

Sources of Stress among Students Preparing in Various Competitive Exams for Job.

NidhiPrajapati, Dr. Keerti Singh
Research Scholar, Assistant Professor
Department of Education

VardhamanMahaveer Open University, Kota, Rajasthan, India

ABSTRACT: Government job is considered as a secure and permanent job that is why everyone wants to get that. But in India job opportunities are very less for one single post thousands of students are competing to each other because of over population. Due to that students are entering in a new academic and competitive world where they are confronted with multiple transition challenges. The challenges are compounded as they experience higher academic work load and family expectations. These challenges are coupled with the stress which covered a person for the future security of life. Due to their immaturity and future uncertainties, they seem not to have any control over the situation. The present research investigated the stress of such students those are preparing for upcoming government jobs declared by central and state government. A sample of 300 students was drawn randomly from the Kavya, Lakshya, Dronacharya, Soni, Saakar, Yuvaam, Pioneer and Mahalaxmi coaching institutes for competition of Kota city. Self-prepared Students Stress Inventory (SSI) was administered to get information from the subjects. The result of the present study revealed that students are affected by self-inflicted, parent inflicted, and peer inflicted stress and they also experience a high amount of these stresses.

KEYWORDS: Coaching Institutes, Stress, Government Job, Vacancy, Government Vacancy, Self-inflicted Stress, Peer Inflicted Stress, Parent Inflicted Stress.

INTRODUCTION

What is stress? In simple term stress is simply the body's non-specific response to any demand made on it. Stress is not by definition synonymous with nervous tension or anxiety. Stress provides the means to express talents and energies and pursue happiness; it can also cause exhaustion and illness, either physical or psychological; heart attacks and accidents. Students in nation are confronted with new challenges, demands and problematic situations which they often experience as being a strain and stressful. These stressors can have a negative impact on psychological well-being (e.g. Compas, Connor-Smith, Saltzmann, Thomsen, & Wadsworth, 2001; Compas, Orosan, & Grant, 1993) Stress and tension form a part of human life. Life is lived through different phases. It is generally considered that getting education is one of the paramount phases of human life because it is education which opens the door of success and develops qualities of a good citizen. By and large, it is accepted that success and quality in life are predicted upon the individual's performance. The performance is evaluated through examinations. Therefore, examination becomes a powerful instrument of certifying the quality or potential of an individual. The worth of an individual is measured on the basis of getting admission in desirable courses having employment potential. Due to limited employment opportunities and less number of lucrative jobs, competition has shot up to an undesirable level resulting in a stressful situation globally.

According to Singh (2005:47-49), educational experts unanimously agree that the present structure of board and competitive examination needs to be replaced with a system friendly to students. Something needs to be done to lessen the huge load of entrance examination stress on students but without lowering the quality of education. Thus, stress is the buzzword. It has merged as an issue, which needs to be discussed threadbare.

It is a common experience that the student is subjected to a variety of stresses in addition to examinations, which are related to the competitive environment, the student's feeling of having made a doubt about his vocational choice, and often his fears of acceptance into teaching, army, bank, forest, medical and engineering. All of this and more (sports, extra-curricular activities, etc.) can put the burgeoning stress on even the smartest student. Blaine (1963: 25) states that "stress can be particularly acute for students because of their stage of development. It has also been found that students are more vulnerable to stress than adults and younger children. Ordinary stresses can be monumental at this stage of development".

Life is only worse for those students who are not academically gifted or inclined. They still have to prove themselves against the formidable standards set by the better performing students and get selection in government jobs. Caught in the mass hysteria that grips the nation every year around results' time, they too do the endless rounds of tuitions and coaching classes in the hope of getting that magical selection to a particular government department. Given the number of students in the country and the woefully limited number of seats, it is not surprising that the whole nation goes berserk in an attempt to get selection in a desired government job at a renowned department. This aggravates the problems students face when they prepare for competitive job examinations thereby increasing their stress levels which arise from sources all around them.

Objectives

1. To find the self-inflicted stress among students those are preparing for govt. jobs.
2. To explore the parent inflicted stress among students those are preparing for govt. jobs.
3. To study the peer inflicted stress among students those are preparing for govt. jobs.

METHODOLOGY

Sample: A sample of 300 students studying in Kavya, Lakshya, Dronacharya, Soni, Saakar, Yuvaam, Pioneer and Mahalaxmi coaching institutes between the age ranges of 21-25 years was selected randomly from Kota city. For sample cluster sampling method was adopted. These subjects were those who attended full time coaching and prepared themselves for various competitive examinations.

Tool: Self-made questionnaire was used to assess stress. The questionnaire of stress assessment was based on Bisht Battery of Stress, which is a standardized tool prepared by Bisht (1971). Discussions and literature revealed that students are exposed to self-inflicted stress, peer inflicted stress and parent inflicted stress, which have been accepted as components of stress in the present study. The calculated reliability and validity of stress questionnaire was 0.83 and 0.91 respectively.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 clearly reveals that 95% students have study stress which is evident from their report that they put extra effort so that they can build a good career. These students make their own targets and work towards meeting them and in this process they worry about the failures 65%. As students move through the educational system, they typically experience a greater frequency of testing and if they perform poor in one exam they resolve to score better next time 83%, which causes additional stress. The students are self-compelled to fulfill parental expectations 93% because parents have invested a lot of money on their education and they feel that they have to do incredibly well which increases their stress. 76% students of the present study also had jobs related stress. During the preparation time, 91% adolescent often think about the adoption of measures and methods by which they can improve their performance.

Table 1: Self-inflicted stress among students studying in coaching institutes.

Sr. No.	Test Item for Self Inflected Stress	Subjects Number	Percentage
1	Puts extra effort for success	285	95
2	Bothered about failures	195	65
3	Resolves to score better	249	83
4	Pressure to fulfill parental expectation	279	93
5	Worried about jobs	228	76
6	Think of ways to adopt for the improvement in performance	273	91

Stress may be experienced due to pressure from within (self-inflicted), from one's beliefs, attitudes and expectations from oneself and others (for example, pressure to fulfill parental expectations), from one's habits, behaviour and personality. According to Acharya (2003), self-inflicted stress starts because of uncertainty and insecurity about future academic and professional life. After every examination these students resolve to score better marks next time. Perhaps the pressure to improve one's own performance each time is strongest in students of coaching institute. This type of pressure may be very useful for them, because it motivates them for better achievement. According to Cohen and Hoberman (1983: 99-125), stressed individuals are benefited by improving their achievement if this stress does not exceed the optimal level. According to Chauhan (2006: 223-231), in many cases students may not be aware of their attitudes and they tend to be controlled by them.

Students assess themselves primarily on academic success. This can distort their perception of reality and cause them to blow things out of proportion. The stress of academic performance may not even be noticeable to close friends because students who begin to feel overwhelmed and hopeless tend to hide their feeling by immersing themselves in work thereby increasing self-inflicted stress. Sometimes students do not seek the help because they do not want to seem weak. Thus, the self-inflicted stress can become a big problem in situations where students are expected to perform beyond their biological limit which is the criterion referenced for evaluation by self and others.

Table 2 shows the peer inflicted stress among students. When students experience peer inflicted stress they start making comparison with peers. 76.66% Students often compare study hours of peers with that of themselves and 65% try to find out that how much course has been covered by their peers. Students in a large number 77.66% blamed themselves for putting poor effort when they performed badly in comparison to peers. Stress is also evident as poor performing students (45%) show reluctance to tell their marks to better performers. After getting poor results 68.33% students used to take resolution to improve their performance among peer group. Most of the students of the present study take peer inflicted stress positively which is evident when their peers get higher marks, they desire to rectify their careless mistakes and try to outperform in peers 81.66%.

Table 2: Shows the peer inflicted stress among students studying in coaching institutes.

Sr. No.	Test Item for Peer Inflicted stress	Subjects Number	Percentage
1	Comparing efforts of self with peer group on poorperformance	233	77.66
2	Comparison of course coverage by peers	195	65
3	Compare study hours with that of peers	230	76.66
4	Not revealing marks to better performers	135	45
5	Resolution to improve performance	205	68.33
6	Desire to outperform peers	245	81.66

According to Natriello and McDill (1986: 18-31), attitudes of peers as well as peer expectations and standards affect individual's efforts in an academic setting. For many students their achievement increases the indirect conflict with peers which results in stress (Fordham and Ogbu 1986:176-206 and Fordham 1988: 54-84). Anxious students may be effected by unfavorable comparisons with others (on getting fewer marks you think that you had put less effort then your peers), resulting in doubt about their abilities and negative beliefs about the consequences of poor test performance (for example, on scoring fewer marks reluctant to tell your mark to adolescent who performed better). These thoughts are present during the whole period of preparation, with both quantitative and qualitative differences in cognition being related to level of test anxiety (Zatz and Chassim 1985:393-401; Prins and Hanewald 1997: 440-447). Thus, the students are known to be frequently pressurized by other students and more so when there is little or no family support (Anderson and Wallace 2007). They are, thus, at increased risk of stress due to peer group also.

A student lives in an environment where everyone expects him to achieve more and more. Thus, he is constantly pressurized by parents and society causing parent inflicted stress which has been shown in Table 3. 82.33% students feel under stress by parental enquiry of amount of course covered by them and while 68.67% students are in stress due to parents enquiry about their classmates marks. 73.76% parents also express their own expectation from students which is also a stress creator in their life. 78.67% parents' enquiries for the reasons of getting poor marks is also demotivating and frustrating causing stress. 84.33% Parents seem worried about the students future and they transfer their worry to them by suggesting the way of studying and 72.67% parents give the example of study pattern followed by selected students through newspaper interviews and personal relative's children selection. 70% parents well intended statements that their selection will reduce half of their stresses also is stressful for students.

Table 3: Parent inflicted stress among students studying in coaching institutes

Sr. No.	Test Items for Parents Inflicted Stress	Subjects Number	Percentage
1	Parents enquire for course covered	247	82.33
2	Parents enquire the marks of peer	206	68.67

3	Parents express their high expectation with children	221	73.67
4	Parents inquire reasons for poor performance	236	78.67
5	Parents suggest way to study	253	84.33
6	Give example how selected students do studies	218	72.67
7	Parents proclaim that their stress will reduce on selection	210	70

Students of the present study also experience parent inflicted stress. Most students feel that parental pressure is largely responsible for enhancing stress level. In an article published in The Times of India (Feb. 24, 2004, p.7), a student stated that parents must understand that examinations and academics are not the be all and end all of life. It is a common observation that when parents talk to their children they focus all on negative ideas and they say things as 'If you don't get selected then'. This makes the students apprehensive and they generally feel anxious and stressed. Students' stresses are usually expressed in terms of loss of self-esteem, self-worth, self-confidence or the sudden changes in the way he/she perceives him/her-self (Diener and Diener 2002). Although peer influence is an important factor for adolescent's education yet educational aspiration is one area where parental influence is more important than peer influence (Davies and Kandel 1981: 363-387).

Thus, both parents and peers play an important role in influencing students' stress. Positive support from parents may reduce some negative influence of peers on academic performance and supportive peers may similarly provide offsetting effects on negative parental influences.

CONCLUSION

Stress is a part of life. Some are facing less or some are high. Positive stress is required in the life as a motivator but negative stress must be eliminate form life as that is dangerous for future. In the last we can be concluded that students who have joined coaching institutes for selection in competitive exams for job experience self-inflicted stress, parent inflicted stress and peer inflicted stress. The highly competitive education and the learning processes are affecting students' mental state. The modern world, which is said to be a world of achievement, is also a world of stress. One finds stress everywhere, whether it is within the family, academics or any social and economic activity. Stress can occur if there is mismatch between the reality of the work environment (objective) and individual's perception of the work environment (subjective). Likewise, lack of fit between the demands placed on individuals and their abilities to meet those demands can result in stress. The stress can be parent inflicted, peer inflicted and self- inflicted. Higher frequency of these stresses was reported by students of the present study.

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