

# “A STUDY OF PLACEMENT STRESS OF STUDENTS PURSUING PROFESSIONAL COURSES”

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## ABSTRACT

*Stress is a necessary and unavoidable aspect of daily living. A person's response towards stress depends on whether an event is appraised as a challenge or a threat. Challenging stimulus can lead to positive outcomes such as motivation and improved task performance while threatening ones or distress can result in anxiety, depression, social dysfunction and even suicidal intention. Students, after finishing schooling may either get selected to professional courses or may enter non-professional courses. Usually entry into the latter may either be by choice or due to not being to be selected in professional courses despite making an effort and that results in frustrations which leads to stress. On the other hand, demands for high quality performance may be imposed on students in professional courses leading to different types of stresses among them. This study aims at investigating the factors that are responsible for causing stress among students pursuing professional courses when looking out for placements. The research also aims to provide students with different ways for practicing positive and self-motivating attitude. Online survey was conducted to collect the data. Various factors were included in the study to determine the main causes of stress among the students seeking out for placements. The researcher found that the main factors causing stress among students were related to academic work and peer pressure.*

**Keywords:** Academic Stress, Financial Stress, Placements

## Introduction

Stress is a necessary and unavoidable aspect of daily living. A person's response towards stress depends on whether an event is appraised as a challenge or a threat. Challenging stimulus can lead to positive outcomes such as motivation and improved task performance while threatening ones or distress can result in anxiety, depression, social dysfunction and even suicidal intention.

Stress signals fall into four categories:

- **Feelings:** anxiety, irritability, fear, moodiness, embarrassment.
- **Thoughts:** self-criticism, difficulty concentrating or making decisions, forgetfulness, preoccupation with the future, repetitive thoughts, fear of failure.
- **Behaviors:** crying, increased or decreased appetite, "snapping" at friends, acting impulsively, alcohol or other drug use (including smoking), nervous laughter, teeth grinding etc.
- **Physical:** sleep disturbances, tight muscles, headaches, fatigue, cold or sweaty hands, back or neck problems, stomach distress etc.

Understanding your stress level is important. If nothing in life causes you any stress or excitement, you may become bored or may not be living up to your potential on the other hand, if everything in your life, or large portions of your life, cause you stress, you may experience health or mental problems that will make your behavior worse. Recognizing when you are stressed and managing your stress can greatly improve your life. There are many reasons that cause stress from in a person's life, from physical (such as fear of something dangerous) to emotional (such as worry over your family or job). Identifying what may be causing you stress is often the first step in learning how to better deal with your stress. Sometimes the stress comes from inside, rather than outside. You can stress yourself out just by worrying about things. Some of the most common sources of stress in general are: survival stress, internal stress, environmental stress, fatigue and overwork, fear and uncertainty, attitudes and perceptions, unrealistic expectations, change.

College students face a significant amount of stress due to various factors. Many aspects of college life, as well as the stress that comes with it, can all impact a student's physical and emotional health. Different types of students stress are academic performance pressure, financial stress, multitasking stress, facing the future, increased responsibility and independence, peer pressure.

## Factors causing stress among students looking out for placements are:

1. **Lack of Time:** Time Management is the main aspect that every student needs to organize. A lack of time management also causes stress on students, whether secondary or tertiary. Balancing

academics, dating, peer activities, and home life can be difficult. Toss in a part-time job, and the challenge increases.

2. **Academic Stress:**The pressure to perform academically is one of the primary causes of teenage stress, particularly for college students. Coursework can be very demanding and the competition for earning top marks can be very fierce. Students who want to do their best and who are planning to apply for admission to graduate school can be under a great deal of pressure as they struggle to excel in school.
3. **Financial Stress:**Any college students experience financial stress. This can involve the struggle to find sufficient money to pay for tuition, as well as securing the funds needed to cover the costs of living while attending school. Even those students who are able to qualify for sufficient financial aid to cover immediate college costs have to cope with the financial stress of knowing that they will have to face paying back a large sum of money following graduation. The debt associated with student loans can be a source of stress, even long before finishing school and entering the job market.
4. **Self-Imposed:**Many students suffer from self-imposed stress like lack of confidence.

### Different ways the students can manage their stress

Regular anxious moments can adversely affect a college student's mental and physical state. It is becoming a common occurrence for students to undergo emotional or mental meltdowns, which unfortunately could lead to cases of suicide. Some of the ways to cope with stress are:

1. **Manage yourself:** Most people talk about managing time in order to have more of what life has to offer, but it's only in managing ourselves that we really see a difference in our lives and are able to handle any stress life throws at us. Manage yourself and other things will fall into place.
2. **Have Achievable Objectives:** It is important to adequately prepare for failure. It is not possible to perform optimally all of the time, so it is important not to be over ambitious (because it may lead to frustration when goals are not achieved). To avoid stress, simply be true to yourself and set goals that are within reach. Also, give your best and be content with the results of your efforts.
3. **Exercise:** Health and vitality depend on your body's ability to use oxygen and food effectively. One of the ways to help that happen is through exercise. Exercise also releases endorphins, which have been shown to improve one's mood, making it a great way to deal with stress! Move your body every day!
4. **Relax yourself:** What do you do to really relax? Do you even take the time, or know how to? Meditation, listening to soothing music, spending time with friends and people you love, conscious breathing... these are all ways to really relax. If your mind is pulled to the things that stress you, you aren't really relaxed! Take time to be absolutely quiet every day.
5. **Rest yourself:** It's important to take breaks. There's a reason why employers give you several during the day. Take them. While you are responsible for your own study schedule, it's critical to your success that you take time to rest — away from your desk — takes naps if you're feeling so! It's also important to get sufficient sleep. Most people need at least seven hours each night. Good sleep habits include having a set bed time and a set waking time.
6. **Be aware of yourself:** Pay attention to your body. It gives you clues as to what it needs, and when something is wrong with it. Also, know what makes you feel great, and what makes you feel lousy. Being able to recognize them will help you make great decisions for yourself. Also, listen to your intuition. Your wise self never gives you the wrong answers. Your head, on the other hand, will almost always try to talk you out of it. Wake up and pay attention.

### Literature Review

Ahmed, U., Riaz, A., & Ramzan, M. (2013) in their study "Assessment of Stress & Stressors: A Study on Management Students" had discussed that Pressure, strain, anxiety, constant worry, nervous tension, depression, social dysfunction, trauma and even suicidal intention are the common terms that students are habitual to represent their stress with. Stress has been widely recognized in the academic literature. The crucial intention of this investigation is to explore the basic stress and stressors among the graduate management students in Pakistan and the degree of stress that they feel with reference to academic level. Academic, institutional and environmental stress among students has long been researched on, and researchers have identified different stressors. The learning auxiliary tries to make an in-depth inquire into each component of academic stress such as numerous assignments, antagonism with other students,

disappointment, failures and poor relationships with other students or lecturers" or family problems at home, curriculum and instruction, team work related issues, assessment, and placement, to identify the micro issues that are causing stress. Pandya, B. U., Deshpande, R. C., & Karani, A. (2012) "A Study on Impact of Academic Stress on MBA Students of Gujarat Technological University" the objective of this study is to explore the components of academic stress among the Masters of Business Administration students of GTU affiliated colleges. Many researchers have identified the components of Academic stress and different stressors which impact the students. This study further tries to enlighten each component of academic stress such as curriculum and instruction, team work related issues, assessment, and placement, impact on performance and outcomes of Academic stress. Three major stressors have been identified which affect the performance and three major outcomes of stress. Around twelve micro issues have been identified under the curriculum and instruction component while three stressors were prioritized related to team work; seven sub issues regarding assessment and three micro issues under placement components of academic stress. The sample comprises of 118 Masters of Business Administration students of GTU affiliated colleges from all the five zones of Gujarat. Data was collected through structured academic stress questionnaire. Kadiravan, S., & Kumar, K. (2012) Enhancing stress coping skills among college students. Stress exists in every part of our life. The prevalence of stress is increasing among students in recent years. This is due to various factors such as increased pressure, competition, decreased resources, inadequate family support, exposed to violence through media and increased use of alcohol as well as drugs. The transition from adolescence to adulthood is a difficult journey filled with various risk, rapid changes, and seemingly endless choices. Coping skills can help the youth to navigate through these challenges. These would help students to be self-reliant, solve problems and make informed choices, which in turn promote their physical and psychological well-being. To ascertain the efficacy of a stress coping programme as a means for decreasing perceived stress and increasing the proactive attitude towards stress. This study adopted quasi-experimental design. Forty-four under graduate computer science students were assigned to control group and forty-four students were assigned to experimental group. A training module was developed to promote proactive coping strategies and general self-efficacy and utilized as an experimental intervention. From the result, it is found that the developed training is effective in enhancing proactive coping and general self-efficacy of college students. Nandamuri, P. P., & Ch, G. (2011) Sources of Academic Stress, A Study on Management Students. The objective of this study is to explore the components of academic stress among the post graduate management students. Academic stress among students has long been researched on, and researchers have identified different stressors. The study further tries to make an in-depth investigation into each component of academic stress such as curriculum and instruction, team work related issues, assessment, and placement, to identify the micro issues that are causing stress. Around twelve micro issues have been identified under the curriculum and instruction component while four stressors were prioritized related to team work; five sub issues regarding assessment and three micro issues under placement components of academic stress. The sample comprises of 500 postgraduate management students from various management institutes spread across the Warangal district of Andhra Pradesh in India. Data was collected through self-designed academic stress questionnaire based on previous models available.

### Research Objectives

The research is focused on the following major objectives.

1. To identify factors responsible for stress in final year students of both under graduate and post graduate courses looking for placements.
2. To propose strategies both at individual and institution level to deal with stress in final year students of both under graduate and post graduate courses looking for placements.

### Research Methodology

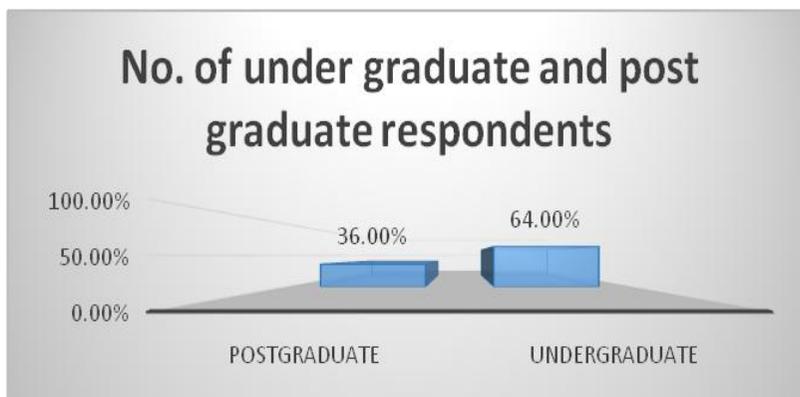
The area of study was "Professional Students". The population of the study was students in final year of their studies pursuing for placements. For this study final year students studying in both undergraduate & post graduate courses in self-financed institutes in Delhi and NCR were considered. A Sample of 100 students were considered in the study. The data was collected by circulating the questionnaire to the students and there were asked to fill it up. The sampling method used was Convenience Sampling. Primary Data was collected with the help of questionnaire. An E- Questionnaire has been used in the study. It was prepared by researcher on Google drive and also was sent through E-mail correspondences. It contained close-ended questions. All questions were judged on five point scale ranging from *Never* to *Very Often*. To analyze and interpret the results or findings of the study the researcher has used MS Excel.

**Analysis and Interpretation**

**Number of undergraduate and postgraduate respondents:**

COURSE	NO. OF RESPONDENTS (N=100)	PERCENTAGE
Under Graduate	24	40%
Post Graduate	36	60%

**Table 1: Number of Under Graduate and Post Graduate respondents**

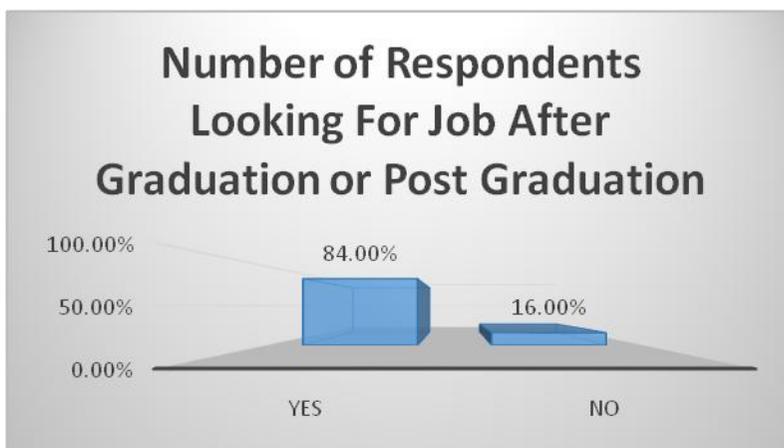


**Figure1: Number of Under Graduate and Post Graduate respondents**

**Number of respondents looking for job after graduation or post-graduation**

LOOKING FOR JOB	NO. OF RESPONDENTS (N=100)	PERCENTAGE
Yes	84	84%
No	16	16%

**Table 2: Number of Respondents Looking For Job after Graduation or Post Graduation**



**Figure 2: Number of Respondents Looking For Job after Graduation or Post Graduation**

**You have too many assignments**

	Percentage of responses (%)
NEVER	8.00
RARELY	20.00
SOMETIMES	36.00
OFTEN	16.00
VERY OFTEN	20.00
TOTAL	100.0

**Table 3: College assignments**

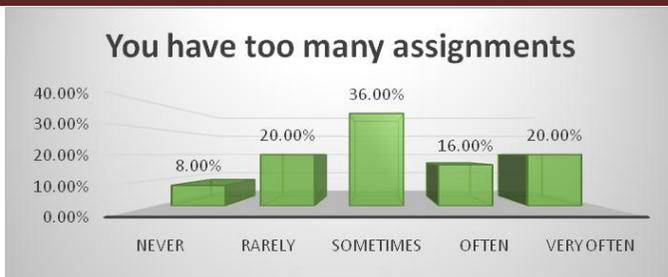


Figure 3: College assignments

**You feel there is too much to do with tuition and college homework**

	Percentage of responses (%)
NEVER	28.00
RARELY	28.00
SOMETIMES	24.00
OFTEN	16.00
VERY OFTEN	4.00
TOTAL	100.0

Table 4: Tuition and college homework

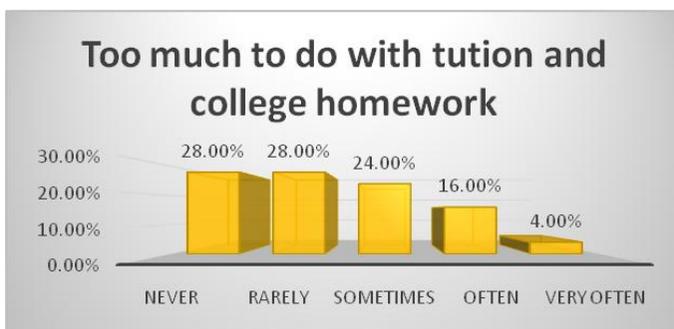


Figure 4: Tuition and college homework

**You have trouble getting along with your family members**

	Percentage of responses (%)
NEVER	40.00
RARELY	28.00
SOMETIMES	24.00
OFTEN	4.00
VERY OFTEN	4.00
TOTAL	100.0

Table 5: Trouble with family members

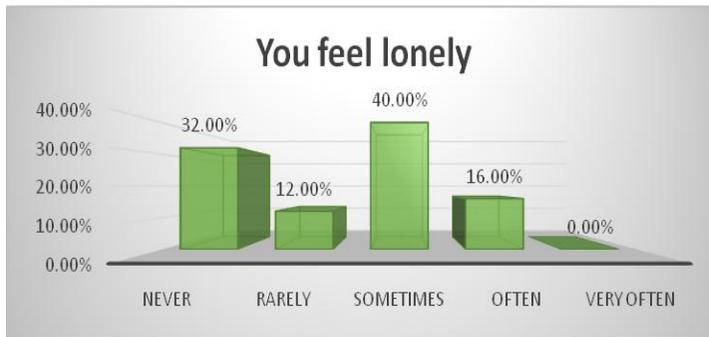


Figure 5: Trouble with family members

**You feel lonely**

	Percentage of responses (%)
NEVER	32.00
RARELY	12.00
SOMETIMES	40.00
OFTEN	16.00
VERY OFTEN	0.00
TOTAL	100.0

**Table 6: Emotional state**

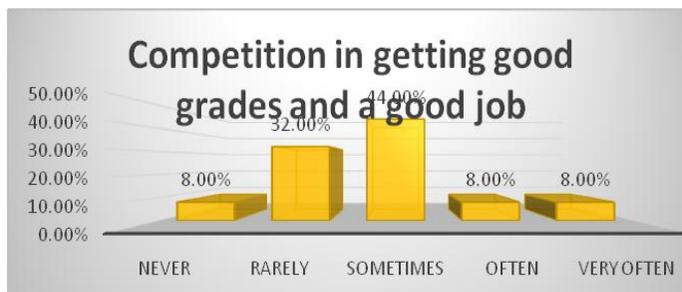


**Figure 6: Emotional state**

**You feel insecure because of too much competition in getting good grades and a good job**

	Percentage of responses (%)
NEVER	8.00
RARELY	32.00
SOMETIMES	44.00
OFTEN	8.00
VERY OFTEN	8.00
TOTAL	100.0

**Table 6: Competition**



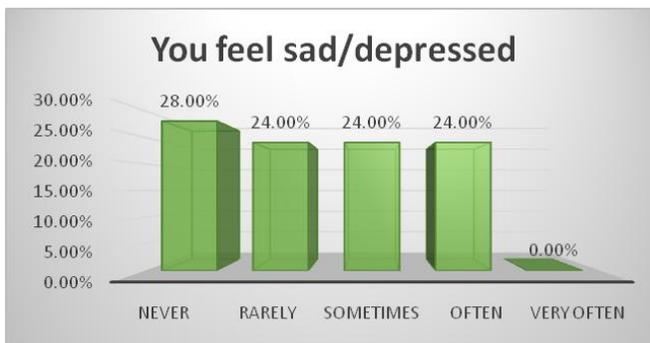
**Figure 6: Competition**

**You feel sad/ depressed**

	Percentage of responses (%)
NEVER	28.00
RARELY	24.00
SOMETIMES	24.00
OFTEN	24.00

VERY OFTEN	0.00
TOTAL	100.0

**Table 7: Feeling of sadness/ depression**



**Figure7: Feeling of sadness/ depression**

**You feel have you too much pressure because of your studies and examinations**

	Percentage of responses (%)
NEVER	12.00
RARELY	8.00
SOMETIMES	32.00
OFTEN	8.00
VERY OFTEN	40.00
TOTAL	100.0

**Table 8:Pressure of studies and examinations**



**Figure8: Pressure of studies and examinations**

**Findings**

The various factors responsible for stress among under graduate and post graduate students seeking for placements are:

- Students felt that they had too many assignments.
- Respondents rarely felt that there was too much to do with tuition and college homework.
- Students felt that they sometimes feel lonely.
- Respondents said that they sometimes feel insecure because of too much competition in getting good grades and a good job.
- Students very often felt that they had too much pressure because of their studies and examinations.
- Respondents felt that they no longer do things once they very much liked to do.

**Suggestions**

At an Individual level one can follow the following methods to reduce stress which are:

- **Meditation:** The art of meditation is very relaxing and can release the stress hormones and make the student feel good about it.
- **Yoga:** Students can take up yoga as it the ancient technique of staying fit and healthy can work wonders if applied.

- **Optimistic Attitude:** A positive attitude can actually change the situation from worse to normal and rather good.
- **Seek Guidance from a senior:** It is always advisable to seek guidance from someone who has an experience in the same field.

At an Institutional level one can follow the following methods to reduce stress which are:

- **Introducing Recreational Activities:** Students should be ask to take part in recreational activities apart from studies like role play, case study, etc. that gives them a practical sense of business.
- **Career Counselling:** It is preferred to counsel the students so that they could choose their specialization areas as per their interest. For example: a UG student might want to pursue higher studies rather than taking up a job.
- **Confidence Boost up Workshops:** Workshops that can be a power booster for final year PG & UG students looking for placements should be taken into consideration to lower down the placement stress.
- **Interaction Sessions with Experts:** The college/ Institute should make an effort to conduct an interaction session for the final year students with Top Management Gurus, Business tycoons excelling in their particular domains.

## Conclusion

Stress is a necessary and unavoidable aspect of daily living. A person's response towards stress depends on whether an event is appraised as a challenge or a threat. Challenging stimulus can lead to positive outcomes such as motivation and improved task performance while threatening ones or distress can result in anxiety, depression, social dysfunction and even suicidal intention.

Think about what many college students go through. Leaving the family home, feeling intense pressure to obtain high grades in connection with career aspirations, taking final exams, trying to establish a romantic/social life, dealing with (often very high) costs of college and possibly working at a job during the school year. What kind of jobs (if any) students can get after college also remains tenuous given the multi-year recession.

UG & PG Students looking for placements should deal with the stress in a much effective manner so that their life and work is not affected by it. They should learn to manage their stress and cope with it. Also, institutes and individuals should adopt various methods so that student can deal with stress. There are many ways in which stress can be reduced, for instance practicing yoga can relieve a person from tension and anxiety. Student stress is an issue that needs to be dealt with proper care. With the help of family, friends, and perhaps campus stress-management resources, many students are able to keep their stress levels relatively under control or even thrive in the college setting. However, for some students, the challenges and frustrations of campus life appear to lead to severe emotional problems.

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