

Effects of Academic Stress on Sophomore's Well-Beings at Universities in Vietnam

Do An Luc

Department of Physical Education, Trade Union University, Hanoi, Vietnam

Email address:

lucda@dhcd.edu.vn

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Abstract: This research works out several major sources of academic stress and its negative effects on sophomores' well-beings at universities. From the data, it can be concluded that sophomores endure a variety of stressors fluctuating from educational demands. The research also examines some health impairments triggered by academic stress and notices that mental damages have a more considerable influence on students' well-being than physical one. This paper is conducted with the aim at helping students recognize their situation so that they can develop the most effective and suitable strategies to cope with academic stress in their academic environment. This is a cross-sectional study on graduate students at five universities in Vietnam in November 2021. We administered a self-reported questionnaire to 458 students on their effects of academic stress on sophomore's well-beings. Descriptive analyses were used to summarize the results. It should be noticed that the results drawn from data just reflects to some extent sophomore's academic stress issue and that conducting only students seems to a limitation. Despite these limitations, this research paper also indicates some most common academic stressors and its negative influences on students as well as proves the rationale of the previous research.

Keywords: Academic, Physical Health, Mental Health, Students, Universities

1. Introduction

The modern world, which is seen as a world of development and enhancement, is also the world of stress. It is undeniable that stress is a complicated and ambiguous psychological issue but also a practical and serious one in daily life. This recognition is perfectly true for students since they enter academic environment in universities, a new and great transition, and they have to face a number of educational requirements. These demands may press or exceed the available resources of students, which results in academic stress [1]. Having a comprehensive of this problematic issue among students, researchers have devoted a large amount of time and effort to dig deep into this phenomenon and to work out various causes as well as negative impacts on students' health of this problem. According to authors of psychological reports [2] stated that academic stressors are attributed to academic-related reasons such as workload and exams. However, Wilson [3] found stress-causing factors can also emerge from oneself such as poor time management and unregulated time resources. As in

materials [4], academic pressure will push students into a ton of setbacks such as impaired performances and even a vicious circle in which stress escalates into a higher level and everything repeats again but more severely. Although a variety of conclusions around this topic have been put forward, these researchers seem not to have a comprehensive perception about this topic and all the causes of academic stress, and their negative impacts were not divided into lucid and scientific categories. Therefore, this research is conducted to examine the exact sources of academic stress and its negative effects on students' well-beings at universities in Vietnam.

2. Methods

To be convenient for analyzing the findings, questionnaire was conducted to students because of its familiarity with students as well as its straightforward process. Finding out some major academic stressors as well as its negative impacts on students' well-beings at universities was the aim of this research so that a questionnaire was conducted.

Several forms of questions including five questions were designed such as ranking, multiple-choice, Yes/No questions in this questionnaire. There are 458 students in 5 universities participated in this research. All respondents were fully informed the aim of doing this questionnaire and were assured that they could stop whenever they wished. All doubts about any questions in the questionnaire were clearly clarified and that participants had no difficulties in answering questions.

3. Findings and Discussions

Along with the development during the globalized process, stress in modern time has reached a higher level of intension. Out of amount of stress faced by adolescents and young adults, there is an escalation in academic stress endured by students. Especially, when they enter the university, all university campuses and environments seem to be “a new world” to them and a number of academic stressors act as hindrances in their daily physical activities and psychological process. A recent report revealed that more than 80% of students at UK universities suffer from stress and anxiety and 1 in 5 students have suicidal feeling [10]. This paper provides readers with the review of some previous valid researchers and viewpoints to highlight two fields: some major causes of academic stress among university students and its negative effects on their well-being.

3.1. Attitudes of Students Towards Academic Stress

Academic stress has been considered as a fundamental problem among students by numerous studies and research papers. With 458 students answering about the severity of academic stress, 89% students appear to universally agree that it is commonly recognized many symptoms of academic stress at universities. There is a definite possibility that sophomores are likely to suffer from many academic stress-related problems. Meanwhile, the minority of them (11%) negate the popular presence and detrimental influences of academic pressure in their academic daily lives. This finding seems to be in correlation with previous research carried out in UK universities. Eighty-two percent of students from those colleges suffer from stress and anxiety and 1 in 5 students have suicidal feeling [5].

Realizing that the period of time in which students struggle with stress might be the indicator of how well they cope with this type of pressure, the table 1: the regularity of academic stress combat of sophomores, is built up to show the recurrence of stress encounter among undergraduate students.

Table 1. The regularity of academic stress combat of sophomores.

No	Students' regularities	Percentage (%)
1.	Never	3
2.	Rarely	8
3.	Often	47
4.	Very often	39
5.	Always	5

As observed in the table 1, all surveyed students admit enduring academic pressure. Noticeably, 91% respondents bear stress on a regular basis (often/very often/always) and this number is over eight times as many as those who do not commonly face academic stress (never/rarely). These differences in stress level can be explained by personal sensitivity to stress varies regarding to each person's characteristics and behavior patterns [6]. Back to the table 1, approximately, 1 in 20 students are in the danger because they seem to be under stress every single day regardless of what the period is. Furthermore, it can be inferred that sophomores are still in the vicious cycle with academic stress and have not jumped in suitable and effective coping with stress strategies that could save themselves.

Table 2. The level of academic stress's impacts on students' well-beings.

No	Level of academic stress's impacts	Percentage (%)
1.	Not at all	2
2.	A bit	2
3.	Comparatively	41
4.	Greatly	48
5.	Extremely	7

It is seen that the likely impacts of academic stress on students' well-being varies among each other. According to table 2, 48% of students suffered from academic stress that affects their well-being in a great degree. In addition, a considerable number (41%) endures stress in a comparative level. Overall, the tables would rather appear to suggest that most students have difficulties in countering with academic stress so frequently that they could not effort to deal with. This phenomenon reflects a shortage of dealing stress strategies among students in staying healthy. This accordantly reflects clearly the rationale of this research paper. There is a definite possibility that dealing with academic stress plays a key role in having a good development in university environment and to cope with academic stress really needs appropriate solutions.

Table 3. Major causes of academic stress encountering in learning process.

No	Major causes of academic stress	Percentage (%)
1.	Educational demand	72
2.	Oneself	35
3.	External factors	30

3.2. Some Major Sources of Academic Stress Among Students

There are a number of stress-causing factors in such a high-pressure studying condition. To begin with, over workload is indicated to be one of the most considerable stressors and this even could not be seen by notice [11]. It seems to be a mutual understanding among [12] when they come into a shared conclusion that the act of scraping through the exams is undeniably a nerve-racking feeling and could be an influential factor of physical impairments and mental ones.

Students have been under a lot of academic stress coming from various sources and some of following academic

stressors was considered as the most common ones. The table 3 displays three major academic stressors that students regular experience during the learning process. According to table 3, students could suffer academic stress from all three above sources at the same time and were affected more seriously by one of them. Some external factors (such as teaching method, high competitiveness, and patents' expectation) and a handful of personal grounds (including unrealistic ambitions and poor time management) share the same level (roughly a third percent) with each other while affecting on student' well-being.

Notably, some educational demands (including over workload, tests, and lower grades) may have contributed to the academic stress up to two-third percent compare with the two others. The result drawn from the data in table 3 established a close connection with some previous researchers' findings that over workload [7] and examination pressure [2] were major causes of academic stress. It can be inferred that curriculum in school may be so thought that students could not effort to do as well as they wish.

Table 4. Negative impacts of academic stress on students' well-beings.

No	Negative impacts of academic stress on students' well-being	Percentage (%)
1.	Impatience	72
2.	Forgetfulness	60
3.	Concentration loss	65
4.	Fear	50
5.	Anxiety and depression	70
6.	Insomnia	45
7.	Eating disorder	30
8.	Sickness	35
9.	Loss of energy	55

3.3. Detrimental Impact of Academic Stress on Students' Well-Beings

As being defined in Cambridge English Dictionary, well-being is "the state of feeling healthy and happy". Nevertheless, this definition seems not to be focused as well as general enough when authors consider well-being to be "Well-being is more than just happiness. As well as feeling satisfied and happy, well-being means developing as a person, being fulfilled, and making a contribution to the community" [13]. From above crucial understandings, we could easily gain a clear perception of how important well-being is to human beings, especially to leaners at colleges.

A chain of severe physical impairments produced by academic stress has been documented in various research studies. Firstly, a large number of students who cram for exams during the testing period are off sick over and again per year and this has ruined students' health as well as the daily habit of healthy behaviors [14]. Secondly, brand-new campus atmosphere enables undergraduates to be more fragile than ever before, which generates eating disorders including bulimia, anorexia and binge eating [15].

In conclusion, students face various stressors when engaging in daily life at university.

It is undoubtedly that students have been experienced many negative influences from academic pressure. The table 4 shows the percentage of students experiencing some negative impacts of academic stress. According to table 4, the number of students suffering from some physical damages such as loss of energy, sickness, eating disorder, insomnia takes a comparative proportion and loss of energy was the most common issue among them taking up to more than a half of students. However, based on the data, mental

problems (including anxiety, depression, fear, forgetfulness, and impatience) have a significant impact on students' well-beings. One of them, impatience is of great concern among students when encountering with academic stress by the percentage of three quarters. Academic pressure has negatively affected students' mental satisfaction a lot. This totally agrees with the findings [8, 9] affirming that academic stress causes considerable number of mental damages, which reflects the rationale of this research paper. There is a slight possibility that dealing with mental problems is more difficult than coping with physical damages.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the research paper investigated the effects of academic stress on students as well as focusing on some major academic stressors. The data collected from the questionnaire showed that a considerable number of students' sophomores regularly experiences academic stress deriving from various sources during the learning process and they also endure physical damages and seriously bear mental impairments.

Firstly, academic stress was recognized among students as a mounting concern on their daily life and it also visits students and affects them in great level. Secondly, based on three main academic stressors ruling students' concern, the study points out that students have difficulties in encountering academic stress and this indicates their shortage of dealing stress ability in term of coping with university assignments. Thirdly, students struggle with mental problems more frequently than that of physical damages. It can be interred that academic stress management will affect other daily activities rather than in school only because of its negative impacts on students'

well-beings and attitudes.

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