Measuring the Impact of Psychological Stresses on the Performance of Private College Students

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Abstract

Rapid changes of the life in general and the continuous war and conflicts in our country, imposed great stresses on upcoming generation. University students are important part of that generation who deserve help and guide.

Some students dropped out or delayed their studying because of different causes among them is psychological stress. Others are badly influenced in their performance by the same factor. So, psychological stress is deserved to be studied as a problem of impacts students' performance in college studying.

This study is important because excessive levels of academic stress can result in an increased prevalence of psychological and physical problems such as depression, anxiety, nervousness and stress related to disorder, which in return can affect their academic results. Students are thus, seen to be affected by the negative causes of academic stress.

The study tries to answer the following questions as its objective:

a-What is the level of the stress among college students?

b-What are the main causes of stresses that influence college students success and failures?

The study is limited to the students of the Dental Department (third and fourth) stages at the Dijlah University College in the academic years 2018-2019.

The researchers think that this paper may be valuable to the university students, administrators of the private colleges, parents, related institutions and the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research.

This research investigates the impact of psychological stresses on private college students. A questionnaire is conducted to collect research data. A total of 60 questionnaires were distributed among dental students, third and fourth grades. 56 valid responses are obtained..

Research findings suggest that female students feel stronger stress physical, mental and emotional factors than males while male students feel stronger stress of academic factors.

According to third grade students, they feel stronger stress from family factors
Than fourth grade students
Mainly, all the students in general, feel stronger stress of physical, mental and emotional factors, especially three items named; lack of sleeping, changing atmosphere of studying and everyday transport.
It is hoped that the feelings of the present study will assist college students to deal with stress.

Section One

1-1Introduction

In this chapter, the researchers present the procedure used in the study. It includes constructing the questionnaire, the study sample, validity, the pilot study, reliability and the statistical procedure.

1-2The Study Sample

This paper is carried out at Dijlah University College in Baghdad. The sample represents population at (dental) students (third and fourth) stages (male and female). The total population is about (75) students. Fifteen students are excluded from the main investigation because they involved in the open-ended questions and the pilot study.
The remaining (60) forms of the questionnaire are distributed among the students. (56) forms are correctly filled and returned to the researchers (4) invalid forms are neglected.

1-3Construction of the Study Instrument (the questionnaire

Henderson(1978:60) states that the questionnaire is the most suited means for collecting data in survey studies.
Two open questions are used to establish a pool of items relevant to the study:
(a-What is the level of psychological stress among college students (?)
b-What are the main causes of stresses that influence college students' success and failure (?)
The questions are given to fifteen students at the two stages in the college selected randomly. The researchers requested them to answer the questions in detail. These students are not included in the main sample of the study. With the help of relevant literature, the researchers constructed the first draft of the questionnaire.

1-4Validity

The first draft of the questionnaire is given to experts of educational and psychological science and English at universities in Baghdad. The jurors are requested to check the clarity and appropriateness of the items in the instrument to determine whether it covers a representative sample of the behavior to be measured. The procedure led to valuable suggestions. According to the judgment of the experts two items are added and a few are modified. Finally, five components are constructed including (35) items. Appendix(1)

1-5The Pilot Study
Evan (1978: 65) states that a pilot study gives the research a chance to practice administering the test . The piloting would reduce any mistakes or weakness in the administrative procedure which may spoil the research. In addition the statistical procedures can be tried out to make sure that they can be applied to the collected data.
The researchers conducted a pilot study included eight students who are excluded from the main sample of study.

1-6Reliability
The questionnaire is administrated to eight students (the pilot study)
In the middle of march 2018.The time span between the first and the second application was two weeks.
Adams (1964:18) "The time span between the first and the second application should not exceed two to three weeks".
A value of about 90% is obtained representing the reliability co-efficient for the questionnaire .In the light of this value, the questionnaire used in this study is considered a reliable instrument.

1-7Statistical Procedure
The researchers use percentage frequency to measure each item in relation to the five scales. For accurate results, the researchers added the raw scores against each item in the scales (strongly agree and agree) to each other to obtain (total agreement).The result is multiplied by 100 and divided by 56 (the number of the students who actually take part in the study). The researchers rearrange scores of each item within each component beginning with high scored item and grading to the low one. The same way is used in discussing results according to gender and grading.
The item obtains 50% indicates medium more than that indicates strong and less indicates weak.
The researchers do the same thing with the scales (strongly disagree and disagree). The scale (I don't know) is neglected.

1-8The Basic data analysis
Detail of the basic analysis of the study included 56 students of dental department male and female in third and fourth years as shown in the table No:1

Table 1

Items	Number	Percentage
Gender		
Male	37	66
Female	19	34
Total	56	100,00
Third year		
Female	10	
Male	21	
Total	31	55,5
Fourth year		
Female	9	
Male	16	
Total	25	44,5
Completely total	56	100,00

The researchers discuss the contents of the table in detail in the following. The discussion includes the responses of the total number of the students in general to the whole items. Then they discuss the results of the students' responses according to gender (male and (female) and later according to grades (third and fourth years

section Two

2-1Results and Discussion
2-2Detailed discussion of the students responses in general . The total number is (56) 2.2 students

A- Physical , mental and emotional factor
Statistical analysis showed that among the stressors in this field item No 1 ''lack of sleeping'' (89%) was considered the strongest , followed by No5 ''everyday transport'' (82%) and No7 '' feeling lonely'' (73%) then No4 ''changing atmosphere'' (68%) , and No8 ''feeling anxious'' 66%
B- Family factor
Statistical analysis showed that among the stressors item No3 ''my academic result will not meet…..'' (77%) was considered the strongest, followed by No6 '' difficult to find (balance …..'' (54%
C- Financial factor
Statistical analysis showed that among the stressors in this field item No8 ''lack of financial help …'' (77%) was considered the strongest, followed by No3 '' difficult for my (parents …… '' (59%) and No4 '' I face difficulties …..'' (57%

D- Academic factor

Statistical analysis showed that among the stressors in academic item No3 '' stay up late before quizzes'' (80%) was considered the strongest, followed by factor No6 ''inability to schedule time ….'' (71%) and No4 '' much data ……. '' (68%) then the item No8 . (''administration of the university … ''(64%) and No9 '' I can't concentrate ….'' (55%

E- Social factor

Statistical analysis showed that among stressors in social factor item No4 '' I disturb because…..'' (80%) followed by No2 ''I worry about development ….'' (55%) and No1 '' (I feel confusion ….'' (54%

An average percentage of the items discussed in the five components above showed that the strongest source of students stresses was found in the items of '' physical , mental and emotional factor '' which represented 75,5% followed by '' academic factor'' 67,5% and family factor 66% .''financial factor'' represented 64% and '' social factor'' 63% as shown in the table No. 2

Table 2

Sections	Average percentage
Physical , mental and emotional factor	75,5
Academic factor .	67,5
Family factor .	66
Financial factor .	64
Social factor .	63

Total average percentage of each factor in general

2-3Discussion of results according to gender

1-Male : the total number is (37) students

A- physical , mental and emotional factor

Statistical analysis showed that among stressors in this field item No1 ''lack of sleeping'' represented 86% was considered the strongest , followed by No5 '' everyday transport tiredness …'' 78% and No7 '' feeling lonely'' 73% then No8 ''feeling anxious ...'' 65% . and No4 '' changing atmosphere ….'' 59%

B- Family factor

Statistical analysis showed that among stressors in this field item No3 '' I worry that my academic results will not meet the expectations of my parents '' represented 81% was the . strongest

C- Financial factor

In this field item No8 '' I'm pessimistic and dissatisfied for the lack of financial help ….'' . Represented 78% was the strongest

D- Academic factor

In this section item No4 '' much data of some teachers make me overload'' represented 81% was considered the strongest followed by No6 '' I worry for unability to schedule

. time ….” 78% and No3 '' I stay up late before quizzes” 76%

E- Social factor

In this field item No1 '' in general I feel confusion in my social life '' represented 75% . was the strongest

2-Female : the total number is (19) students

A- Physica, , mental and emotional factor

Statistical analysis showed that among stressors in this field item No1 ''lack of sleeping” represented 95% was considered the strongest , followed by No5 '' everyday transport tiredness …” 89% and No4 '' changing atmosphere ….” 84% then No7 '' feeling lonely” .74% and No8 ''feeling anxious ...” 68%

B- Family factor

In this field item No3 '' I worry that my academic results will not meet the expectations . of my parents '' represented 68% was the strongest

C- Financial factor

In this field item No8 '' I'm pessimistic and dissatisfied for the lack of financial help ….” Represented 74% followed by No4 '' I face difficulties in paying college installment” 58% and No3 '' I feel that it is difficult for my parents to earn enough money to pay for . my university dues” 53%

D- Academic factor

In this section item No3 '' I stay up late before quizzes” represented 89% was considered the strongest among the stressors followed by No1 '' lack of interest in certain subjects makes me worry” 74% and No8 '' I can't concentrate completely during studying” 63% . then No6 '' I worry for inability to schedule time ….” 58%

E- Social factor

In this field item No4 ''I disturb because my parents prevent my friends to visit me at home '' represented 89% was the considered .The strongest among stressors . followed by No2 '' I worry about the development of my social life in future” 68% and No3 '' I worry I may be unable to adopt to the new social environment '' 63% .The results are shown in the table No.3

Table 3

	Factors	Male %	Female %
A	Physical , mental and emotional	73	82
B	Academic	81	68
C	Family	78	62
D	Financial	78	71
E	Social	57	73

Average percentage of each factor showing the source of stressors according to gender

Male

Statistical analysis showed that '' academic factor" 81% was the strongest source of stressor , followed by '' financial and family factor" 78% .Then ''physical , mental and emotional factor" came in the fourth rank 73% . Then ''social factor 57%

Female

Statistical analysis showed that ''physical , mental and emotional factor" was the strongest source of stressors for female 82% while ''social factor" 73% came in the second rank , followed by ''financial factor" 71% and ''academic factor''68% and '' family factor" . 62%

2-4-Discussion of results according to grade

1-Third grade : the total number is (31) students

A- Physical , mental and emotional factor

Statistical analysis showed that among stressors in this field item No1 ''lack of sleeping" represented 93,5% was considered the strongest , followed by item No4 '' changing atmosphere …." And No5 '' everyday transport tiredness …" 87% and then No7 '' feeling .lonely" 77,5% and No8 ''feeling anxious ..." 55%

B- Family factor

In this field item No3 '' I worry that my academic results will not meet the expectations of my parents '' was considered the strongest factor of stress followed by the item No2 '' . getting along with brothers and sisters" 84%

C- Financial factor

In this section item No8 '' I'm pessimistic and dissatisfied for the lack of financial help …." 77,5% was considered the strongest , followed by No4 '' I face difficulties in paying college installment" 64,5% then item No3 '' I feel that it is difficult for my parents to earn enough money to pay for my university dues" 61% and the item No7 ''I feel worry about . the debts accumulated due to studying" 51,5%

D- Academic factor

In this section item No4 '' much data of some teachers make overload" 81% was considered the strongest , followed by No3 '' I stay up late before quizzes" 77,5% then the item No6 '' I worry for inability to schedule time …." 74% and the items No1 and No8 in sequence which obtained the same grading ''lack of interest in certain …….No1" '' I feel worry because the administration ……No8" 71% and the item No9 '' I can't concentrate . completely during studying" 68%

E- Social factor

In this section the item No2 ''I worry about the development of my social life in future . '' 74% was considered the strongest

2-Fourth grade : the total number is (25) students

A- Physical , mental and emotional factor

Statistical analysis showed that among stressors in this section item No1 ''lack of sleeping" 84% was considered the strongest , followed by item No5 '' everyday transport .tiredness …" 76% then No7 '' feeling lonely" 64%and No8 ''feeling anxious ..." 56%

B- Family factor

In this field item No3 '' I worry that my academic results will not meet the expectations of my parents '' 68% was considered the strongest factor of stresses.

C- Financial factor

In this section item No8 '' I'm pessimistic and dissatisfied for the lack of financial help ….'' 68% was considered the strongest , followed by item No3 '' I feel that it is difficult for my parents to earn enough money to pay for my university dues'' 56% then item No4 '' I face difficulties in paying college installment'' 52% .

D- Academic factor

Statistical analysis showed that among stressors in this section item In this section item No3 '' I stay up late before quizzes'' 84% was considered the strongest , followed by the item No4 '' much data of some teachers make overload'' 76% then the item No6 '' I worry for inability to schedule time ….'' 68% and the items No1 ''lack of interest in certain …….'' 64% and No8'' I feel worry because the administration ……''56% and the item No9 '' I can't concentrate completely during studying'' 52% .

E- Social factor

In this section the item No2 ''I worry about the development of my social life in future .'' 64%

Table 4

	Factors	3rd grade%	4th grade %
A	Physical , mental and emotional	80	70
B	Academic	85,5	68
C	Family	64	59
D	Financial	74	67
E	Social	74	64

Average percentage of each factor showing degree of the stressors according to grade

Discussion

Statistical analysis in the table No.4 showed that the '' family factor'' was the strongest source of stressors according to the third grade 85,5% followed by physical , mental and emotional factor 80% , according to the 4th grade physical , mental and emotional was the strongest 70% followed by family factor 68%

2-5-Conclusions

Statistical analysis of the present study showed that private university students performance which can be affected by the stress are mainly seven items . these items represent the top of stressor source . They are ranged between 80% and 90% . The average distribution of responses was as follows : three items are related to physical , mental and emotional factor , two others related to academic factor and two to the family factor and one to social factor . Table No.5

Table 5

Factor	Average percentage
A- physical , mental and emotional	
1- lack of sleeping	89,5%
2- everyday transport tiredness and losing time	86%
3- changing atmosphere of studying make me worry .	85,5%
B- Social	
1- I disturb because my parents prevent my friends to visit me at home	84,5%
C- Academic	
1- I stay up late before quizzes	84,3%
2- much data of some teachers make me overload	81%
D- Family	
1- I worry that my academic results will not meet ex-pectation of my parents	84%
2- getting along with brothers and sisters	84%

The study identified the main sources of stressor , the major source of stress found out in the study have a direct relation with the stress level of students .

The study could provide better insights to the students and their families , and also to the academic administrators for initiating efforts to reduce the intensity of academic stress .

The reasons for stress cannot be limited to these , it varies according to students and their psychology

In conclusion the results of this study are suggestive as to the necessary components of stress management program specific to the needs of college students

Certainly , stress in the college sitting can not be eliminated but we can and should do a better job preparing students to manage it

2-6-Suggestions

College administrators should identify student's stress as soon as possible and provide adequate support , they could also incorporate career development programs in to formal curricula

On the other hand , students can increase stress management abilities and learn to seek support , they can also make use of family support and release stress-reduced emotions , they can get involved with campus activities and develop an optimistic view of life

Margins

1-components are constructed including (35) items. Appendix1

Names of the jurors are arranged in alphabetical order

1-Abbas, Salam H. Ph.D. Asst. prof. College of Education Ibn Rushd

2-Al-Bakri, Shaima Ph.D. prof. College of Education Ibn Rushd

3-Mikke, Tamara Adil M,A. College of Education

4-Sharif, Abdulkareem Ph.D. College of Arts

5-Waheed, Jinan Ph.D. College of Arts

2-Note: items that represent less than(50%) were neglected from discussion because they don't represent strong stressors

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Appendix 1

Measuring Impact of Psychological Stresses on the Performance of Private College Students Studying in Baghdad

A. physical , mental and emotional factor	Strongly agree	agree	I don't know	disagree	Strongly disagree
1. lack of sleeping					
2. being inferior to others					
3. feeling inappropriate of physical appearance					
4. changing atmosphere of studying make me worry					
5. everyday transport tiredness and losing time					
6. confused and injured feeling for any criticism					
7. feeling lonely					
8. feeling anxious in facing simple problems					

B. Family factor	Strongly agree	agree	I don't know	disagree	Strongly disagree
1. lack of support and encouragement of parents					
2. getting along with brothers and sisters					
3. I worry that my academic results will not meet expectations my parents					
4. parents disaccord					
5. divorce of parents left bad effect					
6. I feel it difficult to find a balance between my academic and social activates					

C. financial factor	Strongly agree	agree	I don't know	disagree	Strongly disagree
1. lack of financial support of my parents in paying college installment					
2. insufficient money for personal interest expenses					
3. I feel that it is difficult for my parents to earn enough money to pay for my university dues					
4. I face difficulties in paying college installments					
5. I can't share in some activities because of the lack of payment					
6. I have to work during holidays to pay for some overheads					
7. I feel worry about the debts accumulated due to studying					
8. I'm pessimistic and dissatisfied for the lack of financial help , governmental or non-government .					

D. academic factor	Strongly agree	agree	I don't know	disagree	Strongly disagree
1. lack of interest in certain subjects makes me worry					
2. having trouble getting along with peers when I share work with my classmates					
3. I stay up late before quizzes					
4. much data of some teachers make me overload					
5. I feel a lot of pressure because all subjects use foreign languages					
6. I worry for inability to schedule time between academic and social activities					
7. I worry to make relationship with other students					
8. I feel worry because the administration of the university does not pay attention to students complains					
9. I can't concentrate completely during studying					

E. social factor	Strongly agree	agree	I don't know	disagree	Strongly disagree
1. In general I feel confusion in my social life					
2. I worry about the development of my social life in future					
3. I worry I may be unable to adapt to the new social environment					
4. I disturb because my parents prevent my friends to visit me at home					