



“STRONGER MINDS, BRIGHTER FUTURES: ADDRESSING STUDENT STRESS TO A SUSTAINABLE WORLD”

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Abstract

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have highlighted the crucial relationship between education and the quality of life in developing a sustainable future. The stress that plagues the students together with exams, tests and academic pressure cannot be addressed, which cannot support SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) and SDG 4 (Quality Education) because it affects the mental condition and education. The current research was intended to analyse how academic workload influences the perception of students on stress as it affects their performance and activities in life. A linear regression analysis was also undertaken through the responses of 169 students. Analysis findings revealed that academic work load did not significantly contribute towards the estimation of the perceived effect of stress ($B = -0.072$, $t = -1.663$, $p = 0.098$). There exists a negative correlation between the stress and the academic workload but the differences are low and not statistically significant at 0.05 level. Those findings suggest that academic workload by itself is an insignificant factor that does not predict significantly student perception of stress and student performance. The results indicate that other aspects can be more influential in determining the level of stress of students including examinations, deadlines, family expectations, and peer pressure. The study indicates that the holistic approach to stress management in educational institutions is important because it focuses on various academic and personal stressors.

Key Words: *Student Stress, Mental Health, Sustainable Development Goals, Academic Overload, Well-being.*

Introduction

Learning contributes significantly to the establishment of the social, emotional and intellectual growth of learners which would result in the eventual attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) especially SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) and SDG 4 (Quality Education). Nonetheless, in the current competitive academic world, students are often subjected to a number of different stressors including academic work-load, examinations, time limits and family demands. Through academic workload, one of the most widespread stressors among the students, is the cumulative pressure of assignments, tests, class schedules, and the expectations of teachers and parents. Excessively, it may result in burnout, sleep deprivation and mental exhaustion and negatively affect the quality of learning and personal wellness. Nevertheless, academic work is not viewed by all students as the source of much stress; in fact, with the appropriate coping strategies and time management skills, it is possible to reduce the burden.

Within a higher educational setting, the definition of the correlation between academic load and the perceived levels of stress among the students is one of the elements that play a vital role in a plan of establishing effective learning programs and support tool. These struggles were further heightened by the COVID-19 pandemic, which brought about online learning, lack of social interactions and increased demands of self-discipline. The need to overcome such stress related problems is in line with



the international mission statement of establishing inclusive, safe and supportive learning environments which forms one of the pillars of the SDGs.

This paper thus examines the hypotheses that academic workload has a major influence on the way students perceive stress and has an effect on their performance and day to day lives.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine how academic load affects students' stress and how that stress impacts their performance and overall life.
2. To list the other possible variables that might affect stress, including tests, deadlines, and expectations of the family.

Review of Literature

In the field of educational psychology and behavioral sciences, student stress has been a widely explored area of research. Misra and McKean (2000) reported that academic stress is one of the major causes of anxiety among university students, often resulting from demanding workloads and unrealistic academic expectations. Similarly, Elias et al. (2011) found that students who are under constant academic pressure tend to experience greater psychological distress and reduced engagement in their studies.

Kumar and Bhukar (2013) observed that academic stress is further intensified by poor time management and frequent performance evaluations. Supporting this view, Robotham and Julian (2006) identified a direct relationship between workload intensity, academic satisfaction, and emotional well-being. Conversely, Kausar (2010) suggested that academic stress can be effectively reduced when students employ positive coping strategies, such as problem-solving, time management, and self-regulation.

More recently, Pascoe, Hetrick, and Parker (2020) emphasized the importance of institutional support systems and mental health resources in fostering student resilience and mitigating stress levels. Furthermore, The World Health Organization (2020) has shown a direct connection between mental well-being and learning outcomes. This issue ties to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3, which focuses on Good Health and Well-being, and SDG 4, which highlights Quality Education. The reviewed literature collectively indicates that academic workload is a significant factor influencing student stress, though its effects may vary depending on individual coping mechanisms and support structures. The current study adds to what we know by showing how academic workload influences the stress levels that college students feel. This contributes to the ongoing discourse on promoting sustainable mental health practices within educational institutions.

Research Methodology

The research design for this study was quantitative, descriptive, and analytical. It aimed to explore how academic workload influences students' perceptions of stress, especially in relation to their performance and daily activities. The population was the college students of various institutions pursuing undergraduate programs. One hundred and sixty-nine students were involved in the study, which was done by convenience sampling. The sample was deemed adequate to undergo regression analysis and offered different data on factors that led to stress to students. The respondents filled out a structured questionnaire. It included demographic details and Likert-scale questions, where 1 means



Strongly Disagree and 5 means Strongly Agree. These questions measured their academic workload and their perception of stress. The responses were to be honest and were voluntary and anonymous.

Research Variables

Independent Variable: Academic Workload.

Dependent Variable: Perceived Stress Impact.

The statistical analysis of responses was done to establish the correlation between the two variables.

Analysis and Discussions

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.612	.194		8.332	.000
1 Indicate how 4 the following sources contribute to your stress [Academic workload]	-.072	.043	-.128	-1.663	.098

a. Dependent Variable: Do you feel that stress has an impact on your performance or daily activities?

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ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	.574	1	.574	2.766	.098 ^b
Residual	34.633	167	.207		
Total	35.207	168			

a. Dependent Variable: Do you feel that stress has an impact on your performance or daily activities?

b. Predictors: (Constant), Indicate how 4 the following sources contribute to your stress [Academic workload]

The output from the regression in SPSS provided key regression data. This includes the unstandardized coefficient (B), t-value, and p-value. These metrics help to determine if the model is significant. The findings indicated that the academic workload did not notably predict the impact of perceived stress (B = -.072, t = -1.663, p = 0.098). The researchers accepted the null hypothesis because the p-value was above 0.05. This means that academic workload does not have a significant



impact on how students perceive stress. These results show that academic workload does not significantly predict how much stress affects student performance. This means that there would be other reasons including exams, deadlines or family expectations that could be more influential in determining the levels of stress in the students.

Conclusion

The current research looked at how academic workload impacts students' perception of stress, their performance, and their daily lives. This aligns with Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 3 and SDG 4). The results of the regression model indicate that academic workload did not significantly predict perceived stress ($B = -0.072$, $t = -1.663$, $p = 0.098$). This conclusion comes from the responses of 169 college students across various colleges. Even though workload and perceived stress had an inverse relationship, it was made to be weak and not statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

This result indicates that academic workload does not play a major role in academic performance and perceived stress among students. Rather, examinations, deadlines, family expectations, peer pressure, and time management problems can be of more critical importance in determining the level of stress among students.

The paper supports the necessity of comprehensive strategies in dealing with stress problems in colleges, which focus on mental health awareness, counseling assistance, and balanced academic planning. Mental health promotion should be included in the learning systems. This integration supports the goals of SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) and SDG 4 (Quality Education). It helps build a learning environment that is focused on academics and strong emotionally. The current study can be extended through future research to include more predictors such as emotional intelligence, coping strategies, and institutional support systems to enhance the complexity of student stress as well as its implication on sustainable education.

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