RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ACADEMIC STRESS, QUALITY OF LIFE AND TIME MANAGEMENT AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

This research was aimed at assessing the connection between academic stress and quality of life, and the management of time in college students. The study utilized a correlational research approach. The sample consisted of 120 participants who were enrolled in colleges. The purposive sampling method was employed to gather data, which was collected within the six months by using self-reported measures i.e., the Academic Stress Scale, the WHO Quality of Life Scale-BRIEF, and the Time Management Behaviour Scale. The findings indicated a significant inverse correlation between academic stress and both quality of life and time management among college students. Additionally, female college students exhibited higher ratings in time management when compared to their male peers. The study's restricted sample size showed a substantial restraint on its generalisability.

I. INTRODUCTION

Academic stress is the psychological distress caused by the anticipation of academic failure or even the perception of such failure. Death and taxes frequently come first and second, in life stress comes third when it comes to human issues (Bernstein et al., 2008). A person's quality of life is impacted by a higher level of academic stress. On the other hand, time management can be viewed as a method for overseeing and regulating time (Eilam & Aharon, 2003). Students experiencing significant academic stress often struggle with effective time management skills. A rapidly evolving and competitive environment is creating new demands on young individuals, leading to heightened levels of stress and anxiety among students. One of the most important forms of stress is stress related to academic problems, which young people experience all the time in schools and colleges. Agolla and Ongori (2009) have led some researchers to argue that schoolwork is not without stressful activities, and college students are at a critical stage of reaching adulthood (Rimsha, 2024). When students can manage competing demands through coping skills, students demonstrate excellent academic performance when they possess good time management (McKenzie et al., 2004).

The study focuses on how students of colleges deal with stress in academics, evaluate their quality of life overall, and manage their time. The studies by Reddy et al. (2018) and Rimsha (2024) were among the previous studies conducted concerning the experiences students have in relation to academic stress, quality of life, and time management. The academic stress is defined as stresses that occur as a result of other stresses and activities.

Reddy et al. (2018) prove that the stress levels of students increase and decrease. The link between high levels of stress and performance declines in academic fields describes the need to have effective stress management at both individual, societal, and institutional levels (Sohail, 2013). Stress is a phenomenon that is significantly determined by gender (Bashir, 2024). The study by Khan et al. (2021) explored a sample of 400 students studying in grades 10th to 12th at five privately-owned secondary schools. Results showed that a third of the students were under much stress in terms of their academic work, and 37% showed heightened anxiety, which was presumed to have a negative influence on student achievement.

Prabu (2015) has surveyed high school students and recommended that boys are more stressed than girls. The sample in this study was composed of first-year students in a secondary school. Male students had higher academic stress than female students. It was also found that life satisfaction was negatively correlated with academic performance. An earlier study is consistent with this result, that as academic stress increased, life satisfaction decreased (Aftab et al., 2024). Misra and McKean (2000) established an interaction between academic stress and time management in college students, demonstrating that enhanced time management strategies led to a decrease in academic stress. Significant differences related to gender were identified across all metrics. Women were better at managing their time than men. Problems with students' mental health range from 2% to 50%. According to a sample of student well-being, 1 in 10 students experiences an emotional conflict that is severe enough to necessitate professional assistance (Khajuria et al., 2022). High school students frequently struggle with mental health issues like depression and anxiety. Depression was experienced by 25% of students at any given time (Beck & Srivastava, 1991). Wig et al. (1980) found that 50% of the 68 students who were referred to the center for student counseling reported having difficulty concentrating. Ribeiro et al. (2012) discovered that 33.9% of them were either moderately or highly stressed. The quality of life suffers as a result of this.

Bhandari (2018) surveyed undergraduates and found that quality of life was negatively correlated with average level of perceived stress. A sample of undergraduates and graduates from Islamabad was surveyed and showed that academic performance, test proficiency, and student academic performance were significantly linked to time management. One of the students commits suicide every hour, according to data provided by the National Criminal Records Service (Saha & Gopalakrishnan, 2016). The agency found that 1.8% of students took their own lives after failing their exams, and the suicide rate increased by 80% in a single year. According to Agolla and Ongori (2009), stress has become a major issue in academia and is affecting students' time management skills. In recent years, assessment of quality of life has become useful in determining the impact of disease and numerous interventions (Aftab et al., 2018; Agolla & Ongori, 2009). However, quality of life has received little attention in the educational process of university students, which is considered to be a stressful period (Brown & Brown, 2005).

A study showed that students who experience moderate to severe stress have a lower quality of life and well-being (Rimsha, 2024). In addition, according to the previous findings, male gender, daily exercise, and fundamental science knowledge were without regard with higher quality of life scores, and those scores had no significant differences in quality of life domain among different students (Chraif & Dumitru, 2015). Stress can accumulate due to academic obligations, financial challenges, and insufficient time management abilities. A study indicated that, for males, personal achievement scores were inversely related to the psychological aspect of quality of life, whereas for females, these scores exhibited a moderate correlation with personal distress (Paro et al., 2014). However, a Brazilian study found a weak correlation between the stress dimension and the life quality domain (Meyer & Sullivan, 2012). Students who practiced better time management not only reported being more productive at work, but they also reported higher levels of morale and lower levels of stress (Kearns & Gardiner, 2007). In addition to time management, positive psychological interventions also play a significant role in managing stress (Ahmed, 2024). Based on the literature review, the current study has the following objectives:

1. To look into the interconnections among college students' time management abilities, overall quality of life, and levels of academic stress.
2. To analyse and differentiate how male and female college students manage their time, quality of life, and academic pressure.

II. METHOD

Participants

The research methodology adopted in this study was the correlational research method, which aimed at finding out the interaction between academic stress, quality of life, and time management among college students. Through the correlational study design, the research determines the existence and the strength of the relationship between two or more variables that occur naturally (Shaughnessy et al., 2006). The sample of the survey consisted of 120 college students, who were picked from the Royal Colleges of Gujranwala. The participants used in the study were aged between 18-22 years. The form of sampling used in this inquiry was purposive.

Measures

Data collection took place in the following ways. [1]. The Academic Stress Scale (Kohn and Frazer, 1986) was a measure of academic stress done on college students. On average, the scale is composed of 35 items. These items encompass some of the frequent academic stressors, which include workload, examinations, grades, time management, and pressure to perform well. The respondents will answer each of the items on a Likert scale (e.g., not at all stressful to extremely stressful). [2]. The physical, mental, and social domains of the student life were tackled with the help of the WHO Quality of Life Scale-BREF (Zhang et al., 2012); one of the most important issues is the quality-of-life scale. WHOQOL-BREF is a self-rated scale containing 26 questions and is frequently employed to determine the quality of life. The possible response alternatives differ between a score of 1 (very dissatisfied) and 5 (very satisfied), with higher readings denoting a better quality of life. There are four domains in the scale: physical health, psychological health, social relationships, and environmental health. [3] The Time Management Behavior Scale (Macan et al., 1990) was used to measure time management among adult students. The Time Management Behavior Scale is based on the idea that effective time management involves a combination of planning, organization, and the use of specific techniques. It focuses on observable behaviors related to time management. The scale typically consists of around 33 items. Respondents rate each item on a Likert scale (e.g., from 1 = seldom true to 5 = very often true).

Procedure

The research was conducted for the purpose of finding the link between academic stress, quality of life, and time management among college students. First of all, permission from the authors of the measures was taken to use them for research purpose**s.** The official permission from the Royal College was also taken to collect the data from the sample. Participants were given informed consents to brief about the purpose of the study. Different measures were used, including a demographic sheet to know the basic information about the participants. After the data collection, SPSS (version 27) was used to compute, analyze, interpret, and represent data in tabular and graphical form. Research ethics were strictly followed in the present study. The subjects were informed that they could stop participating in the study at any time and that it was entirely up to them to do so, with no negative consequences for refusing. All the participants and authorities were thanked personally for their cooperation.

III. RESULTS

Table 1: Psychometric Properties of Study Variables

Variables	M	SD	Range	α
Academic Stress	93.71	15.77	56-131	.72
Quality of Life	93.57	5.88	79-109	.76
Time Management	47.36	4.89	25-60	.79

Table 1 shows that all variables have satisfactory alpha reliability (α > .70).

Table 2: Correlation between academic stress, quality of life and time management among college students

Variables	1	2	3
1. Academic Stress	--	-.23*	-.36*
2. Quality of Life		--	.56*
3. Time Management			--

*p< .01

The findings of Table 2 demonstrated a strong negative correlation between academic stress and time management, and quality of life. Among college students, time management and quality of life are significantly positively correlated.

Table 3: Gender differences in academic stress, quality of life and time management among college students

Variables	Females (*n*= 60)		Males (*n*= 60)		t(118)	p	Cohen's *d*
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*			
Academic Stress	94.02	15.98	98.21	15.83	.43	.54	.35
Quality of Life	98.23	16.13	89.18	14.13	.26	.11	.59
Time Management	48.72	8.23	42.81	5.22	3.46	.00	1.33

Table 3 shows that female college students were higher on time management as compared to male college students. No gender differences were found in academic stress and quality of life.

IV. DISCUSSION

The major aim was to delve into the connections between college students' time management skills, academic stress, and quality of life. The findings showed that college students' time management skills, quality of life, and academic stress were significantly correlated. The required relationship was evaluated using Pearson's product-moment correlation. Today, students are expected to be competitive, which increases pressure and leads to more stress (Eisenberg et al., 2010). These problems can lead to insomnia, anxiety, depression, malnutrition, and behavioral outcomes, and affect academic performance. Increased academic stress has been proven to reduce quality of life. Previous studies strongly empirically support the current findings (Eisenberg et al., 2009; Misra & McKean, 2000).

Academic stress also has a stronger buffering effect on time management (Shahani et al., 1990). Studies have shown that student learning outcomes benefit from effective time management (Claessens et al., 2007). Time utilization can be anticipated through planning and timing. The college CGPA is significantly correlated with time utilization (Britton & Tesser, 1991). Krause and Coates (2008) imply that the students must be able to effectively manage their time to develop successful strategies and habits of study. Time management gives people the chance to organize and control their activities. Ma et al. (2020) argue that time management is similar to that of university campuses; it is found to be important outside of the ability to manage it, and it has been demonstrated that having free time significantly enhances one's quality of life. Connell et al. (2016) also suggests that students who get enough sleep, exercise, eat well, and have more downtime are less likely to get sick, suggesting a connection between time management and physical health hints at a relationship. The results of this study show that study stress affects student grades, time management, and quality of life.

Findings on gender differences revealed that female college students are more likely than male students to report better time management. In the results of the current study, the use of their problem-solving ability to alleviate stress was exhibited by the female students (McKean, 2000). The study of time management in students shows a divided view of gender differences. Although one study has indicated that female students can report higher time management skills, it is important not to simplify them. In case of studies proving such a tendency, potential variables that have some influence on it may be the expectations and gender roles that tend to make women more structured and responsible. Nevertheless, it is also worth noting that they are mostly generalized stereotypes and that individual diversity among genders is often much more immense than that of any differences (Anderson et al., 2011; Macan et al., 1990).

V. CONCLUSION

The results of this research show that there is a strong correlation between academic stress, quality of life, and time management among college students. The results have shown that the time management skills are very good among the female college students compared to their male counterparts. The findings failed to show that academic stress and quality of life were statistically associated. This research has been conducted on the adult students of colleges, and the sample size is the primary contributor to the limitation of the research. The major challenge that was encountered in the course of researching in a college environment was the mistrust that was expressed by both the student population and various organizations. The results of the study could be instrumental in promoting the development of college students.

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