

PERCEPTION OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS ON THE IMPACT OF STRESS ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AMONG STUDENTS OF HUMAN KINETICS AND HEALTH EDUCATION OF FEDERAL UNIVERSITY DUTSIN-MA KATSINA STATE

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Abstract

This study examines perception of undergraduate students on the impact of stress on academic performance among students of Human Kinetics and Health Education of Federal University Dutsinma, Katsina State. Survey research design for data collection. The instrument used for data collection was Academic Stress Questionnaire adapted from Akram, Khan and Baby (2014) to assess academic stress among students. The population of study was four hundred and eighty nine (489) students, made up of all the male and female Undergraduate Students of Human Kinetics and Health Education Department as of 2022/2023 academic session. Two hundred and twenty (220) respondents were randomly selected through simple random sampling technique. Simple frequency and percentage was used to analyze the data collected. The findings of the study reveals that majority of the respondents are of the opinion that stress influences students' academic performance. Similarly, Academic stress is majorly caused by financial constraint, family and personal problems as well as heavy work load. Majority of the respondents agreed that stress can be managed by engaging in proper relaxation, recreation activities and seeking of psychological help from professionals. Based on these findings, the following recommendations were made; academic activities should commence early so as to avoid over working the students at the middle or end of semester.

Keywords: Perception, Impact, Assessment, Stress, Academic performance

Introduction

Academic performance is one of the most vital consideration among undergraduate students in higher educational level (Kalman (2012). The academic performance can be illustrated by grade point average (GPA), despite living in an environment where education is accessible to all, there are still some differences in performance among the undergraduate students. Internal and external factors have been associated with academic performance of which stress happens to have negative or positive effect on the mastery of the academic curriculum (Berard, Spielmans, & Julka, 2011).

Stress is the body's nonspecific response mechanism towards demands or strains made on itself or the environment (Backels & Wheders, 2011). It is a process by which we perceive and cope with environmental threats and challenges. Individual can be stressed in differently on daily life and stress can be viewed as the bodies reaction both neurologically and physiologically to adapt to the new condition (Yahusko, 2008). Stress can be due to different reasons or stressors such as the academic financial problem, health problem or loss of close family member or friend etc.

Stress in academic situation can have both positive and negative consequences. Stress can inhibit and suppress learning, which is called "Unfavorable stress" and is associated with inhibition of undergraduate students academic performance (Backels & Wheders, 2011). Learning and memory can

be affected by stress although an optimal level can enhance learning ability (Kalman, 2012). Too much stress can cause physical and mental health problems, reduce self-esteem, and may affect the academic achievement of students (Bennett, 2013). Universities all over the world are places where learning is achieved at its maximum level and they are the centers for academic pursuits. Due to this mission and pursuits in the universities, there are numerous responsibilities resting on the shoulders of universities. For university to attain such goals it has to be properly equipped and focused to carry out such responsibilities. According to Awe in 2012, the problem of Nigerian Universities as it affects undergraduate students have increased over the years with increasing enrolment and poor funding (Awe, 2012).

The lack of basic infrastructural facilities and parents economic status would in turn directly affect teaching and learning for the students and this would reflect on their grade level in school. Lack of these necessities can be a source of stress to the students for effective learning to take place, the right conditions that would be favorable to this moment needs to be set in place. Stressors abound in our everyday life as would condition and unsatisfactory living continues to be a problem especially in a challenging academic environment like our Nigerian universities and especially faculty of education where more demands are placed on the students who both study their core courses and additional educational courses.

The performances of undergraduate students in their academic can be affected by many factors such as gender, age, teaching staff, father, family's social status, total study hours and accommodating them as hostellers or dry scholars (Berry, Cook, Hill & Stevens, 2011). Many researches have been done by scholars on finding the factors which contribute to undergraduate student's academic performance both positively and negatively; and achievement relies heavily on social status of parents and students guardians (Graetz, 2015).

Researches have been conducted in order to review the relationship among stress and academic performances of undergraduate students in great manner (Choi, Abbott, Arthur, & Hill, 2014). Undergraduate students complained about the stress they undergo during their examination or any competition regarding grades or in any case when they have so much to study and less time to do it. They say it really has effects on their academic performance (Carveth, Gesse & Moss, 2015). One study reported that stress among undergraduate students is notably an important factor which is interrelated with poor performance (Backels & Wheders, 2011). A research by Conard found that students' attitude towards the learning of working ethics is related to the academic performance and achievement (Benton & Sargent, 2012).

It also found, that, confidence level of undergraduate students in themselves in terms of academic and their managerial abilities as how they manage their academic work load affects their academic performance achievement (Richardson, 2014). Additionally, family's expectation can be a big factor that can affect the motivation level of undergraduate students as well as their academic performances and they must be considered as an important point regardless of their attitude towards education (Mutsoto. & Abenga, 2010).

A study examined a significant correlation of academic performance with intelligence level among the students of high school on gender basis and found that the relationship among intelligence of undergraduate students and their academic performance. It was observed that, this was higher among girls. They also found that socio-economic status is not affecting the students' academic performance notably among boys and girls, and that, the academic performance of urban girls and boys are higher than that of rural ones. They concluded from their research that, academic performance and achievement of girls are much more superior to that of boys to lesser stress they face in schools (Mishra, 2013).

Statement of the Problem

Despite the fact that education is universally given a high importance, academic institutions today do not display a motivating atmosphere. Students are being pressurized and forced to mug up things without really understanding them just to get more distinctions and good grades in examinations. To secure more distinctions and ranks students are pressurized by teachers and parents to attend extra classes and coaching that add their mental pressure to perform well. Students hardly get time for recreation in their busy schedule. As a result stress has been seen tightening its grip on the students, as they have to compete at every step of their academic career in this fast moving world. University school students seem especially vulnerable to this reality. For many students, high school may be stressful. Students feel the effects of stress in harsh and also negative ways. Some of these effects include a sudden drop in grades, depression, general fatigue, insomnia, mood swings, temper tantrums and aggression. Failure to complete high school not only affects the well-being of the students, but also the well-being of the nation as a whole. Most of the students in university school face stress almost every day. Some of this stress is good and the balance of the stress can be overwhelming because an optimum level of stress is good for better performance because the overwhelming stress pushes a student to do things they would not normally do.

University school students are particularly prone to stress than young adults and older groups because of the corresponding age and transition related changes in their life. Stress among the high school students can be due to a number of reasons such as parents' expectations, pressure to perform well academically and a number of intra and inter-personal factors operating either together or in isolation. Besides, most of the high school students apart from their school, attend coaching classes preparing them for entry into various professional courses in several institutions. They thus experience additional strain and stress- physical as well as mental. Hence academic problems have been reported to be the most common source of stress for students (Struthers et al., 2000). Therefore, this study shall attempt to examine the perception of undergraduate students on the impact of stress on academic performance among students of Human kinetics and Health Education of Federal University Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State

Objectives of the Study

The following objectives were set to guide the study:

1. To determine the perceived impact of stress on Academic performance among undergraduate students of Human Kinetics and Health Education in Federal University Dutsin-Ma Katsina State.
2. To determine the perceived causes of stress among of undergraduate students of Human Kinetics and Health Education in Federal University Dutsin-Ma Katsina State.
3. To find out the perceived relationship between level of stress and Academic performance among undergraduate students of Human Kinetics and Health Education in Federal University Dutsin-Ma Katsina State.
4. To find out the perceived ways of the managing the impact of stress on Academic performance among undergraduate students of Human Kinetics and Health Education in Federal University Dutsin-Ma Katsina State.

Research Questions

1. What is the perceived impact of stress on Academic performance among students of Human Kinetics and Health Education in Federal University Dutsin-Ma Katsina State?
2. What are the perceived causes of stress among students of Human Kinetics and Health Education

in Federal University Dutsin-Ma Katsina State?

3. What are the perceived relationship between level of stress and Academic performance among students of Human Kinetics and Health Education in Federal University Dutsin-Ma Katsina State?
4. What are the perceived ways of managing the impact of stress on Academic performance among undergraduate students of Human Kinetics and Health Education in Federal University Dutsin-Ma Katsina State?

Methodology

The population of study was four hundred and eighty nine (489) students, made up of all the male and female Undergraduate Students of Human Kinetics and Health Education Department as of 2022/2023 academic session. Two hundred and twenty (220) respondents were randomly selected through simple random sampling technique. This was because simple random sampling procedure provides the possible means for all members of the population to be equally represented. Survey research design which uses sample of the population in estimating their characteristics through the systematic use of statistical method. This therefore helps one to compare the attitudes and opinions of different populations as well as look for changes in them overtime. It was therefore considered the appropriate research design for the present study. The instrument used for data collection was Academic Stress Questionnaire adapted from Akram, Khan and Baby (2014) which has been validated and reliable (.072) for assessing academic stress among students. Therefore, two hundred and twenty (220) Questionnaires were administered to all levels in the Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education in the following manner; 50 questionnaires to 100L, 70 questionnaires to 200L, 50 questionnaires to 300L, 50 questionnaires to 400L. The procedure for the completion of the form was explained to the respondents. The questionnaire distributed were filled and collected back on the spot. A total number of 220 questionnaire where distribute to the respondents and they were all filled and return correctly give a total of 100%. Descriptive statistics of simple percentage was employed to assess thoughts, opinions, and feelings. Additional details on causes of stress and how to curb them have been discussed.

Results

Demographic data of respondents

The results from this study are presented in the table below.

Table 1: Demographic data of respondents

Variables	Options	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	130	59%
	Female	90	41%
	Total	220	100%
Level	100L	50	23%
	200L	70	31%
	300L	50	23%
	400L	50	23%
	Total	220	100%
Age	16-20yrs	90	41%
	21-25yrs	60	27%
	26-30yrs	70	31%
	30- above yrs	0	0%
	Total	220	100%

Demographic Characteristics of the respondents are presented on Table 1 above. An observation of the

gender of the respondents shows that 130 (59%) were males while 90 (41%) were females; this indicates that more males than females were used as respondents for this research. The analysis of this respondent by level of study revealed that 50 (23%), 70 (31%), 50 (23%), 50 (23%) were at 100L, 200L, 300L and 400L respectively. The analysis of age of the respondents showed that 90 (41%), 60 (27%), 70 (32%), 0 (0%), were between the ages of 16 - 20years, 21 – 25years, 26 - 30years and 31 years above respectively.

Answering Research Questions

Research Question 1: What is the perceived impact of stress on Academic performance among students of Human Kinetics and Health Education in Federal University Dutsin-Ma Katsina State?

Table 2: Perceived impact of stress on academic performance among students

S/N	Statement	Yes	No	Total
1	Lack of concentration influence academic performance of undergraduate students	140 (64%)	80 (36%)	220 (100%)
2	Poor grade academically is affected by stress	130 (59%)	90 (41%)	220 (100%)
3	Good grade in academic is influenced by stress	60 (27%)	160 (73%)	220 (100%)
4	Undergraduate students academic performance is influenced by anxiety and depression	160 (73%)	60 (27%)	220 (100%)

Table 2 above presents the opinion of the respondents on impact of stress on academic performance of undergraduate students. An analysis of how lack of concentration influence academic performance of undergraduate students showed that 140(64%) agreed to the statement and 80(36%) disagreed to the statement. The analysis of how poor grade is caused by stress showed that 130 (64%) agreed to the statement and 90 (41%) disagreed to the statement. The analysis of the respondents good grade in academic being influence by stress showed that 60(27%) agreed to the statements and 160(73%) disagree to the statement. The analysis of the respondents students’ academic performance is influence by anxiety and depression showed that 160 (73%) agreed to the statement and 60 (27%) dis agreed to the statements.

Research Question 2: What are the perceived causes of stress among students of Human Kinetics and Health Education in Federal University Dutsin-Ma Katsina State?

Table 3: Perceived Causes of stress among undergraduate students

S/N	Statement	Yes	No	Total
1	Heavy work load lead to stress to undergraduate students	180 (82%)	40 (18%)	220 (100%)
2	Practical courses are means of getting stress by undergraduate students	120 (55%)	100 (45%)	220 (100%)
3	Financial constrain and lack of resources materials causes stress	170 (77%)	50 (23%)	220 (100%)
4	Stress is caused by family and personal problems	180 (82%)	40 (18%)	220 (100%)

Table 3 above presents the perceived causes of stress on undergraduate students. The analysis of the respondents on the heavy work load to stress on undergraduate students revealed that 180 (82%) agreed to the statement and 40 (18%) disagreed to the statement. The analysis of the respondent opinion on practical courses are means of getting stress by undergraduate showed that 100 (45%) disagreed to the statement. The analysis of respondents responded to financial constraint and lack of resource materials causes stress indicated that 170 (77%) agreed to the statement while 50 (23%) disagreed. The analysis of the respondents on stress is caused by family and personal problems showed that majority of the respondents 180(82%) agreed to the statement and 40 (18%) disagreed to the statement.

Research Question 3: What are the perceived relationship between level of stress and Academic performance among students of Human Kinetics and Health Education in Federal University Dutsin-Ma Katsina State?

Table 4: Perceived Relationship between stress level and academic performance

S/N	Statement	Yes	No	Total
1	Students productivity of output is affected by stress	200 (91%)	20 (9%)	220 (100%)
2	Stress affect students creativity and dedication to study	200 (91%)	20 (9%)	220 (100%)
3	Students academic performance in assessment and examination is negatively affected by stress	180 (82%)	40 (18%)	220 (100%)
4	Stress affect students social skills with other students and teachers	150 (68%)	70 (32%)	220 (100%)

Table 4 above shows the relationship between stress level and academic performance. The analysis of the respondents opinions on the students productivity or output is affected by stress showed that majority of the respondents 200 (91%) agreed to the statements and the remaining 20 (9%) disagreed to the statement. The analysis of the respondents response on stress affect students creativity and dedication to study revealed that 250 (91%) agreed to the statement and 20 (9%) disagreed to the statement. The analysis of the respondents on student’s academic performance in assessment and examination is negativity affected by stress revealed that 180 (82%) agreed to the statement and 40 (18%) disagreed to the statement. The analysis of the respondents response on stress affects students social skills with other students and teachers indicated that 150 (68%) agreed to the statement and 70(32%) disagreed to the statement.

Research Question 4: What are the perceived ways of managing the impact of stress on Academic performance among undergraduate students of Human Kinehtics and Health Education in Federal University Dutsin-Ma Katsina State?

Table 5: Perceived Ways of managing impact of stress on academic performance

S/N	Statement	Yes	No	Total
1	Create time for recreation and relaxation to manage stress	200 (91%)	20 (9%)	220 (100%)
2	Avoid procrastination of academic work	180 (82%)	40 (18%)	220 (100%)
3	Always seek psychological help through guidance and counselling	180 (82%)	40 (18%)	220 (100%)
4	Create goals which are realistic and attainable	170 (77%)	50 (23%)	220 (100%)

The table above presented ways to curb and manage stress among students. The analysis of the respondents response on create time for recreation and relaxation to manage stress showed that 200 (91%) agreed to the statement and 20 (9%) disagreed to the statement. The analysis of the respondents opinion on avoid procrastination of academic work revealed that 180 (82%) agreed to the statement and 40(18%) disagreed to the statement. The analysis of the respondents on always seeks psychological help through guidance and counseling indicated that 180(82%) agreed to the statement and 40(18%) disagreed to the statement. The analysis of the response on create goals which are realistic and attainable showed that 170(77%) agreed to the statement and 50(23%) disagreed to the statement.

Discussion of Findings

The results of the perceived impact of stress on academic performance in the table 2 above indicates that majority of the respondents are of the opinion that stress may result to lack of concentration by the students. Also the table reveals that majority of the respondents agreed that stress might result to poor academic grade. Furthermore, it was observed that majority of the respondents agreed that stress may lead to anxiety and depression on the students which might result to poor academic performance. Also, the results revealed that stress does not influence students in obtaining good grades. This result in line with Lumontoit (2017) who stated in his research on stress and students’ performance that, stress has negative effect on students ability to concentrate academically.

On the perceived causes of stress among undergraduate students the result in table 3 three showed that majority of the respondents agreed that heavy work load imposed stress to students, also the table indicated that majority of the respondents are of the opinion that practical courses are means of getting stress by students. Further information revealed that majority of the respondents agreed that financial constraint and lack of resources material causes stress. Lastly, on the causes of stress among undergraduate, the table also showed that majority of the respondents agreed that family and personal problems causes stress. The result was in line with Phinney and Hass (2013) who stressed that sources of stress to be more specific has a unique set of stressful encounters among students which includes: difficult financial challenges, domestic responsibilities, responsibilities related to holding job while in school and heavy academic load.

The result on the perceived relationship between stress level and academic achievement in table four revealed that majority of the respondents are of the opinion that stress affect students productivity or output. Also, it indicated that majority of the respondents agreed that stress affect students creativity and dedication to study. More so, the table showed that majority of the respondents agreed that stress affect students’ performance in assessment and examination negatively and that the majority of the respondents agreed that stress affect student’s social skills with some students and teachers. This result was in line with the research work of Essel & Owusu (2017) who also discovered that stress affects

the productivity or output student makes. When students are stressed up, they turn not to give their maximum best when doing school work and as a result it manifests in the output they bring which are clearly seen in their grade. They also don't make adequate preparation for examinations.

To curb and manage stress among undergraduate students, the result in table five showed that majority of the respondents are of the opinion that recreation and relaxation help to manage stress also the table revealed that majority of the respondents agreed that avoiding procrastination is a way to curb stress, the result further indicates that majority of the respondents agreed that seeking psychological help through guidance and counseling reduces stress. Finally, the table showed that majority of the respondents are of the opinion that creating realistic and attainable goals help to manage stress among students. This result is in line with findings by Segal, et.al (2018) that students stress management is effective through the following techniques; get moving, connect to others, engage your senses, learn to relax, eat a healthy diet and get your rest.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made;

1. That academic activities should commence early so as to avoid over working the students at the middle or end of the semester,
2. That the department should orient the students clearly about service of level advisers and counselling units in case of academic difficulties.
3. That students should be encouraged to avoid procrastination as well as to carry out assignments promptly.
4. That students should engage in stress management strategies of relaxation, eating healthy diet and resting.

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