

Students' Academic Stress and Study Habits: Basis for Academic Intervention

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Abstract:- This descriptive – survey study determines the academic stress and habits of student's from different universities in the Kingdom of Bahrain during the academic year 2017-2018, the findings of which were the bases of academic intervention. There were 66 students included in the study from different universities in the Kingdom of Bahrain. Adopted standardized questionnaires were used on both dependent variables

The results showed that the level of academic stress among the respondents with regards to sex, college enrolled, marital status, and employment status is all interpreted "oftentimes". The study skills and habits of the respondents have been displaying fairly good in study skills and habits though not as always. The level of academic stress when classified as to sex, marital status, and employment status is statistically not significant. The level of academic stress experience by the respondents varies as to what college they enrolled. There is no difference on the level of study skills and habits of the respondents regardless of the aforementioned categories. There is a difference on the level of study habits and skills when the respondents are classified as to college enrolled.

There is a negative linear relationship between the academic stress and study skills and habits. Hence, if the academic stress is low there is a tendency that the study skills and habits is high.

Keywords:- Academic Stress, Study Habits and Skills, Academic Intervention.

I. INTRODUCTION

Teaching students how to study is as important as teaching the subject matter of a course. Study skills and habits help students achieve not only in school work but also in their lives in general. In helping the students to achieve maximum skills to study, the administration and teachers are also teaching the students develop how to live life in general since studying skills involves time management, goal setting, concentration etc. which are undeniably part of living. One of the goals of the administrators and teachers is for students to achieve maximum potentials in studies and enjoy university life.

Many students attributed to poor study habits like poor time management, exam pressure, and course work among others as the causes of academic stress. These

definitely lead to poor academic performance. Eventually, students resort to some coping mechanisms. Others are struggling by coping to bad coping such as; drug addiction, alcohol abuse, and self-denial; while others cope positively by acceptance, positive reframing, planning which are indispensable steps to conquer academic stress [1].

Hence, it is the intention of this study to help the students cope with their academic problems through enhanced academic intervention.

A. Statement of the Problem

- What is the level of academic stress of the respondents with regards to a. sex, b. college enrolled, c. marital status, and d. employment status?
- What are the study skills and habits of the respondents with regards to a. sex, b. college enrolled, c. marital status, and d. employment status?
- .3. Is there a significant difference on the level of academic stress when classified as to a. sex, b. college enrolled, c. marital status, and d. employment status?
- Is there a significant difference on the level of study habits and skills when the respondents are classified as to a. sex, b. college enrolled, c. marital status, and d. employment status?
- Is there a significant relationship between the student's academic stress and study skills and habits?
- What academic interventions can be proposed based on the study?

➤ Hypothesis

- There is no significant difference on the level of academic stress when classified as to: sex,
- college enrolled, marital status, and employment status.
- There is no significant difference on the level of study skills and habits when the respondents are classified as to: sex, college enrolled, marital status, and employment status.
- There is no significant relationship between the student's academic stress and study skills and habits.

B. Significance of the Study

The purpose of research is to collect information in respect of observable fact that poses concern to organization, people or group and the likes with the end in mind to finding a solution to such problem or find a way of making the condition better.

This study is of great value in the sense that it facilitates students to identify some stress factors and how to manage with the stressors. Moreover, the students can

recognize the best study habit or skills that can assist his/her in improving academic performance.

This study is also beneficial to the psychologists, upon knowing the correlation of academic stress and study habits.

All the stakeholders of education, government, parents, guidance, school management, etc., benefit from the result of this study since study habits and stress may affect student's academic performance. The output of the study which is the academic intervention guides the stakeholders and students to work hand in hand for the improvement of any educational endeavor.

C. Conceptual Framework

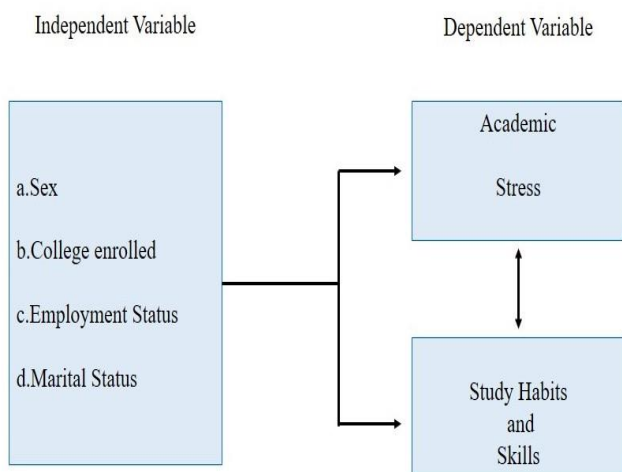


Fig 1

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of the study. The paradigm shows that sex, college enrolled, employment status, and marital status serve as the independent variables while academic stress and study skills and habits are the dependent variables. The relationship between academic stress and study skills and habits will also be established.

Sex in this study refers to male and female. While College enrolled is limited to College of Business, College of Engineering, and College of Computer Science. Employment status refers to the respondents either working or non-working students. Moreover, the marital status components are single, married, and divorce.

Academic stress is natural for students, especially for those who are buying for honor and intelligence. At some points, the more the student aims high for performance, the greater he experiences stress in school. Students nowadays are facing so much academic problems which include inability to understand the subject and disinterest in attending classes.

One of the many great sources of stress among individuals which eventually resort to low self-esteem is academic stress [2].

Retaining reading materials is one proof to achieve to improve effective study habits. Among other skills in studying includes having the right environment, setting realistic schedule etc.

An academic intervention is a strategy used to encourage a child to apply a new skill to new settings or situation or build fluency in a skill [3]. Or intervention also might as well working with students on time management skills or consistently submitting homework assignments.

D. Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Attribution Theory which believes that students must need to feel in control over an outcome of academic task. Students will have more motivation to successfully finish a task if they are more in control over an academic outcome [4]. Students need to be aware of why a certain outcome happens, to feel in control. For example, a student who never studies for a math test and fails each week will not know the reason for the poor performance. If the student understands that studying is essential for on the math tests, he will be more motivated to study and do well on the test.

Hence, the researcher deemed that the academic intervention, which is the output of this study, has noted the role participation of the students to motivate themselves in attaining the task.

The causes of failure or success can be internal or external, unstable or stable, and uncontrollable or controllable. Internal reasons are the things that the student did. Females have a tendency to focus on effort and external factors while males tend to generally focus on ability and other internal factors [5].

Attribution Theory highlights on two types of goals, performance goals and learning goals. Individuals who work hard to succeed are students who have high learning goals. Failure becomes a motivator for those who have learning goals [6].

E. Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study is limited to the undergraduate students during the 2nd Trimester of the Academic Year 2017 – 2018 who are enrolled in selected universities in the Kingdom of Bahrain. This descriptive research utilized an adapted study habit's questionnaire from Virginia Gordons University Survey: A Guidebook and Readings for New Students [7]. The said questionnaire focuses on time management, study environment, and preparation skills. The second questionnaire on academic stress is also adapted from Kealy D. on an analysis of students academic stress of Utah State University [8].

Upon retrieval of the accomplished instruments, the data were analyzed, processed and interpreted according to the requirements of the problems and hypotheses.

The mean, percentage, and rank were used in the treatment of the data gathered.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. On Academic Stress

One that contributes to the stressful life of adolescents is the transition from high school life to university life [9]. The adjustment of the student's transition period affects their academic motivation. To mention some ordinary factors of stress that produce anxiety and tension in students are high competitiveness, information overload, school pressure, unreachable ambitions etc. [10]. The utmost degree of difficulty to study is been experience by students in which the main source of stress in the obligation to meet assessment deadlines [11].

Another thing being pointed out as a source of stress is about the time available vs. course load. With that, time management is very important. First year students reveal a high correlation of course load being the source of exam stress [12].

This contention is strengthened in the study of Zai-ur-Rehman and Talib which reveals that 53% of the students asserted that their GPA is affected because course load gives them stress [13]. Reviewing all the learning materials has given stress to students before sitting down during exams. The possibility of passing or failing the exam induces stress and not the examination itself.

Aside from the exam preparation and course load, the kind of the program, the student is taking may also induce academic stress. Zai-ur-Rehman and Talib concluded that a significant difference was showed between students in management science students and students in engineering. The students in engineering have higher stress score compared to management science students.

Another stressor is about personal resources. This is when students do not have adequate finances for study [14]. Study reveals that there are many students who are looking forward of finding a part-time job to sustain finances in school. According to Robotham, due to work commitments, 20% of students oftentimes cannot submit course work on time and 30% of working students missed lectures. This is an imbalance that results to poor academic performance due to stress to maintain school vis-à-vis on one's job [15].

The environment also contributes to the academic stress of students. The more the family peers, and friends supports the students, the more they can cope up with academic stress. This is highlighted in Maslow's hierarchy of needs for motivation.

In addition to the financial support which causes stress to students, gender plays significant in many studies. Female displays to have a higher stress level of compared to male counterparts [16]. But even with significant stress, females displays a better GPA's than males.

Academic stress also showed simple significant correlation with depression ($r = 0.49$) and academic performance ($r = .44$) as revealed by Khanekheshi [17]. It is also found out from that study that depression and academic stress explain 68% of the variance of academic performance.

For some undergraduate and graduate students, one of the contributing factors of academic stress is poor study habits. Most of the students in the Middle East, the researchers observed, having been a university teacher for years in the region, lack study skills and habits. The researcher is hopeful that this study will be of great use to the region for the academe to maximize the output of the study.

B. On Study Habits and Skills

There are many serious study habits that would affect to student's performance such as organization of materials, note taking, time management etc. Chilca on his study about Self-Esteem, Study Habits and Academic Performance among University Students, concluded that study habits influence academic performance ($p=0.000$ $\alpha=0.05$). Therefore, it is expected for students to refine study techniques to enhance academic performance [18]. Procrastination is a tendency for students to complete coursework and exam preparations. Poor time management leads to distress and poor academic performance. Usually time management is significantly related to academic performance.

The utility of the course is an intrinsic motivation of the students. Sometimes if the course is not useful and relevant to the students program and well-being they tend to have low academic performance.

The findings of Khan, Z's study revealed that gender has significant effect on study habits. However, insignificant effect of socio-economic status was found on study habits. Interaction effect of sex difference and Socio-economic Status was also not significant [19].

C. On Academic Intervention

Significantly, the students who obtain assistance from an academic intervention are students who may fight back in the classroom with a mixture of learning skills. These struggles could noticeably impact the student's school performance. Depending upon the school district, subject-matter assistance can come in varied ways.

Preuss, M. & Switalski, R. in their study, Academic Probation Intervention through Academic Assistance Advising, revealed that the data about the intervention program have positive impact on student outcomes. Students on probation who are involved with the program

were likely to increase GPA, avoid suspension, and remain enrolled in their classes at the college. Intervention with probationary students was indeed successful through academic assistance advising [20].

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is quantitative and used a descriptive-survey method to determine the students' academic stress and habits. The respondents of the study are the college students in the Kingdom of Bahrain. This study was conducted during the Second and Third Trimester of the Academic Year 2017 – 2018. An adopted standardized questionnaire was used on both dependent variables.

On the Academic Stress: Keady, D's questionnaire on his study entitled, "All Graduate Theses and Dissertations Graduate Studies 1999 Student Stress: An Analysis of Stress Levels Associated with Higher Education in the Social Sciences" [21]. For the Study Habits & Skills, the questionnaire from the Office of Student Academic Success Services, Queens' University, Kingston, Ontario Canada [22]. These questionnaires were distributed to the students in different universities in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

After retrieval of the answered questionnaires, the data were processed, analyzed and interpreted based on the requirements of the problems.

The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) program was used to counter-process the data gathered for some statistical analysis. This descriptive statistics employed include:

Frequency, rank, and mean to determine the academic stress and study skills and habits of the students.

For inferential statistics, T-test was used to determine the significant difference on the level of academic stress when classified as to Sex and Employment status. Anova was used to determine the significant difference as to College enrolled and marital status. T- test was also use to determine the significant difference on the level of study habits when the respondents are classified as to: sex and employment status while Anova for college enrolled and marital status. The study used Pearson product moment correlation to determine the significant relationship between the student's academic stress and study habits.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Academic stress		N	Mean	Interpretation
Sex	Male	36	3.0281	Oftentimes
	Female	30	2.9143	Oftentimes
Marital status	Single	45	2.9927	Oftentimes
	Married	21	2.9414	Oftentimes
Employment status	Working	24	3.1454	Oftentimes
	Non-working	42	2.8798	Oftentimes
College enrolled	Business	28	3.0371	Oftentimes
	Engineering	11	3.3827	Oftentimes
	Computer Science	8	2.9387	Oftentimes
	Others	19	2.6674	Oftentimes

Table 1:- Level of academic stress of the respondents with regards to sex, college enrolled, marital status, and employment status.

Table 1 shows that the level of stress among the respondents are all interpreted "oftentimes". This means that the respondents are experiencing academic stress in their everyday struggle to meet the demands in school especially for those who are working and engineering students as shown in the 'mean' in the table. The mean of students who are working and those enrolled in the Engineering program are higher compared to other groups in employment status and college enrolled. And also table 1 reveals that male respondents experience more academic stress compared to female.

Attribution theory which believes that students must need to feel in control over an outcome of academic task. Students will have more motivation to successfully finish a task if they are more in control over an academic outcome [23]. Students need to be aware of why a certain outcome happens, to feel in control. For example, a student who never studies for a math test and fails each week will not know the reason for the poor performance. If the student understands that studying is essential for on the math tests, he will be more motivated to study and do well on the test.

Study habits and skills		N	Mean	Interpretation
Sex	Male	36	3.8150	Fairly
	Female	30	3.9197	Fairly
Marital status	Single	45	3.8847	Fairly
	Married	21	3.8152	Fairly
Employment status	Working	24	3.9038	Fairly
	Non-working	42	3.8390	Fairly
College enrolled	Business	28	3.5679	Fairly
	Engineering	11	4.1682	Fairly
	Computer Science	8	3.9650	Fairly
	Others	19	4.0768	Fairly

Table 2:- Study skills and habits of the respondents with regards to sex, college enrolled, marital status, and employment status.

Table 2 shows that the study skills and habits of the respondents with regards to sex, college enrolled, marital status, and employment status is fairly. This means that the respondents have been displaying fairly good in study skills and habits though not as always. What is revealing is that females demonstrate better study skills and habits compared to males. The engineering students also displayed fair study skills and habits compared to other respondents.

The causes of failure or success can be internal or external, unstable or stable, and uncontrollable or controllable. Internal reasons are the things that the student did. Females have a tendency to focus on effort and external factors while males tend to generally focus on ability and other internal factors [24].

Attribution Theory highlights on two types of goals, performance goals and learning goals. Individuals who work hard to succeed are students who have high learning goals. Failure becomes a motivator for those who have learning goals [25].

There are many serious study habits that would affect to student’s performance such as organization of materials, note taking, time management etc. Chilca on his study about Self-Esteem, Study Habits and Academic Performance among University Students, concluded that study habits influence academic performance ($p=0.000$ $\alpha=0.05$). Therefore, it is expected for students to refine study techniques to enhance academic performance [26].

Academic stress		N	Mean	Mean Difference	Sig. (2-tailed)	Interpretation
Sex	Male	36	3.0281	.1137	.441	Statistically not significant
	Female	30	2.9143			
Marital status	Single	45	2.9927	.0512	.746	Statistically not significant
	Married	21	2.9414			
Employment status	Working	24	3.1454	.2657	.079	Statistically not significant
	Non-working	42	2.8798			

Table 3a:- Difference on the level of academic stress when classified as to sex, marital status, and employment status.

Table 3a reveals that the level of academic stress when classified as to sex, marital status, and employment status is statistically not significant. This means that there is no difference on the level of academic stress among the respondents as classified to sex, marital status, and employment status. All the respondents have experienced almost the same level of academic stress regardless of its classification.

Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted that there is no significant difference to the academic stress as classified into sex, marital status, and employment status.

One that contributes to the stressful life of adolescents is the transition from high school life to university life. The adjustment of the student’s transition period affects their academic motivation. To mention some ordinary factors of stress that produce anxiety and tension in students are high competitiveness, information overload, school pressure, unreachable ambitions etc. [27]. The utmost degree of difficulty to study is been experience by students in which the main source of stress in the obligation to meet assessment deadlines.

College enrolled	ANOVA	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Interpretation
Academic stress	Between Groups	3.745	3	1.248	4.067	.011*	Statistically significant
	Within Groups	19.031	62	.307			
	Total	22.777	65				

Multiple Comparisons LSD

Dependent Variable	(I) COLLEGE	(J) COLLEGE	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.	Interpretation
Academic stress	Business	Others	.3698	.028*	Statistically significant
	Engineering	Others	.7154	.001*	Statistically significant

Table 3b:- Difference on the level of academic stress when classified as to college enrolled. (* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.)

As to the difference on the level of academic stress when classified as to college enrolled, there is a difference on the level of academic stress as to college enrolled by the respondents. Table 3b shows that it is statistically significant. This means that the level of academic stress experience by the respondents varies as to what college they enrolled.

Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference on the level of academic stress as classified into college enrolled is rejected. There is a significant difference on the level of academic stress as classified into college enrolled.

Another stressor is about personal resources. This is when students do not have adequate finances for study. Study reveals that there are many students who are looking forward of finding a part-time job to sustain finances in school. According to Robotham, due to work commitments, 20% of students oftentimes cannot submit course work on time and 30% of working students missed lectures. This is an imbalance that results to poor academic performance due to stress to maintain school vis-à-vis on one’s job [28].

Study habits and skills		N	Mean	Mean Difference	Sig. (2-tailed)	Interpretation
Sex	Male	36	3.8150	.1047	.346	Statistically not significant
	Female	30	3.9197			
Marital status	Single	45	3.8847	.0694	.560	Statistically not significant
	Married	21	3.8152			
Employment status	Working	24	3.9038	.0647	.575	Statistically not significant
	Non-working	42	3.8390			

Table 4a:- Difference on the level of study habits and skills when the respondents are classified as to sex, marital status, and employment status

Table 4a shows that the level of study habits and skills when the respondents are classified as to sex, marital status, and employment status is statistically not significant. This means that there is no difference on the level of study skills and habits of the respondents regardless of the aforementioned categories. Although this is not revealing in the study of Khan, Z, where gender is found to be significant in the level of the respondent’s study habit.

Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference of the level of study habits and skills of the respondents as classified to sex, marital status, and employment status is accepted.

The findings of Khan, Z’s study indicated a significant effect of gender on study habits. The effect of Socio-economic Status on study habits was found to be insignificant. Interaction effect of sex difference and Socio-economic Status was also not significant [29].

College enrolled	ANOVA	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Interpretation
Study skills and habits	Between Groups	4.416	3	1.472	10.735	.000*	Statistically significant
	Within Groups	8.500	62	.137			
	Total	12.916	65				

Multiple Comparisons LSD

Dependent Variable	(I) COLLEGE	(J) COLLEGE	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.	Interpretation
Study skills and habits	Business	Engineering	-.6003	.000*	Statistically significant
		Computer Science	-.3971	.010*	Statistically significant
		Others	-.5090	.000*	Statistically significant
	Computer Science	Business	.3971	.010*	Statistically significant

Table 4b:- Difference on the level of study habits and skills when the respondents are classified as to college enrolled (* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.)

On the level of study habits and skills when the respondents are classified as to college enrolled, table 4b reveals that it is statistically significant. This means that there is a difference on the level of study habits and skills when the respondents are classified as to college enrolled.

Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference on the level of study habits and skills when the respondents are classified as to college enrolled is accepted.

A study conducted by Yu, D. (2012), found that math proficiency, English proficiency, high school accounting, and academic aptitude influence accounting performance, supporting the findings of many previous researches on cognitive factors. Conclusion: Since student perception of teacher effectiveness strongly influences accounting performance, it is critical that hiring and training of accounting faculty be given utmost importance. Level of effort and good study habits also help, but not the sheer number of study hours [30].

Correlations		Academic stress
Study skills and habits	Pearson Correlation	-.024
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.847
	N	66

Table 5:- Relationship between the student’s academic stress and study skills and habits

Table 5 shows that there is a negative linear relationship between the academic stress and study skills and habits. Hence, if the academic stress is low there is a tendency that the study skills and habits is high. Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between the student’s academic stress and study skills and habits is accepted. There is no significant relationship between the student’s academic stress and study skills and habits.

Academic stress is natural for students, especially for those who are buying for honor and intelligence. At some points, the more the student aims high for performance, the greater he experiences stress in school. Students nowadays are facing so much academic problems which include inability to understand the subject and disinterest in attending classes.

One of the many great sources of stress among individuals which eventually resort to low self-esteem is academic stress [31].

➤ *What academic interventions can be proposed based on the study?*

School – Based Intervention idea will be of great help to the students. Listening, reading, and receiving corrective feedback are only some of the interference that the institution may implement to measure students retention. Retaining reading materials is one proof to achieve to improve effective study habits. Among other skills in studying includes having the right environment, setting realistic schedule etc.

Preuss, M. & Switalski, R. in their study, Academic Probation Intervention through Academic Assistance Advising, revealed that the data about the intervention program have positive impact on student outcomes. Students on probation who are involved with the program were likely to increase GPA, avoid suspension, and remain enrolled in their classes at the college. Intervention with probationary students was indeed successful through academic assistance advising [32].

An academic intervention is a strategy used to encourage a child to apply a new skill to new settings or situation or build fluency in a skill [33]. Or intervention also might as well working with students on time management skills or consistently submitting homework assignments.

An instructional interventional is also best recommended. It is a specific set of steps or program to help a student in an area of need. Instructional interventions focus on subjects like reading and math. Interventions are needed so that the parents and school can track student's progress.

V. CONCLUSIONS

1. The level of academic stress among the respondents with regards to sex, college enrolled, marital status, and employment status is all interpreted "oftentimes".
2. The study skills and habits of the respondents with regards to sex, college enrolled, marital status, and employment status is fairly. This means that the respondents have been displaying fairly good in study skills and habits though not as always.
- 3.a. The level of academic stress when classified as to sex, marital status, and employment status is statistically not significant.
- 3.b. There is a difference on the level of academic stress as to college enrolled by the respondents that it reveals statistically significant. This means that the level of academic stress experience by the respondents varies as to what college they are enrolled.
- 4.a. The level of study habits and skills when the respondents are classified as to sex, marital status, and employment status is statistically not significant. This means that there is no difference on the level of study skills and habits of the respondents regardless of the aforementioned categories.
- 4.b. On the level of study habits and skills when the respondents are classified as to college enrolled, table 4b reveals that it is statistically significant. This means that there is a difference on the level of study habits and skills when the respondents are classified as to college enrolled.
5. There is a negative linear relationship between the academic stress and study skills and habits. Hence, if the academic stress is low there is a tendency that the study skills and habits is high.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based from the findings of the study, the following recommendations are drawn:

- Aside from the Guidance Office, there must be a *Working Group on Student Stress* to address the comprehensive need of the issue in the institution.
- The institution has to provide information about student's stress reduction (stress inoculation) in the campus to avoid negative aspects of stress.
- An in-depth study on academic stress and study habits interesting findings will merit further research.

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