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AN ANALYSIS OF INFLUENCING SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS TOWARDS STRESS MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT:

This study looks into the effects of socio-demographic variables on stress management among university students, with a focus on gender, socioeconomic status (SES), age, cultural background, and family structure. It focuses on how these factors affect stress levels and coping techniques, with female students and those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds reporting more stress. Younger students have difficulty transitioning to university life, while older students must balance academic and personal demands. Cultural values and family dynamics shape stress perceptions and coping strategies. The findings emphasize the necessity of focused interventions in satisfying students' diverse needs, such as gender-specific programs, financial aid, culturally sensitive support, and family involvement. This study provides colleges with practical solutions for improving student well-being and stress management strategies.

Keywords: socio-demographic characteristics, stress management, higher education, gender, socioeconomic level, cultural background, family structure, and student well-being.

Introduction:

Stress among students in higher education has become an increasingly important issue, and understanding the influence of socio-demographic factors on stress management is crucial for developing effective interventions. Various socio- demographic variables, including gender, socioeconomic status (SES), age, cultural background, and family structure, significantly impact how stress is perceived and managed. Research has consistently shown that gender plays a key role, with female students generally reporting higher stress levels than their male counterparts, particularly in areas such as academic pressures and social relationships. Women often utilize emotion-focused coping strategies, such as seeking social support, while men may be more likely to engage in problem- focused strategies. This highlights the need for gender-specific interventions to address these disparities in stress management. Socioeconomic status (SES) is another crucial factor, with students from lower SES backgrounds facing increased stress due to financial pressures, limited access to resources, and greater academic demands. These students are often less equipped with effective coping strategies, which can hinder both their academic performance and mental health. Additionally, students in high-demand academic fields, such as medical studies, experience significantly higher levels of stress, anxiety, and depression, which are often linked to the intensity of their academic programs. Specialized programs, such as mindfulness-based stress reduction, have shown effectiveness in improving mental well-being for these students. Age and developmental stage also influence how students manage stress, with younger students, particularly those transitioning from high school to university, facing unique pressures. Older students, on the other hand, often juggle academic responsibilities with family and professional obligations, which can exacerbate their stress. Furthermore, cultural background plays a significant role in stress perception and coping methods. Students from collectivist cultures tend to rely more on family and community support, while those from individualistic societies may priorities self-reliance and personal achievement. This cultural variation underscores the need for culturally sensitive interventions. Finally, family structure and parental influence are key determinants of how students cope with stress. Students from supportive and stable family environments tend to manage stress better, while those from less supportive backgrounds often experience heightened stress levels. Overall, these socio-demographic factors shape how students experience and manage stress in higher education, and understanding their interplay is essential for developing personalized, effective interventions to promote student well-being.

Scope and Significance:

1. The study examines how gender, socioeconomic status (SES), age, cultural background, and family structure influence stress management in higher education.

2. Analysis of stress perception and coping mechanisms: This study looks at how students from different backgrounds perceive and deal with stress.

3. Students will provide quantitative and qualitative data for the study, including stress levels and coping techniques.

4. Diverse student populations: This study will examine stress management practices across demographics, such as gender, socioeconomic level, and cultural background.

Objectives:

1. Investigate how gender, money, age, culture, and family influence student stress.
2. To investigate stress coping among students from various socioeconomic backgrounds.
3. Evaluate the efficacy of existing stress management strategies.
4. To recommend stress management programs based on student demographics

LITERATURE REVIEWS

1. Gender and Stress Management

S NO.	AUTHORS NAME	YEAR	KEY CONTENT
1.	**Misra & McKean**	**2000**	Gender differences in stress management have been extensively documented in the literature. Female students tend to report higher levels of stress than male students, particularly in areas like academic pressure and social relationships.
2.	**Ferran Viñas Poch**	**2004**	The results suggested that a program or service should be developed within the university to manage students' expectations and have a beneficial effect on their moods. Their academic performance would eventually improve, their ability to adapt to university life would be improved, and suicidal thoughts would be prevented.
3.	**Nolen-Hoeksema, S.**	**2012**	Women are more likely than men to use emotion- focused coping strategies, such as seeking social support. These gender-based disparities in coping mechanisms point to the necessity for gender-specific stress management interventions in higher education.

2. Socioeconomic Status (SES) and Stress

S NO.	AUTHORS NAME	YEAR	KEY CONTENT
1.	**Robotham, D.**	**2008**	SES is a significant determinant of stress levels among university students. Students from lower SES backgrounds often experience heightened stress due to financial pressures, limited access to resources, and higher academic expectations.
2.	**Brougham, R. R., Zail, C. M., Mendoza, C. M., & Miller, J. R**	**2009**	Students from lower-income families reported higher levels of stress and fewer coping tools, emphasizing the difficulties they encounter in managing academic and personal responsibilities.

3	**Naresh Kumar and Gurdeep Kaur**	**2013**	The research explored the connection between Stress Management and Socio-Economic Status among students in Government Senior Secondary Schools. Utilizing scales developed by Dr. Pushpraj Singh, Dr. Anjali Srivastava, and Dr. S.P. Kulshrestha, data from 200 students in Ludhiana, Punjab, were assessed. The findings revealed no significant correlation, suggesting that Socio-Economic Status had no impact on Stress Management.

3. Stress in Medical and Other High-Demand Fields

S NO.	AUTHORS NAME	YEAR	KEY CONTENT
1.	**Muhamad Saiful Bahri Yusoff [a], Ahmad Fuad Abdul Rahim [a], Abdul Aziz Baba [b], Shaiful Bahari Ismail [b], Mohamad Najib Mat Pa [a], Ab Rahman Esa [c]**	**2013**	This study examined stress, anxiety, and depression among 743 medical school applicants. It discovered that 3.6% had severe stress, 54.5% had anxiety, and 1.9% had depression. Anxiety was associated with extracurricular activities, race, and academic variables. Stress and depression were linked to similar causes, with anxiety being influenced by interview-related stress.
2.	**de Vibe, M., Solhaug, I., Tyssen, R. *et al.***	**2013**	Female medical and psychology students experienced significant improvements in mental distress, study-related stress, overall well- being, and mindfulness after participating in the Mindfulness- Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program. These positive changes highlighted the program's effectiveness in enhancing students' mental health and coping abilities.
3	**Rika Sarfika, Wanda Azzahra, Yuanita Ananda, I Made Moh , Yanuar Saifudin, and Khatijah Lim Abdullah**	**2025**	This study looked at stress, sadness, and anxiety as markers of academic burnout among 250 Indonesian nursing students. Stress was the biggest predictor, followed by depression, while anxiety had no significant influence. Fourth-year students had the highest burnout rates. The findings showed the importance of focused interventions for advanced-year students.

4. Age, Developmental Stage, and Stress

S NO.	AUTHORS NAME	YEAR	KEY CONTENT
1	**Wintre, M. G., & Yaffe, M.**	**2000**	The way students manage stress is influenced by their age and developmental stage. Younger students, especially those migrating from high school to university, suffer a variety of pressures, including academic difficulty and social adjustment (Wintre & Yaffe, 2000). Older pupils or those with more life experience may have more effective coping methods and higher stress resilience. However, older students frequently balance other responsibilities, such as family or professional obligations, which can contribute to additional tensions.
2	**Dr. Azhar Mahmood, Shazia Zamir, Qurat-ulAin, Saira Nudrat, Fatima Zahoor**	**2013**	The study looked at the effects of age and management experience on occupational stress among 120 academic managers from higher education institutions in Punjab, Pakistan. Data for the Occupational Stress Inventory-Revised (OSIR) were obtained via mail and office visits. The findings revealed a substantial negative association between age, management experience, and perceived occupational stress, emphasizing their influence on stress perception.

3.	Paul O Ajao Rotimi Oguntayo Tunmise S Ajao Margaret A Adeyi	**2023**	This study investigated how resilience affects stress among undergraduate students at the University of Ilorin in Nigeria. The findings revealed that stress was influenced by gender, age, and academic level, while stronger resilience was associated with less stress. The study suggests focusing on developing pupils' resilience to assist them in managing academic problems.

5. Ethnic and cultural characteristics affect how people perceive and manage stress.

S NO.	AUTHORS NAME	YEAR	KEY CONTENT
1.	**Cheng, H., Zhang, J., & Sun, X**	**2013**	Cultural and ethnic backgrounds have a considerable impact on stress perception and coping techniques. Students from collectivist and community participation to cope with stress.
2.	**Reddy, M., Sreevani, R., & Geetha, P.**	**2015**	Students from individualistic societies may prioritize personal achievement and self-reliance. It suggests that cultural values influence students' coping methods and that understanding cultural variations is critical for effective stress management interventions.
3.	**Buil, J. M., Kösters, M. P., & Koot, H. M.**	**2023**	This study used the RCADS to assess anxiety and depression symptoms in Dutch youngsters. It discovered that, while scores were similar across genders, ethnic minority children (Moroccan, Turkish, Surinamese/Antillean) reported higher levels of several symptoms than Dutch children. Girls scored higher than boys, and there were disparities in social phobia, panic disorder, and separation anxiety among native Dutch and minority groups.

6. Parental Influence and Family Structure

S NO.	AUTHORS NAME	YEAR	KEY CONTENT
1.	**Parker, P. D., Martin, A. J., & Colmar, S.**	**2006**	Family dynamics are critical in determining how students deal with stress. A stable home environment and robust familial support networks are associated with improved mental health outcomes and stress management (Parker et al., 2006). Students from broken family structures or with little parental support, on the other hand, are more likely to be stressed and have fewer stress-management options. Family support is especially important for pupils from collectivist societies that value familial bonds.
2	**Adegboro JS, Ajayi NO**	**2022**	This study investigated the impact of parental stress from family structure and occupation on children's academic stress at Oroke High School in Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria. A sample of 313 students was chosen. The results showed that systolic blood pressure increased prior to exams and reduced thereafter. It was suggested that parents create a stress-free home atmosphere to prevent transferred tension and support their children's education.
3	**EMILY ADHIAMBO OKOTH**	**2023**	This study looked at how parental marital status influences anxiety among KCA University students in Nairobi. It discovered that parental marital status had a considerable impact on anxiety levels, with students reporting relatively low anxiety. The study also found that avoidance is a prevalent coping mechanism. It suggested that the university establish a counseling office, raise mental health awareness, and maintain confidentiality to encourage students to seek treatment.

OTHERS

SN .	AUTHORS NAME	YEAR	KEY CONTENT
1.	**Anderson, N. B., & McNeilly, M.**	**1991**	This study looked at sociodemographic differences in psychophysiological activity, namely age, gender, and Black/White differences in heart rate, blood pressure, and electrodermal activity, as well as age-related changes in sexual functioning. It underlined the significance of a contextual approach to understanding these discrepancies and encouraged additional research into the biological, psychological, behavioral, environmental, and cultural aspects that influence psychophysiological responses.
2.	**Pinderhughes, E. E., Dodge, K. A., Bates, J. E., Pettit, G. S., & Zelli, A.**	**2000**	This study examined the characteristics that influence parents' harsh discipline, utilizing data from 978 kindergarten parents. It discovered that opinions about spanking, child aggression, and family stress influenced discipline, with lower-income and African American parents reporting greater punishment. Parents' disciplinary tactics are influenced by their societal experiences, with some being more reactive and others employing more explicit strategies.
3.	**Andrew Steptoe.**	**2007**	This study discovered that depressed symptoms differed by country, with higher levels in Pacific-Asian regions and lower levels in Western countries. Poor socioeconomic status, a lack of control, financial disparity, and less individualistic cultures have all been associated with increased depression rates, emphasizing the importance of personal, societal, and cultural influences.
4.	**Nazan Bilgel MD.**	**2008**	The survey discovered that 27.1% of respondents reported moderate or severe depression, 47.1% had moderate or severe anxiety, and 27% had moderate or severe stress.
			Female students expressed greater worry and tension. First and second-year students scored higher on depression, anxiety, and stress than other year groups. Furthermore, students who were content with their education reported lower levels of melancholy, worry, and stress than those who were dissatisfied.
5.	**Esben Strodl**	**2015**	This research of 190 high school students in Kolkata discovered that 63.5% reported academic stress, primarily as a result of family pressure. Approximately 33% demonstrated mental symptoms, whereas 81.6% experienced exam anxiety. Academic stress has been connected to mental health difficulties, underlining the importance of pressure- reduction techniques.
6.	**Anupama K*, Sa rada D**	**2018**	This study examined academic stress in 240 10th-grade children (120 boys and 120 girls) in Tirupati aged 14 to 15. The study discovered that both boys and girls had significant levels of stress, with girls having more stress in thinking-related areas and boys experiencing more physical stress. The study also discovered significant differences in behavior-related stress between males and females. It implies that stress management programs and adjustments to the exam system are required to provide a healthy atmosphere for students.
7.	**Fernanda Carneiro Mussi**	**2020**	A larger proportion of college students reported moderate to high levels of global stress. Students in the sixth through tenth semesters reported higher levels of stress than those in the first through fifth semesters, notably in Practical Activities, Professional Communication ($p = 0.014$), Environment ($p = 0.053$), and Vocational Training ($p = 0.000$). In the multivariate analysis, the characteristics most strongly related with increased stress levels were being in the sixth to tenth semesters, being female, earning one minimum wage or less per
			month, and having an income that was deemed insufficient.

8..	**An Jie Lye Peng Yen Liew Hidayah Mohd Fadzil Chan Choong Foong***	**2022**	This study investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and psychological capital (PsyCap) among final- year chemical engineering students. It discovered that EI substantially predicted PsyCap, whereas demographics had no influence. Both EI and PsyCap were modest, indicating that EI-focused interventions can assist students in managing academic and professional obstacles.
9.	**Marcio Alexander Castillo-Díaz**	**2024**	This study looked at the relationships between gender, health practices, and psychological distress among 4,203 Honduran college students. It discovered that women and students in health areas exhibited healthier habits, but being female, older, and having pre-existing health issues were associated with increased discomfort. Healthier habits were connected with lower levels of distress, indicating the need for interventions to promote student health.
10.	**Luyao Xie [a], Pho enix K.H. Mo [a], Zixin Wang [a], Xiaobin g Tian [b], Joseph T.F. Lau [c d]**	**2024**	The study expanded our understanding of how social support and loneliness mediate the relationship between MSM status and depressive symptoms in Chinese male university students, providing valuable insights for developing interventions to improve their mental health.
11.	**Srivastava, K., Mandal, M., & Bhati, R.**	**2025**	This study looks at the reasons for suicidal thoughts among Indian students preparing for competitive exams, as well as the impact of stress management. A survey of 240 students revealed a significant correlation between stress management and suicide ideation, as well as demographic characteristics that influence these ideas. Effective stress management can prevent suicidal thoughts and benefit peers. Future studies could investigate additional aspects

Analysis and Discussion:

This research explores how various socio-demographic factors, including gender, socioeconomic status (SES), age, cultural background, and family structure, influence stress management among university students. While prior studies have looked at the effects of these factors individually, a significant gap exists in comprehending how they intersect and jointly affect stress levels and coping strategies. Most research primarily concentrates on one factor at a time, such as the differences between genders in stress perception or how SES contributes to academic pressure, without thoroughly investigating how these attributes overlap and intensify the experience of stress within higher education. For instance, it is widely recognized that female students typically report elevated levels of stress compared to their male peers, especially concerning academic performance and social dynamics; however, few studies take into account how gender interacts with other socio-demographic aspects like age or family structure to influence stress management approaches. Moreover, students from lower SES backgrounds experience heightened stress due to financial limitations, restricted access to resources, and increased academic demands. Nevertheless, there is scant research on how these financial challenges may intersect with cultural backgrounds or developmental transitions (for example, the shift from high school to university) to worsen stress levels and impact coping strategies.

Another notable gap pertains to the influence of family structure and support systems on stress management. Although some research acknowledges that students from supportive family settings tend to experience lower stress levels, the interplay of family dynamics with other socio-demographic factors, such as cultural background or socioeconomic status, remains insufficiently explored. For example, students from collectivist cultures, who may depend significantly on family support, might handle stress differently than those from individualistic societies, where self-reliance is prioritized. Grasping these intricate interactions is vital for creating effective and customized stress management programs. Furthermore, current interventions at universities often tend to be generalized and fail to adequately address the diverse needs of students stemming from various socio-demographic backgrounds. This gap in research underscores the necessity for interventions that account for the collective effects of multiple socio-demographic factors, not just to alleviate stress but also to promote resilience and mental health among different student demographics. By addressing this shortcoming, this study provides a more thorough framework for understanding stress management in the context of higher education.

It urges universities to move away from uniform approaches and to develop interventions that are attuned to the socio-demographic characteristics of their students. These could encompass gender-focused initiatives, culturally aware support services, financial assistance aimed at low-SES students, and family-oriented programs designed to help mitigate stress that is passed from parents to children. By considering these elements, universities can foster more inclusive and supportive environments, ultimately enhancing student well-being and academic performance.

Future Recommendations

Universities should provide personalized stress management programs based on their students' socio-demographics. For example, tailored courses or materials might be developed for different age groups, ethnic backgrounds, and genders, addressing their distinct stressors and coping mechanisms. Such programs might combine mindfulness practices, peer support groups, and academic counselling to provide students with the tools they need to manage stress effectively.

Enhance Financial Support Systems: As socioeconomic status (SES) has a major impact on stress levels, schools should extend financial aid programs for low- income students, including scholarships, grants, and emergency money. Partnerships with local businesses or organizations could also provide

students with internships, paid positions, or discounts, which would help to alleviate financial constraints and stress. Integrate Family Support in the University.

Well-Being Initiatives: Universities should consider incorporating family involvement into their mental health initiatives. Family engagement programs may include workshops to educate families about stress and mental health, as well as outreach services to assist families in providing emotional and academic support to students. Recognizing the impact of family dynamics may improve students' stress management strategies, especially for those from collectivist societies.

Cultural Competency Training for Faculty and Counselors: To better support students from varied backgrounds, colleges should engage in cultural competency training for faculty, counselors, and administrative personnel. This training would provide them with the knowledge and skills required to understand and address the cultural differences that influence stress perception and coping processes. Furthermore, colleges should establish multicultural assistance centers where students from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds can access services suited to their specific needs.

Longitudinal Studies to Track Stress Trends: Future studies should examine how sociodemographic characteristics vary throughout a student's academic career and impact stress management. Universities can obtain insights into how stress evolves and what interventions have the most long-term impact by collecting data over time, allowing them to better tailor their support services to suit the changing requirements of their students. By applying these guidelines, colleges may create a more supportive, inclusive, and resilient academic environment that not only tackles present stressors but also provides students with the tools they need to face future challenges effectively.

Conclusion

The study of socio-demographic factors influencing stress management in higher education demonstrates the diversity and complexity of student stress. How pupils perceive and manage stress is influenced by their gender, social status, age, cultural background, and family structure. These findings underline the importance of universities implementing tailored, inclusive, and culturally sensitive interventions to help students from diverse backgrounds effectively. Personalized stress management programs, financial support systems, family participation, and cultural competence training for staff are critical to building an environment that promotes student well-being. Furthermore, ongoing research and longitudinal studies will assist schools in adapting to changing student needs and ensuring long-term success in managing academic and emotional stress. By using these measures, colleges can improve their students' mental health and academic performance, resulting in a healthier, more supportive educational environment.

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