



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Psychology

IMPACT OF NEGATIVE EMOTIONS ON ACADEMIC SCORES AMONG UNDERGRADUATES STUDENTS

KEY WORDS: Academics, Beck, Depression, Inventory, Students, University

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ABSTRACT A pilot study was conducted to determine the effects of negative emotions caused due to depression on the academic performance of undergraduate students. The sample population consisted of 20 students from an Engineering college, affiliated to VTU (Visvesvaraya Technological University). BDI (Beck's Depression Inventory) has been used in the study to measure the level of depression among the sample. The results of the study proves that there exists a relation between the negative emotions of depression and the academic performance of the students. The findings of the current study would assist counsellors, psychologists, educators and researchers in developing strategies to enhance the mental well-being.

INTRODUCTION

Depression is a mental health condition due to which an individual feels sad or blue and lasts for a short period of time. The negative emotions caused due to depression can interfere the daily routines of individual (National Institute of Mental Health, 2011). This can even lead to fatigue, suicide, and decreased ability to do work and attend school (Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, 2013). The negative emotions can disrupt one's thinking process, emotional reactions and day to day behaviours (Williams, 1984; Farby, 1980).

Some of the factors that contribute to the negative emotions such as loneliness, lack of social support from family, peer group, neighbours, financial stress, academic stress and many more.

India is at the peak of becoming the suicide capital of the globe with more than 90 percent of deaths due to various categories of depression such as bipolar depressive disorder. Nearly 350,000,000 people are affected with some form of mental health issue. 11% of adolescents are affected by depression in the age of 18. 70% of women across the globe experience negative emotions due to depression when compared with men.

Estimation of 16,000,000 adults had at least one major depression in the year 2012. This count is approximately 6.9% of adults in the country. Approximately 30% of graduates reported negative emotions which disrupted their academic ability. Almost 80% of depressed individuals does not seek treatment for their mental illness.

The highest reported age group is 18 to 25, in which 38 to 49% had depression and anxiety, 10- 21% had suicidal thoughts, 20 to 30% faced alcohol abuse, self-injury and eating disorders and 64% dropped out of college due to mental health issues (ACHA, 2007; APA, 2010; Blanco et al, 2008; CDC, 2002; NAMI, 2012). In India- 45% of suicides involve 15- 29 yrs old; 5.3% involves graduates and post graduates (NCRB, 2007). In the year 2006, 16 students committed suicide in India in a day due to examination stress (TOI, 2008).

LITERATURE REVIEW

In a survey conducted by Holmbeck et. al, 1988, it was confirmed that many adolescents have frequent fights with their parents and are difficult to handle. They are more vulnerable to frequent mood swings, disruptions and risky behaviour. Sometimes they engage themselves in activities that are not only harmful to themselves but also to the people around them. Adolescents suffer from several psychological distortions, substance abuse and personal issues which affects their academics.

Depression makes an individual sad, weak, frustrated, disappointed, helpless and hopeless (Sarason et. al., 2002). Individuals who are effected with negative emotions would be

unable to perform well in academics as they may not have the courage in what they do and may feel that they do not have the capability in achieving the standard of performance set for them. The students might perceive things negatively and consider themselves as failures. This condition can definitely contribute to many serious problems in their academic life such as poor grades. Studies have shown that academic performance was found to be affected by many symptoms of depression, such as difficulty in concentration, lack of interest and motivation (Fine & Carlson, 1992).

Surtees, Wainright, and Pharoah (2002), in their survey, found these conditions reduced the likelihood of achieving a first-class degree among first-year students, although this relationship disappeared when adjustment was made for other factors such as homesickness. Reports suggested that negative emotions caused due to depression may be a contributing factor to poor academic performance (Fine & Carlson, 1994). Several methods and approaches have been conducted to investigate the relationship between depression and academic achievement.

For instance, Stark and Brookman (1994) obtained ratings of students' academic performance and severity of students' depressive symptoms from respective parents and teachers. The former was an instrument used to measure student's academic performance and study habit, while ratings of severity of students' depressive symptoms were used to measure the depression level of the students. The result of the studies proved that there existed an inverse relationship between academic achievement and depression. This perspective was then supported by Zaid, Chan, and Ho (2007).

In a study conducted by Sherina et. al., 2003, it was found that the academic performance of 41.9% of students in a public institution in Malaysia was found to be affected by depression

Objective of the Study

The objective of the study is to find the relationship of impact of negative emotions with the academic achievements of students.

Hypothesis

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested:
 H₀: There is no effect of Depression on Academic achievement.
 H₁: There is significant effect of Depression on Academic achievement.

METHODOLOGY

A pilot study was conducted by considering a sample of 20 undergraduate students of VTU University, of which 15 were considerable for further analysis. The sample for the study was chosen based on random sampling technique. The sample was divided into two groups- low achieving and high achieving groups. Low achieving group refers to students who obtained percentage

below 60%, and high achieving group refers to students who obtained percentage of 60% and above. The study used Beck's Depression Inventory questionnaire to collect information on level of depression.

Testing of Hypothesis

Descriptive statistics used in this quantitative research work were percentages, means, and standard deviations. For the analysis, Independent sample t-tests were used to measure differences between low and high achieving groups with respect to level of depression. The hypothesis was formulated as the initial step. A test statistic should be defined to test the validity of the hypothesis. The test statistic is computed from sample information. Here, t-test is chosen as statistical test and a standard value of Significance level (0.05). A decision rule is used to accept or reject the null hypothesis.

RESULTS

Two types of data analysis were performed to identify the differences in level of depression between high and low achieving undergraduate students. First, the means and standard deviations were obtained to determine the extent to which these two groups reported experiencing depression. Second, t-tests were conducted to evaluate whether the differences in levels of depression between low and high were significant or not. The result of the same has been tabulated as shown below.

Table 1: Descriptive and inferential statistics report on level of depression

Measurements	Low Achieving Students			High Achieving Students			Level of Significance=0.05	
	Mean	SD	DF	Mean	SD	DF	T test	p value
Depression	26.67	11.93	2	11.83	8.86	11	2.45	0.014

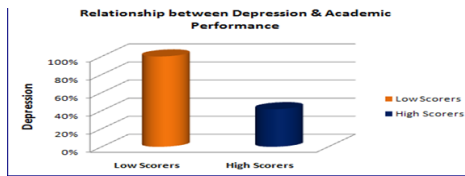


Figure 1: Relationship between depression and Academic Performance of students

Table 1 shows the analysis of data collected during the study. It shows that the mean score for depression in low achieving students was 26.67 (SD = 11.93) and the mean score in high achieving students was 11.83 (SD = 8.86). Independent sample t-test yielded a significant difference in Depression between the low-and high-achieving group, $t(15) = 2.45$. Since $p < 0.05$, the null hypothesis is rejected. In other words, there is effect of Depression on student's academic performance. The results of the test showed that all low scorers had depression and only 40% of high scorers showed signs of depression. This result indicates that low achievers have higher level of depression compared to high scorers (See Figure 1).

DISCUSSION

The current study was conducted to examine the effect of negative emotions caused due to depression among undergraduate students. 20 undergraduate students, both males and females, were selected as participants in this study by making use of random sampling technique. By having knowledge and understanding on this research, it could help educators, counselors, and psychologist to design and develop proper intervention program to reduce the impact of psychological issues faced by students.

The students themselves could benefit from the study. Information and ideas gained from this research could help them to face, manage, and handle the mental issues. Therefore, enhancing knowledge and strategies in controlling psychological problems among students can help them to increase their academic

performance.

CONCLUSION

The present generation students faces many mental health issues. The current study is an attempt to understand the relationship between the negative emotions due to depression and academic performance of the students. The population of the study was divided into low-achieving group and high-achieving groups. The data provided by 20 students were subjected to analysis. The findings of the present study indicated that low scorers reported higher level of depression compared to high scorers. This finding of the study can help to design programs and strategies to boost students' performance in academic life.

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