

**A STUDY OF STRESS FACTORS AND THEIR IMPACT ON STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AT UNIVERSITY LEVEL**

**Mansoor Ahmed Soomro**

Assistant Professor, Department of Business Administration  
Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Shaheed Sindh University Campus Dadu

**Dr Muneeruddin Soomro**

Pro-Vice Chancellor, Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Shaheed Sindh University Campus Dadu

**Dr Ghulam Akbar Mahesar**

Professor Department of Political Science & Director Area Study Centre Far East & South East Asia, University of Sindh Jamshoro

**Sana Rani**

Researcher, Department of Criminology, University of Karachi, Karachi

**ABSTRACT**

The main emphasis of the study is on the academic performance and the stress management in applied science among the students of Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Shaheed Sindh University Campus Dadu. What is the level of stress on the academic success of the students? How does it affect their lifestyle and health? This is what the research study covers to counteract the general stress among the students. The purpose of the study is to inquire and bring light to measure and check the present stress among students of the university. While doing the research a quantitative method was applied for collecting and analyzing the data. The Questionnaires were distributed among different students for this purpose. Innumerable factors of stress were found in the results and the factors were grouped in four categories which are; -Environmental Factors, Academic Factors, and Personal Factors. In environmental factors, the stress was about the happening the fate in the future. The students were found worried about future that what would happen about their fate? How it will happen? What is about to happen? When they came into contact with the new people it raised their stress. Also the class workload was the main reason for the stress among the students regarding academic factors. When the students were experiencing the workload of the class the group of the students came under stress. The last factor was a personal factor which was mainly due to the financial problem among the students.

The stress of all categories can be managed through stress management courses and doing different extracurricular activities which will help to divert the attention of the students on different occasions. This study has drawn significant conclusions and Suggests further measures for practitioners which could help other to manage stress. The limitations are also mentioned so that those who are conducting research for the similar cases can extract better results and ways of curbing stress. A survey questionnaire was designed to collect the response from students, the five-point Likert scale was used from strongly agree to strongly disagree. SPSS-21 version was used to interpret the results through different quantitative techniques like descriptive, regression, and correlation.

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**Keywords:** Stress, Academic Stress, Personal Factor, Academic Factor, Environmental Factor, Students Performance.

## INTRODUCTION

**Background of the Study:** Stress is the main root cause of the problems being faced by the students throughout their academic life when they are struggling to get the academic accomplishment for their future life. The pressure of academia is one of the important factors that cause failure among learners. Stress is the reaction of brain and action by means of hormonal signaling, the perceptual experience of risk sets off an automatic reactionary system, known as the fight or flight response. Commonly stress refers to two things, the mental perception of pressure, on the one hand, and the person's response to it, on the other, it involves multiple systems, from crack-up of muscles to memory. Stress is areas on by which learners expect a lot from him to achieve bright future. Stress is a feeling of strain and pressure. Stress is a mendacious feeling for learner (Cohen *et.al.*, 1997).

Academic performance is the educational objectives that are to be accomplished by a student, teacher or institution over a specific time. The academic performance of students to a greater extent depends on involvement of parents in their academic activities to achieve a higher level of success in their career. The learners have quite dominant affective factor especially in girls regarding academic excellence. They take pressure and stress in every situation during their study life. A lot of factors that affect their study such as regularity, teachers' attitude towards their study, strictness at their home and future job tension (Hussain *et.al.*, 2012).

**Problem Statement:** Stress among student is common, stress can bring many things with itself. For university students stress is very serious issue because stress can damage one's health and future, university students have many objectives to achieve like good grades, good job, and society standards, but due to academic stress it's difficult to achieve them, as stress brings many problems for them. This study has been conducted to identify the causes, factors and certain solutions to these stress-related problems.

## THE OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- \* To distinguish the reasons for worry among the students under study.
- \* To recognize particular regions of worry in the life of students under study.
- \* To recognize remedies to manage the pressure.

**HYPOTHESES**

- H1. Personal Factor has a significant impact on students' academic performance
- H2. Academic Factor has an insignificant impact on students' academic performance
- H3. Environmental Factor has a positive and significant impact on students' performance

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

Stress is the feeling created by unaccompanied factors, yet a soul reacts so in accordance with its intensity which produces troubles or strain that influence on the cerebrum and the entire organs of the body with an unpalatable condition which results in mind glitch, physiological issue and furthermore numerous regions of mental conditions as misery, nervousness, torment, and burnout.

Physiologically, stress related sicknesses can be cardiovascular, indigestion and gastrointestinal ailments are manifested by incredible territories of hereditary traits. Formative variables which vary from person to person, moreover signs of this infirmity may be practically identical at some time among people (Hellhammer, 2008).

Subsequently, the stress is on a very basic level constraint associated with a man and may result in a strain or, at the end of the day outcome of an unmanaged push that is the time when a man can't deal with a test or issue experienced strain in result. To a couple of individuals, the effect is inconsequential which infers that it can continue to put on weight, while the other can face the impact that tremendously has a threatening effect. Stress is described by Port personality 2006, 5as "A hyper reaction after outside factors in intestinal parts" that actuates a bad and tremendous response.

Amidst certain period, key organs, for example, sexual organs, heartbeat, circulatory strain, the respiratory rate and hormonal reactions are also noted at the apex.

**Sources of Stress among Student:** These are the main sources of students' academic stress:

**Personal Factors as Source of Stress:** This is the main source of stress among students' it includes the change in the living environment, the students' may feel uneasy to come out from their comfort zone, second change in sleeping habits like to remain awake complete night and consequently in-classroom they feel sleepy, it also create stress because in this condition it is difficult for students to focus on lecture, third financial difficulties are also a source of stress among them.

Numerous studies are available on the internet on stress and college students which concluded that relationship between both financial factors and stress are (Fisher, 1994; Greenberg & Valletutti, 1980; Schafer, 1996; Altmaier, 1983).

Author Folkman and Lazarus in 1984 discovered that stress formed in mind of a related person because of cognitive appraisal about different positions as well as it will put consequences on the environment. Stress can exist whenever the stressor gets things as stress otherwise nothing give him stress, if he thinks there is no anything which gives me stress.

Author Volpe (2000) as well as author Feng (1992) tells us that anything which challenge stressor take as stress, which affects stressors' mentality or physique. Stress can be due to many reasons like different factors of environment; biological, social as well as psychological factors which affect stressor.

**Academic Factors as Source of Stress:** Academic source of stress includes increased class workload, particularly in conditions where there are huge extent of assignments to do in the wake of having a burdening day at work makes undergraduate students more muddled. Second, low grades are the source of academic stress. Third, many hours of studies, as a university student they need to do hard work to compete many others not only from the same institute but also from students of other institutes. Fourth, difficulty of language, lingual capability may additionally significantly influence a students' potential (Association, 2006). Fifth examinations are also the source of stress among the students.

In modern institutes which deliver education to students, evaluate work performance is day by day changing. Like natural sciences are changing along with management science studies, so it can be concluded that stress of students can be increased or changed or pushed upward, in less number of institutes where there is too much burden on students in the shape of assignments, practical work, projects, and different presentations or studies. Therefore, there is much student's dropout from that institute because of less performance or in other words they didn't meet their standard for securing minimum marks (Chang, K. 2007).

Some institutes take stress as positive consequences. If institute gives stress to students and they study a lot, resultantly they get better marks that's why it's beneficial. But there can be a negative impact of stress because stress is required to be managed in a proper way. If students are smart they can manage stress but poor students cannot manage it, which is harmful to their studies. In concluding remarks, if a

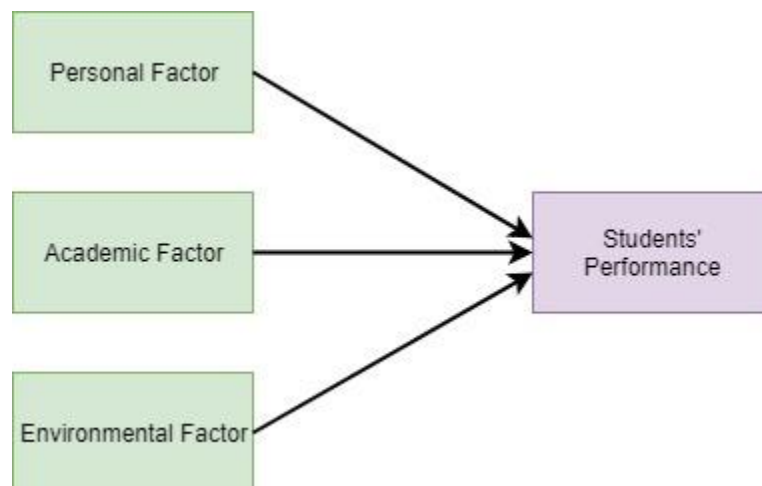
person manages stress then it has a positive consequence (Stevenson, 2006).

**Environmental Factors as Source of Stress:** It includes Lack of vacations or breaks, the human body needs some rest but continuous study or assignments burden can cause stress among students. Second, bad living conditions: the living conditions of people put impressions that are source of stress. Third, future worries, the likelihood about how much the future choice turn more beneficial to students from scope point of view.

Numerous Researchers had worked on the stress of students, there is a lot of literature on the internet a lot of articles but in conclusion there is no any proper solution to reduce the stress of students in educational institutes. From previous literature it is concluded that responsible for stress are institutes, students themselves as they are influenced by regulation, rules, policies as well as different conditions like shortage of classes, lack of electricity, less facilities, hike of fees , no uniform policy for admission of students in institutes as well as in examinations, delaying in taking classes or examinations, gender discrimination, harassment, unfair assessment etc. are the same reasons behind stress of students (Preston, 2003).

### Theoretical Framework

**Figure-1**  
**Framework for Study**



## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To determine the level of stress, a survey questionnaire was designed to collect response from students' of Sindh University Campus Dadu. The questionnaire was based on two parts, the first part was demographic and second was comprising of questions related to different variables like personal, academic, and environmental factors of stress. For analysis of responses the statistical package for social scientists was utilized for frequencies, regression, and correlation which was applied through quantitative techniques. Moreover, students were given questionnaire to collect the response through close-ended surveys. The respondents were requested to tick the proper box or boxes coordinating their favored assessments. The information accumulated through the surveys were analyzed by the utilization of some techniques of SPSS-21. Graphic measurements, for example, bar and pie chart were utilized to introduce data prepared from information which was provided by students of Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Shaheed Campus Sindh University Dadu according to the conditions faced by them.

## FINDING AND RESULT

This portion of findings gives details on the tables structured through SPSS software and their interpretations for better understanding.

- Demographics status
- Analysis of data and hypothesis

## Descriptive Statistics

TABLE-1 AGE				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Below 20 years	22	11.0	11.0	11.0
21-25 years	53	26.5	26.5	37.5
26-30 years	96	48.0	48.0	85.5
30 years and above	29	14.5	14.5	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

Table 1 states that highest rate of respondents come in the average age of 26-30 with 85.5% cumulative percent. In this age rate, 96 respondents were involved and formed a majority rate of response. Below 20 years age bear the lowest percentage of 11.0 %

TABLE-2 GENDER					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	119	59.5	59.5	59.5
	Female	81	40.5	40.5	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 states gender frequency has been clearly swiped by male dominance with a percentage of 59.5 and number of 119 respondents. Females are short in number with a quantity of 81 respondents and 40.5%.

TABLE-3: EDUCATION					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Primary	41	20.5	20.5	20.5
	Secondary	37	18.5	18.5	39.0
	Graduate	89	44.5	44.5	83.5
	Master	33	16.5	16.5	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	

Table 3 states that the above data has respondents with graduate educational background happen to have received the highest number of respondents with a percentage of 44.5. Master seems to have lesser number of respondents with 16.5%.

### Analysis of Data and Hypotheses

TABLE-4: CRONBACH'S ALPHA	
Cronbach's Alpha <sup>a</sup>	N of Items
.815	21

The table 4 states the reliability statistics is divided into two parts; Cronbach's Alpha and a number of items in the shape of dependent and independent variables. According to given four items, the Cronbach's Alpha is .815. According to (Nunley, 1978), if the reliability value of Cronbach's alpha is greater than 0.70, then further steps can proceed otherwise cannot be proceeded if the reliability value is less. In this regard, the study is found reliable at the rate of 0.815 and can be preceded further.

**TABLE-5: CORRELATIONS**

Personal Factor			Academic Factor	Environmental Factor	Students' performance
Personal Factor	Pearson Correlation	1	.696	.742	.882
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	200	200	200	200
Academic Factor	Pearson Correlation	.696	1	.608	.703
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	200	200	200	200
Environmental Factor	Pearson Correlation	.742	1	.609	.633
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.100	1	.000
	N	200	200	200	200
Students Performance	Pearson Correlation	.882	.403	0.433	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.967	.001	
	N	200	200	200	200

This table 5 indicates the strength of the relationship between the variables and all other independent variables and how much they are correlated according to the outcome of the study, As Cohen says that correlation tables dictate the relationship between variables.

There are three types of correlations:

1. Weak (.10-.29),
2. Moderate (.30-.59),
3. Strong (.60-above).

As the tables suggests, each individual bears above .5 value, therefore, above mentioned items have a strong correlation with each other.

**TABLE-6**  
**MEASURE OF SAMPLE ADEQUACY, KMO AND BARTLETT'S TEST**

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.784
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square
	789.071
	Df
	8
	Sig.
	.000

This table no.6 is comprised of two things, KMO and Bartlett's test of sphericity. The significance value should be less than .05 to be highlighted as significant value, since the table pictures the value of .0000, therefore study can be preceded. According to Kaiser- Mayer-Olkin, the measure of sample adequacy should be greater than .60 than the sample size can be said adequate for further study. The table suggests



the required value of .874 along with Bartlett's approximate chi-square value of 789.071

<b>TABLE-7</b>				
<b>MODEL SUMMARY<sup>B</sup></b>				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.785	.681	.667	1.966

a. Predictors: (Constant), Environmental Factor, Academic Factor, Personal Factor.

b. Dependent Variable: Student's Performance

This table 7 states about the level of fitness of the model and prediction of the dependent variable by the independent variable. The R square must be between 1 to 100%. Therefore, according to results of regression equations, the dependent variable student's performances 68% is predicted by the Environmental Factor, Academic Factor, Personal Factor.

**Table-8**  
**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Un-standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.489	.068		2.010	.002
Personal Factor	.192	.081	.192	1.374	.001
Academic Factor	.077	.081	.277	2.905	.000
Environmental Factor	.197	.071	.197	2.789	.001

a. Dependent Variable: Students Performance

The coefficient table no.8 has 3 items which are described along with their beta value. Beta value suggests whether the hypothesis given about the variables is valid and positive or not. As Personal Factor variable has a positive beta value of .192, it is said to be valid. As Academic Factor variable has a positive beta value of .277, it is said to be valid. As Environmental Factor variable has a positive beta value of .197, it is said to be valid. All the beta values of variables verify hypotheses.

The data was collected through questionnaires distributed among different groups of students. When the results came it was seen that the stress of the students was due to four different factors namely Relationship, Environmental Factor, Academic, and Personal factors. The first factor, Relationship Factor, was due to coming in contact with new

people. When the students worked with new people their stress was increased. It was the highest factor in the group when the students answered the questions in the questionnaire. Relationship with the new students was the main reason. The second factor, Environmental Factor, caused the stress and in it. The stress was about the happening of the future. There was great stress due to workload in the class in the third factor, Academic Factors. Financial problems were the main source of stress in the fourth and last factor, Personal Factors. All the results denote that stress affects overall learning activities as well as other activities in society.

### **CONCLUSION**

1. The results show that the stress has left a negative impact on the social and academic activities of the students.
2. The students are found ineffective at studies, slow and poor at academic performance.
3. Overall the students' personality is highly affected by the stress and in the result their life becomes dull. There is need to find out the remedy. It is performed by means of identifying the most important motives regarding accent as includes changes within lifestyle, expanded workload, instant responsibilities, and interpersonal relationships or finding the appropriate remedy.
4. A cluster over research has been committed regarding stress and its administration then technological solutions are given and it is intended that as the analysis suggest that giant steps are required to be taken to help the students to bear a hectic tutorial life as suggested by study.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

1. **Co-curricular activities:** The student may be motivated to involve themselves in co-curricular activities like sports, debate, singing competition etc. it will reduce stress among students
2. **Motivational sessions:** The young generation requires proper motivation towards studies, hence the renowned motivational speakers be called to make presentations in front of student to induce them for studies.
3. **Visit of expert doctors:** The visits of expert doctors may be initiated in classes, who may give expert opinions to students to reduce stress, fatigue and monotony
4. **Worry about future:** Students have been observed that they are worried about their future, in this regard government should devise

- the plans and policies as the talented students must be certain about the future prospects in different field
5. **Rules, regulations and policies of university:** It has been witnessed that same strict rules regulation and policies are implemented by some universities which create pressure among students that is the cause of stress among various students
  6. **Burden of assignments and studies:** It has been known through studies that some student at university level get pressure of assignments and burden of studies. There should be policy that more assignment may not be given to student at one time but assignments be given with gaps subject wise
  7. **Lack of sleep:** The parents must take care of sleeping habits of learners as they may sleep sufficiently as they should be fresh in class lecture time and may not feel sleepy
  8. **Adverse living condition:** The parents must take care of living conditions of the university student so the conducive atmosphere be provided to them as they can understand the syllabus comfortably.
  9. **To make exercise habit:** The students be advised to take required exercises to keep them healthy to avoid from stress and pressure of courses
  10. **Availability of place for play:** Every university must possess suitable place for playing indoor and outdoor games which may keep them alert and smart to bear the pressure of studies and assignment.

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