needs to work hard give his/her fullest effort here. In college level, the studies become very highly difficult and simultaneously the competition is also very high. In this competitive world, an individual need to maintain good grades and CGPA till the end of completion of the degree. Students who want to pursue post graduation need to fulfil all necessities required for getting admission into a good college. Similarly, students who want to join and continue their career need to prepare for the same. In this way, individual need to concentrate and maintain his/her academic performance for good future and life. So, by maintaining all these situations and concentrating on each causes academic performance stress.

2. FINANCE:

It has become more familiar with the fact that the education has become so much expensive. Mainly the college education is touching heights in economical side. So we conclude here

that college fee is expensive. Not all parents can afford paying college fees. But those parents who can't afford but are willing to admit their child in college anyhow manage to pay his/her fees. They sacrifice their other needs in front of their child's career and also for their wants and needs. This is also one of the stress causes in individual's life. Individual is familiar with this fact and this thing may hunt individual's mind causing stress.

On other hand, there can be many other ways of causing stress due to financial problems. If individual is not happy with his monthly pocket money or is unable to satisfy his/her own needs or is getting embarrassed in front of friends due to no money or continuous sacrifices due to shortage of money or losing money in any situation can cause financial stress.

3. SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS:

Students find many relationships in college. The relationships may be of friendship or love. In early stage of college, individual may find difficult to cope up and trust and find true friends. Due to this, few may get stressed and depressed. On the other hand, individual faces many ups and downs in love relationship too. This causes stress. Fights with partner or friend or any other issue with your close one or with any one in college gives you stress. Also, individual gets introduced to new people, they become friends and relation continues. Maintaining relation with these people can also cause stress.

4. TIME MANAGEMENT:

Time management also plays an effective role as a stressor. Most of the times, the college students feel lazy and thus they keep on postponing their tasks and other works. While completing the work at the end, an individual feels the stress of doing the entire task together. Here stress is caused due to not managing time in any of the situations faced by a college student in day to day life.

HOW UNDERGRADUATE COLLEGE STUDENTS SHOULD MANAGE OR COPE UP WITH STRESS:

1. FIGURE OUT FROM WHERE DOES THE STRESS COME:

Many times when a college student is in stress, he/she doesn't know the reason of stress. In this case that individual need to be calm and find out the stressors causing him/her stress. It

can be anything like exam tension, the load of laundry, fight with friend, family problems, etc. By having clarity of the stressors in college student's life, the college student will be one step closer to administer college student's life.

2. AVOID ALCOHOL, SMOKING AND DRUGS:

Few people give reason of relaxation for smoking. But it's there misunderstanding. But the fact is Nicotine controls an individual's feelings so that they do not know. Alcohol, Smoking and drugs are stimulants so it will increase you stress instead of reducing it. This also causes stress, so a college student needs to avoid smoking, alcohol and drugs consumption. Rather you can drink herbal tea, fresh fruit juices, and mineral water for keeping yourself hydrated.

3. SLEEP MORE:

Sleep is always the best medicine for releasing stress. Nowadays students are more addicted to social networking, whatsapp, calls, texting. They give preference to internet and mobile and laptop usage. This causes extra stress and it's not noticeable to students. So the college students should get more sleep and avoid these other stressful activities.

4. TALK TO YOUR CLOSE ONES:

Often when an individual is in stress due to any reason, he/she should talk to their family member, best friend, and partner. By expressing their stress and sharing the problems to their close ones may really help in reducing their stress. Also, their close ones may give him/her some tips for coping with their stress or help in finding some solutions. So, talking to an individual's close ones may really help in coping or managing the stress.

5. TIME MANAGING:

Many times when an individual keeps his/her tasks pending, he/she feels burden of the completion of tasks at together at the end. This causes stress. So to avoid such stress, an individual should manage his/her time properly. He/she should prefer completing the tasks on time and not to keep on postponing works for any reason and that relates to stress till the end. This may provide the time for also doing other activities. Thus, time managing is also an important tip for coping and avoiding stress.

6. EXERCISE:

Doing exercise daily is the best way for releasing stress and exorcism. Even a walk for 30 minutes is good for releasing stress but exercising will give more effect. Joining any health club will also refresh a student's mood and reduce the stress. Yoga is the best way to relax your muscles and release the stress. Laughing is also considered as one of best stress releasing exercises as we know they say "laughter is the best medicine".

7. LISTENING MUSIC:

Listening to music can put your mind in a better state and change your mood. So when a college student feels stressed out due to any reason, he/she can also prefer listening to music. This refreshes their mood and mind .This helps in coping up with their stress.

8. MAINTAIN A HEALTHY AND VARIES DIET:

Always try to maintain a healthy diet. Food is not only for fulfilling the hunger, but its respective vitamins plays role is reducing the stress. The fresh juices of orange and grape are said to be good for an individual's immune system and helps in reducing stress. So maintain a proper healthy diet will also help in coping with stress.

BENEFITS OF STRESS MANAGEMENT IN STUDENTS:

Managing stress in college students is the very important key for success and happiness. Being able to manage the stress will improve the quality of college student's life. By learning how to manage stress will be very much helpful in a college student's personal and professional life. Stress management will also increase an individual's patience and quality of work. Some of the benefits of stress management are:

- ❖ Better immune function
- ❖ More energy
- ❖ More relaxation
- ❖ Good mood
- ❖ Positive energy

CONCLUSION:

This study will help college students to understand and find out their stressors and will teach how to deal with the stress. Various techniques are suggested for use in practice to reduce, avoid and manage the stress. This review paper provides the fact that figuring out the reason of stress, avoiding alcohol and drugs, sleeping more, talking to close ones, time managing, exercising, listening music, maintaining a healthy diet are the effective ways for reducing stress.

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