Social Factors and Academic Stress among Higher Institution Students in Oyo State, Nigeria.

1Funmilola, E. Akinyooye Ph.D. and 2Miss Blessing Christiana Adesokan

1Department of Adult Education, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria.
ojofunmiloa@gmail.com
+2348030499636
2Postgraduate Student, Department of Adult Education, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria.
sokanblessing994@gmail.com
+2348131938390

Abstract: *The study investigated nexus between social factors and academic stress among higher institution students in Oyo state, Nigeria. The study adopted descriptive research design of survey type, the population consisted of higher institution students in Oyo state. Simple random sampling technique was used to sample two-hundred and ninety five respondents. Quantitative research instrument was used to elicit information from the selected respondents and data collected was analyzed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation and Multiple Regression. The results revealed that there was positive relationship between social factors (peer-pressure, family structure and social activities) and academic stress. Based on the findings, it was recommended that lecturers working in these institutions of higher learning and professional counselors should organize seminars and meetings for concerned students in order to encourage, and advise them on how to manage academic stress, maintain good relationship with their peers and balance social activities with their academics.*

Keywords: Peer-pressure, family structure, social activities, higher institution students and academic stress.

Introduction

Stress has been seen tightening its grip on the students, as they have to compete at every step of their academic career in this changing world. Stress in academic system can have negative consequences if it is not properly managed. Social factors (peer-pressure, family structure and social activities) causes stress if not properly managed. There is often a lot of pressure that comes along with pursuing a degree and one's education, which is studying, homework, tests, laboratory, reading, and quizzes. There is the stress of doing all of the work, balancing at a time and finding time for co-curricular activities. Academic stress can lead to students being unable to perform to the best of their abilities in examinations, frequent school refusal, phobia, physical complaints, irritability, weeping spells, and decreased interest in school work. It can also affect the society by not producing good leaders who can move the country forward. High stress, if not well managed can affect students negatively, unable to get along with friends or roommate, test anxiety and unable to adjust to new environment and so on. Consequently, unable to cope with these challenges by students lead to stress. Students in higher institution experience stress because they stay away from home, live independently without family members, and take new responsibilities both personally and academically. Living away from home could be a challenge for an individual who has never been away and more contents, to master in small amount of time and increased responsibilities could be stressful for the students, all these challenges lead to academic stress. Auerbach and Grambling (1998) argue that stress can leads to serious problems if it is not managed effectively. Stress affect the students academically and change the way the person acts and thinks.
Wilks (2008) warns that if a student is not able to cope effectively with academic stress, then serious psycho-social-emotional health consequences may result.
Researchers have long identified stress symptoms as lack of energy, taking over the counter medication, high blood pressure, feeling depressed, increase in appetite, trouble concentrating, restlessness, tensions and anxiety among others (Malach-Pines and Keinan, 2007; Ongori,2007; Ongori and Agolla, 2008; Agolla, 2009). An individual experiencing one of these factors is likely to be a victim of stress. Dusselier, et al. (2005) found that the biggest factor causing stress for students was academics. Students identified tests, classes, homework, and examinations as causes of stress. Stress is part of the daily life of a college student (Dusselier, 2005).
Academic stress among students have long been researched on, and researchers have identified stressors as too many assignments, competition with other students, failures, lack of pocket money (Fairbrother and Warn, 2003), poor relationships with other students or lecturers, family or problems at home. Academic factors (test and examination) were the predominant cause of stress in most students, followed by physical, social, and emotional. Family as a determinant of academic stress is in form of parenting style, motivation and monitoring of their children, whether there is problem in the family, socio-economic status of the family, educational level of parents etc. The educational background of the parents and the financial status of the parents will determine whether the student will be highly stressed or not. Family structure is also one of the important sources of academic stress which includes the pressure placed upon students due to the expectations of parents for their child to do well academically (Deb, et al 2011). Amponsah and Owolabi (2011) acknowledged the prevalence of academic stress among college students because college students are no strangers to varying degrees of stress in a typical semester. Pierceall and Keim (2007) reported that 75% to 80% of college students

are moderately stressed and 10% to 12% are severely stressed while Hudd (2000) established that during a typical semester, high levels of stress have been reported for 52% of college students.

Social activities is the engagement of students in activities which is not academic in nature. Social activities include spending time with friends, attending parties, being involved in team sports, being a member of a club, going to local parks, chatting with family and friends. One more thing that is essential to help reduce stress is the social support that can be gained from friends, teachers and family. Stress effects are lowered with a good social support group. That is why, an excellent and healthy relationship with friends, teachers and family are vital. People, who are friendless and alone, are more risky to stress and also mental related problems. Students experience various developmental stressors in their day-to-day activities in order to overcome from those stressors. There are different relaxations techniques which will help the students to cope with that stress and help them to lead a better and happier life. Some of the techniques are deep breathing exercises, progressive muscle relaxation techniques, visualization also known as free guided relaxation or visual guided imagery, exercises, laughter, listening to calming music, stretching relaxes, meditation techniques such as yoga or transcendental meditations, cuddle with a pet or a hug of a loved one.

Peer pressure as a determinant of academic stress is whether the student could be able to relate well with friends, classmates' roommates etc. If the student is engage in disagreement or fight with his friend it may lead to academic stress. Academic stress among students have long been researched on, and researchers have identified stressors as too many assignments, competitions with other students, failures and poor relationships with other students or lecturers (Fairbrother and Warn, 2003). Akhtar and Aziz (2011) found that parental pressure affect academic achievement positively while peer pressure affects it negatively especially among female university students. Royal College of Psychiatrists (2011) reported that students with secure attachments to family and those residing in a supportive community are in a better position to handle stress. Indira, et al (2020) argued that students' having literate mother, those from family with higher socioeconomic status, those staying with own parents, whose parents are staying together, and those who play and watch television after their school are less likely to have academic stress. In another development, those who do not sleep adequately each night, who do not feel their home environment is good, and those who face emotional abuse at home were more likely to have academic stress. Michaela, et al (2019) concurred that stress had negative impact on students' learning capacity, academic performance, education and employment attainment, sleep quality and quantity, physical health, mental health and substance use and abuse outcomes.

Blai (1972) explored that those students who lives in another city out of their city feel more stress than those students who get education in their house. Those students who live in hostels they have stress because of their roommates, because there is no collaboration and cooperation between different students in hostels and students could not adjust in these places that caused anxiety and stress in students. Dickson et al (2020) opined that stress comprised psychosocial, mental and physical conditions that has both positive and negative consequences depending on its gravity on an individual and his/her coping resources available. In higher institutions of learning, excessive academic stress depreciates the progress of academic work and stifles academic development. This has made Wani et al., (2018) to classify academic stress as one of the disturbing cankers in higher institutions of learning that decreases the academic output of students and faculty or staff. Dickson et al (2020) contended that academic stress when well managed, can help in promoting academic work, elicit good academic outcomes from students and ensure high professional output from faculty staff in higher institutions.

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this study is to investigate social factors (family structure, peer pressure, social activities) on academic stress of higher institutions students in Ibadan. Specifically, the objectives of the study is to;
i. ascertain the relationship between social factors and academic stress of higher institution students;
ii. assess the joint contribution of social factors variables on academic stress of higher institution students; and
iii. determine the relative influence of social factors on academic stress of higher institution students.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study.
i. What is the relationship between social factors (family structure, peer pressure, social activities) and academic stress among higher institution students?
ii. What is the joint contribution of social factors (family structure, peer pressure, social activities) on academic stress on higher institution students?
iii. What is the relative influence of social factors (family structure, peer pressure, social activities) on academic stress?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Descriptive research design was employed. This was used not only to elicit useful information concerning the current status of the phenomena under investigation but also to describe the scenario with respect to variables engaged. This design encouraged the researchers to examine the variables of interest which had either previously happened or is happening at the moment without having

substantive control over them. In the light of this, the design was considered appropriate for this research work, as the researchers' intention was to assess the nexus between social factors and students' academics stress.

Target Population, Sample and Sampling Technique.

All undergraduate students of higher institution of learning in Oyo state formed the target population. Three higher institutions were purposively sampled and simple random sampling technique was employed to select two-hundred and ninety five respondents (295).

Instrumentations
Quantitative instruments was employed to collect pertinent information for the research work. Four scale-structure instruments were used to collect data from the respondents such as Academic stress scale, family structure scale, peer-pressure scale, social activities scale. Four rating scales of A-Agree, SA-Strongly Agree, D-Disagree and SD-Strongly Disagree.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

In order to effectively ensure the validity of the instruments used for this study, the quantitative instrument was subjected to content validity measurement which consisted of face and predictive validity. The content validity of the instrument was done by comparing each of the items included in the instrument with the objectives and research questions enumerated in the research work. On the face validity, the researchers ensured that the items were worded and typed in a clear and concise form as well as logically and systematically arranged in line with the enumerated research questions and objectives. For reliability of the instrument, the same instrument was administered on forty (40) respondents. Cronbach technique was used to test the reliability of the instrument which produced 0.72, 0.66, 0.78, and 0.58 for academic stress, family structure, peer-pressure and social activities scales respectively. These indicated that the instruments were consistent, suitable, reliable and appropriate for the study.

Data Analysis Methods

Both inferential statistical tools were employed to analysis the generated data from the field. These comprised Pearson's product Moment Correlation to determine relationship existing between independent variables and dependent variable and Multiple Regression analysis to ascertain both joint and relative contribution of each independent variables on dependent variables.

RESULTS

Analysis Based on Research Questions
Research Question One: What is the relationships between social factors and academic stress among higher institutions students?
Table 1: Showing the Summary of Correlation Matrix between Independent Variables and Academic Stress among Higher Institutions Students

Variables	N	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Academic Stress	295	38.095	7.398	1.000						
Peer Pressure	295	19.780	4.202	.366**	.346**	1.000				
Social Activities	295	19.454	4.300	.344**	.271**	.383**	.645**	1.000		
Family Structure	295	1.695	.739	.158**	.078	.056	.020	.057	.159	1.000

**Significant at P<0.05
The results from table 4.2.1 showed that there was positive significant relationship between independent variables (peer pressure, social activities, family structure) and dependent variable (academic stress) of higher institutions students. Academic stress of higher institutions students had positive significant correlation with peer pressure (r= .366, p<0.05); social activities (r= .344, p<0.05) and family structure (r=.158, p<0.05) of the respondents.
Research Question Two: What is the joint contribution of social factors on academic stress among higher institutions students?
Table 2; Summary of Regression Analysis of the combined Independent Variables on Academic Stress among Higher Institutions Students

R =.726						
R Square = .528						
R Square (Adjusted)= .518						
Standard Error of Estimate= 5.13667						
Analysis of Variance						
Sources	**Sum of Square (SS)**	**Df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**	**Remark**
Regression	8492.356	6	1415.393		.000	

Residual	7598.986	288	26.385	53.643		S
Total	**16091.342**	**294**				

P<0.05

Table 4.2.2 revealed that the contribution of the three independent variables on the dependent variable (academic stress) when pulled together was significantly in the prediction of dependent variables. Also, the table showed a coefficient of Multiple Regression (R) of .729 and a Multiple R Square of .528. This means that 52.8% of the variance in the academic stress of higher institutions students is accounted for by all the three predictor variables used in the study when merged together. The significance of the joint contribution was tested at p<0.05 using the F- ratio at the degree of freedom ($F_{(6,294)}$= 53.643, p<0.05). It implied that the joint contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variables was significant and that other variables not included in this model may have accounted for the remaining variance of 47.2% criterion

Research Question Three: What is the relative contribution of each of the independent variables (peer pressure, social activities, family structure) on academic stress among higher institutions students?

Table 3: Summary of Relative Contribution of the Independent Variables on Academic Stress among Higher Institutions Students

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
Constant	-.680	2.370		-.287	.774
Peer Pressure	.307	.085	.175	3.600	.000
Social activities	.117	.096	.068	1.226	.221
Family structure	.362	.412	.036	.878	.381

Table 4.3 showed the relative contribution of the three independent variables used in the study on the dependent variable, expressed as standardized coefficients beta weights. The beta weight values shows influence of peer pressure, social activities, and family structure implies that the academic stress of higher institutions students can be managed by incentives and adequate promotion as a positive reinforcement of these three variables used. Using the standardized regression coefficient to determine the relative contributions of the independent variables to the prediction of the dependent variables (academic stress), peer pressure (β= .175, t= 3.600, p<0.05), was the most potent contributor to the prediction of academic stress of higher institutions students followed by social activities (β= .068, t= 1.226, p>0.05), and then followed by family structure (β= .036, t= .878, p>0.05).

Discussion of Findings

 From the information gathered from the respondents used in the study, research question one showed that there was positive significant relationship existing between social factors such as (family structure, peer pressure, social activities) and dependent variable (academic stress) of higher institution students in Oyo state. This indicates that social factors (family structure, peer-pressure and social activities) is related to academic stress. Agolla, (2009) identified the expectation from parents, friends or relatives as one of the causes of the stress to an individual. Some undergraduate students are often stressed because of interpersonal relationships with peer and they experience considerable difficulty when trying to adjust to the university social network. Also, Family structure is also one of the important sources of academic stress which includes the pressure placed upon students due to the expectations of parents for their child to do well academically (Deb, et al 2011). This often results in parents encouraging their child to study for a long periods of time in order to attain high grades or percentages in examinations. The study also revealed that there was relative contribution of each of independent variables (family structure, peer pressure, social activities) on dependent variable (academic stress) of higher institution students.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that social factors (family structure, peer-pressure and social activities) influence and contribute to stress. Social factors can help reduce stress when peer-pressure encourages students academically and parents motivates their students to learn and strive harder. When students also participate in social activities, it reduces the   tension or stress they face.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following suggestions are recommended.
  i.   Lecturers and counsellors should organize seminars and meetings for students in order to encourage, and advise them on how to manage academic stress and also tell them how to balance their academic exercises with their social life.
  ii.   Government and concerned stakeholders should ensure that there is employment opportunities to motivate students to learn and reduce academic stress. Government should also provide good academic and social infrastructure facilities for learning to reduce academic stress.

iii. School authorities and administrator should also make sure the academic curriculum is easy and not complex for the students to assimilate.

iv. Stress management as a course of study can be factored into the university curriculum for all programs to constantly equip both students and faculty members on the high risks of excessive and poorly managed stress.

v. The university administrative team should endeavor to organize seminars and workshops to sensitize students and faculty members on the ever emerging academic stressors as well as their efficient ways of managing them.

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