



AN EXAMINATION OF PERCEIVED SOURCES OF ACADEMIC STRESS: THE CASE OF MANAGEMENT STUDENTS OF BAHIR DAR UNIVERSITY, ETHIOPIA

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Abstract

This study aimed to examine the components of academic stress that are likely to be experienced by management students in Bahir Dar University in Ethiopia. It is an in-depth investigation into each component of academic stress, i.e., identifying the micro issues that are causing stress in each of the main components of academic stress in a higher learning environment. Stressors related to curriculum and instruction, team work, assessment and placement were deeply explored. The sample comprises of 211 students that spread across the regular and continuing education programs of the department. Data were collected through self-administered questionnaire randomly distributed to respondents. It found that curriculum and instruction related stressors accounted for the highest source of stress among students followed by assessment related stressors. Consequently, the curriculum and instruction related stressor 'studying for tests and exams' topped the sources of academic stress among management students. The findings also revealed that students' major stressors are academic workload, teaching methodology and aids, academic performance, lack of confidence, difficulty of courses, fear of failure, inadequate resources, lack of preparation and tough exam schedule. Even though both undergraduates and postgraduates were more likely to experience stress from all components, the findings revealed that there was a significant difference between undergraduate and postgraduate management students in the extent of their experience of the sources of academic stress in the university. The findings suggest the need for revisiting curriculum and assessment related issues as majority of students reported to experience stress due to these factors. Finally, similar interventions for these students are needed and repeating the same study in other departments and universities is recommended here with.

Keywords: Academic stressors; Undergraduate; Postgraduate; Bahir Dar University; Ethiopia

Introduction

University students suffer from different kinds of academic stress during their study period. Studies indicate that when students interact with the new college environment, they experience many new demands such as increased work load, pressure to maintain grades and earn a degree, establishing relationships with new faculty members and new friends,

increased responsibilities for time-management, and increased independence from their families (Ross, Niebling, & Heckert, 1999). It stands to reason that students entering into the professional education need to face challenges to which they have never been exposed before (Shah & Shah, 2015). High expectations, information overload, academic pressure, unrealistic ambitions, limited opportunities, and high competitiveness are some of the common sources of stress that create tension, fear, and anxiety in students in the academic environment (Sinha, Sharma, & Nepal, 2001). Lumley & Provenzano (2003) emphasize that the immediate challenges that students face are the decisions they have to make about the presented career paths in addition to developing and negotiating new relationships, getting novel ideas that challenge their past-learned views, and moving away from home. All these issues contribute to the pressure of academic stress among students in a higher learning environment.

As stated in Brand & Schoonheim-Klein (2009), stress among undergraduate and graduate students is multifactorial. It rests to reason that stress arises from both academic and non-academic factors such as socio-cultural, environmental and psychological attributes. Moreover, high stress among university students might be experienced due to academic commitments, financial pressures and lack of time management skills. As Bang (2009) confirmed, when students do not have adequate personal resources like finances to deal with the stressful event, they are likely to experience heightened distress. Several students deal with the pressure of finding a part-time job to meet their financial demands and create a bridge to professional life after their studies. Hence, the students are faced with stressors arising from their part-time jobs (Ross, Niebling, & Heckert, 1999). This is especially true for students in the extension program as they face such problems in addition to the academic hardships in Bahir Dar University. The number of dropouts is also higher among students in the extension program than the regular students.

Stress levels may escalate to significant proportions in some students especially during tests and examination periods (Bedewy and Gabriel, 2015). Excessive stress can affect both health and academic performance of students (Campbell & Svenson, 1992). Consequently, the stress presents with symptoms of anxiety among the students. Selye (1976) reads that stress is a subjective feeling that occurs when an event requires a change in an individual's behavior, physical status, or cognitions based on his/her personal appraisal of the environment. Students may encounter different types of stress. As hypothesized in the diathesis-stress theory some people are more vulnerable to stress than others (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). This theory postulates that psychological and physiological vulnerabilities make some people more sensitive to stress, more likely to perceive environmental events as threatening, and more likely to react to perceived threats or stress in their environment.

In a nut shell, as the students enter into a university it is like a transformation in the sense that the way they manage their daily lives will be changed. The learning and living environment is different from the pre university context. The students usually are needed to stay away from home, live independently and take new responsibilities. All these could be a challenge for an individual in a tertiary education who has never been experienced before. University students could also feel the need to be accepted in the friend circle, the pressure from relationship issues and the uncertain future employment prospects once they complete their studies. Apart from academic requirements, relation with faculty and time pressure coupled with increased responsibilities may also pose challenges as they bring stress to students. A number of researches have been done overseas looking at the causes of stress and its effect on the performance of university students. In the studies, much emphasis was vested on the general sources of stress. Review of literature indicates that major percentage of stress experienced by students comes from academic stress (Yumba, 2008; Angolla & Ogori, 2009; Thawabieh & Qaisy, 2012;). However, this research will keep the findings from literature review as basis

and concentrate on the main components of academic stress in Ethiopian context. The study will also establish the significance of the correlations of the variables in question.

It is important that students should learn and acquire the necessary knowledge and skills that will make them contribute positively to the development of the general economy. In order to facilitate improvement of leadership qualities and produce excellent future managers, management education is an important medium. However, the exciting and enriching experience of learning has been stripped down to a mere number game in Ethiopia as the education system has gradually evolved in to a 'rat race'. We see our students facing various problems while in campus. Research studies found out that academic stress was more prominent among the students of professional courses (Shah & Shah, 2015). Nonetheless, there is lack of empirical evidence in the Ethiopian context. When we come to see the case in Bahir Dar University, we will hardly find such kind of empirical results. That is why the current study primarily concentrated on exploring the micro issues of different components of academic activity in the professional course work setup in the university. It examined the sub issues of each component of academic stress among the undergraduate and the postgraduate management students of the university.

The study could provide better insights to the academic administrators for initiating efforts to reduce the intensity of academic stress among students in Bahir Dar University. Even though the dangers of excessive stress leading to psychological damage are not observed frequently in Bahir Dar University, we encounter such cases sometimes. It has to be noted that stress can potentially interfere with learning, academic performance and in turn exacerbate student problems. This study provides an insight into the stress inducing events for students who have embarked on a new higher learning environment. Therefore, it would be beneficial to study which of these stressors are motivating and which are detrimental, and the extent to which each can affect the academic performance of students in a tertiary institution. Consequently, if we are to develop programs to assist students to minimize their anxiety and decrease their distress, a study or measurement of the sources of their stress and its associated causes is of paramount significance. Thus, the findings will help the individual students, lecturers, counseling centers, and the university administrators to put in place mechanisms that alleviate the effects of stress at the University. Besides, the findings will stimulate intellectual debates on academic stress among students in higher education institutions. The university authorities can use the result to take clear steps to learn and face serious psychological stress for students during the period they spend of their studies. Doing so will enable the university to maintain well-balanced academic environment conducive for better learning, with the focus on the students' personal needs.

Objectives of the study

The principal objective of this research is to examine the perceived sources of academic stress among management students of Bahir Dar University. In this regard, the specific objectives include:

1. To find out the components of academic stress experienced by management students.
2. To investigate the micro-issues related to curriculum and instruction, teamwork, assessment and placement causing academic stress among management students.
3. To determine the major sources of stress in the academic work environment of management students in Bahir Dar University.
4. To uncover whether there is a statistically significant difference among undergraduate and postgraduate management students in the sources of academic stress.

Hypothesis

H1: There is no statistically significant difference in the sources of academic stress among undergraduate and postgraduate management students in Bahir Dar University.

H2: The components of academic stress (curriculum and instruction, teamwork, assessment and placement) are the significant contributors to the academic stress of management students in Bahir Dar University

Literature Review

Academic stress can come in different ways in an individual's daily life. As stated in Bedewy and Gabriel (2015), academic stressors among students in a higher learning environment can be included in one of the three categories. Studies demonstrated that the most frequently reported factors contributing to stress and anxiety comes from workload and test difficulty and exam format. Factors related to academic expectations and pressures to perform are the other sources of academic stress. A number of studies have shown that parental pressures and teachers' expectations were associated with stress around the time of examinations or about choosing particular academic study or a future career. The third categories, factors related to students' academic self perceptions, involve such scores especially those related to their personality characteristics, intelligence, their past academic achievements, and other academic, environmental and psychosocial sources.

It has to be noted that knowing the causes of students' academic stress will make the educational administrators know how to monitor and control the stress factors that are responsible for the students' stress. In fact, stress itself is not necessarily bad. It stands to reason that appropriate stress is one of the motivations for university students to improve. However, stress directly affects individual physiology, psychology and sociology and the reaction of individuals after being stressed (physiological, behavioural, perception), and causes illnesses. Thus, stress plays an important role in the health of individuals. It can be said that educationalists are only able to give timely counseling by understanding the cause of stress of university students, or better still, planning beforehand to prevent it from occurring (Lin & Chen, 2009).

University students may encounter stress in different ways in their daily lives. When there is a change in life, one needs to make adjustments to fit in the new condition. Stress can be manifested in various ways. Stress symptoms can be lack of energy, taking over the counter medication, high blood pressure, feeling depressed, over or less eating habits, difficulty in concentrating, agitation, nervousness and anxiety among others (Ongori, 2007; Ongori and Agolla, 2008; Agolla, 2009). Chen et al (2006) stated that teachers often emphasize the acquisition of knowledge. As a result, they often neglect the emotional feelings of students during the teaching process, which can cause emotional stress and learning problems for students. Students may also feel unfamiliar situations like nervousness, worry, frustration, abasement, depression, etc. The instability of these emotions in turn easily initiates unusual behavior. Unless appropriate timely counseling is not given by the schools, teachers and parents, or if they cannot obtain appropriate concern from their peers or siblings, the learning achievements and adjustment ability of students will be affected.

Researchers have found out that students report experiencing academic stress at predictable times each semester with the greatest sources of academic stress resulting from taking and studying for exams, grade competition, and the large amount of content to master in a small amount of time (Abouserie, 1994). Fairbrother & Warn (2003) identified academic stressors as too many assignments, competitions with other students, failures and poor relationships with other students or lecturers. In summary, students in a higher learning environment have many obstacles to overcome in order to achieve their optimal academic performance. Different stressors such as time management and social activities can all pose their own threat to a student's academic performance. So it can be said that it takes a lot more than just studying to achieve a successful career in higher institutions.

In general, stress seems to be very common in university students' life. According to Altbach, (1970), graduate students perceive that faculty exert great power over their lives and feel that they live in a state of substantial powerlessness. Hence, stressors affecting students can be categorized as academic, financial, time or health related, and self-imposed (Goodman, 1993). Academic stressors include the student's perception of the extensive knowledge base required and the perception of an inadequate time to develop it (Carveth et al, 1996). It has to be stressed that students have to survive academically and prepare themselves for further career. Rajasekar (2013) reads that much of the academic stress at graduate level is related to what students learn and how they learn it. So there's a lot of pressure for the present generation management students to learn more and more than the past generations. For the purpose of the present study, the components of academic activity are identified as – curriculum and instruction, team work, assessment and placement. The present study attempts to find out which of these aspects are creating stress among undergraduate and postgraduate management students.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study is constructed on the variables taken from contemporary literature related with the given subject matter. The dependent variable for this study is academic stress and the independent variables are the four major factors or the components contributing to the academic stress; i.e., curriculum and instruction related, teamwork related, assessment related and placement related as shown in the conceptual framework below (Nandamuri and Gowthami, 2012) (Figure 1). Moreover, under these four identified components are various determinants (micro-issues) to measure academic stress.

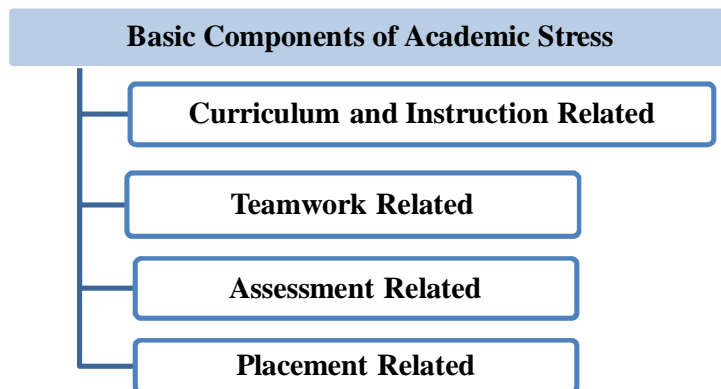


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study

Methodology

Research Design and Sampling Techniques

This study employed a cross-sectional descriptive research design. The procedure adopted is quantitative approach. The participants (sampling unit) in this study were drawn from undergraduate and postgraduate students (regular and continuing programs) of management in the College of Business and Economics of Bahir Dar University (n = 211). 330 participants were selected using stratified random sampling method from a population of approximately 885 students. Self-administered questionnaires were given to all target sample population of 330 students of the department (250 undergraduate and 80 postgraduate students). Out of this, 211 usable questionnaires were returned. This gives a 63.9% return rate which was taken sufficient for the current survey.

Instruments

A structured self-administered survey questionnaire was used in the study. It was divided into 3-parts; demographic, academic stress, and an open ended question. The demographic part examined (age, gender, current academic level, year of study, marital status); academic stress comprised of items measured on 5-point Likert scale ranging from 5(Most of the time) to 1 (Never). The last part of the questionnaire consisted of an open question where the participants were asked to name only one major source of their stress which thus read as “Name one major source of your academic stress?”

Statistical Analysis

Descriptive statistics, comparison of means (Independent-Samples T Test) and multiple linear regressions were employed in the analysis of the study data. The data were analyzed using SPSS version 20 software. The open ended question was thematically analyzed as indicated in Table 3.

Participants Background Data

Overall, a total of 211 students (2.8% first-year students, 46% second-year students, 41.2% third year students and 10% fourth year students) participated in the survey. 69.2% of the total respondents were found in the age range of 20 to 25. And 9.5 % of them were less than 20; 9.5% in between 26 and 30; 3.8% in between 31 and 35; 6.2% in between 36 and 40 and the remaining respondents were above 40 years of old. Further, 81% of them were single and the rest were married. The participants’ distribution by gender and academic level is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Distribution of respondents by gender and academic level

Academic level	Gender		Total	Percent
	Male	Female		
Undergraduate	119	59	178	84.36
Postgraduate	29	4	33	15.64
Total	148	63	211	100

Source:-Survey (2016)

Data Analysis and Discussion

Table 2. Patterns of micro-issues that are causing stress among management students

Components	Micro-Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation
Curriculum & Instruction Related Stressors	Regularly attending classes	3.01	1.665
	Achieving academic goals	3.48	1.176
	Choosing specialization	3.41	1.285
	Handling class workload	3.36	1.285
	Amount of material to study	3.33	1.325
	Study for tests and exams	3.75	1.263
	Doing oral presentations	3.35	1.222
	Fear of lagging behind in some subjects	2.50	1.232
	Contributing to class discussion	2.75	1.358
	Writing essays and assignments	3.28	1.255
	Learning all the material	3.05	1.428
Teamwork Related Stressors	Keeping up with regular reading	3.11	1.339
	Completing group assignments	3.00	1.382
	Making joint presentations	2.93	1.233
	Communicating with group and/class members	2.79	1.412
	Adjusting with group mindset	2.75	1.279

Assessment Related Stressors	Meeting deadlines of assessments	2.92	1.268
	High weight age components of assessments	2.90	1.165
	Sitting for tests	3.19	1.351
	Lack of clarity of assessment models	3.05	1.243
	Getting good grades through the assessment process	3.18	1.374
Placement Related Stressors	Job profile	2.65	1.401
	Uncertainty about getting job after graduating	2.97	1.350
	Facing placement interview	2.91	1.225
	Pay package and job location	2.92	1.193

Source: Survey (2016)

The second objective of this study was to investigate the micro-issues in each of the main components (curriculum and instruction related, teamwork related, assessment related and placement related) causing academic stress among management students in Bahir Dar University. The results are shown in Table 2 above. Overall, it was found that studying for tests and exams is the major curriculum and instruction related stressor among management students with a mean score of 3.75 and standard deviation of 1.263. Similarly, Kohn & Frazer (1986) revealed that students report experiencing academic stress with the greatest sources of academic stress coming from taking and studying for exams, grade competition, and the large amount of content to master in a small amount of time. Fear of lagging behind in some subjects found to contribute the least among the micro issues that are causing stress to management students with a mean score of 2.5 and standard deviation of 1.232. This shows that the students faced major stress from studying for exams and tests and in turn achieving academic goals.

From the teamwork related stressors, completing group assignments has the highest mean score of 3.00 and standard deviation of 1.382 followed by making joint presentations which has a mean score of 2.93 (1.233). It implies that the students are stressed when working in teams or when activities are given in groups.

In the case of assessment related stressors, the highest mean score goes to sitting for tests, i.e. 3.19 (1.351). This is followed by getting good grades through the assessment process with a mean score of 3.18 and standard deviation of 1.374. These show how much the students fear sitting for tests. This is consistent with the past researches which found sitting for examinations as a source of stress for students (Fan & Wang, 2001; Li & Lin, 2003). The students are stressed because they are thinking of getting or scoring good grades in their studies (courses). And these could happen for different reasons such as lack of preparation long before exam time and tough exam schedule especially during final examinations.

The findings also shown that uncertainty about getting job after graduating is the major academic stressor among placement related stressors with a mean score of 2.97 and standard deviation of 1.350. Pay package and job location is the second most important element with a mean score of 2.92 (1.193). The least among these micro-issues is job profile which has a mean of 2.65(1.401). This is possibly due to the fact that most of the students thought that they could experience and in turn cope with jobs ones they are employed. Another possible reason that could explain this is the flexibility of the profession of management and the less stressful, more general working environment for management students as in the case in Ethiopia.

Table 3. Major sources of stress in the academic work environment of management students

Items	N	Percentage (%)
Academic overload e.g. assignments, tests, keeping up with regular attendance/studying, time management and meeting deadlines	51	24.17
Teaching methodology & aids e.g. learning through a projector	36	17.06
Academic performance e.g. exam nature, sitting for exams, making presentations, grade expectations	28	13.27
Inadequate resources e.g. computers, books, lecture halls	18	8.53
Lack of confidence, difficulty of courses & fear of failure	26	12.32
Financial problem	8	3.79
Rough relationship with teachers	15	7.11
Love affair/relationship with girl /boyfriend	6	2.84
Academic life and the changing environment	5	2.37
Lack of preparation and tough exam schedule	10	4.74
Uncertainty about getting job after graduating	8	3.80
Total	211	100

Source: Survey (2016)

In the third part of the questionnaire, respondents were asked the question “Name one major source of your stress” aimed at eliciting their responses with regard to what students consider the major source of their stress while in campus. To find out the major causes of their stress, the students were restricted to one open ended question that required them to write only one major source of stress responsible for their academic stress. The result is presented in Table 3 above. The resulting thematic analysis (Table 3) reveals that students’ major stressors are academic workload (e.g. assignments, tests, keeping up with regular attendance/studying, time management and meeting deadlines), teaching methodology & aids (e.g. learning through a projector), academic performance (e.g. exam nature, sitting for exams, making presentations, grade expectations), lack of confidence, difficulty of courses, fear of failure and inadequate resources (e.g. computers, books, lecture halls). On the other hand, respondents mentioned that there exists a rough relationship between students and their lecturers which is not good for learning environment.

Moreover, lack of preparation and tough exam schedule are cited as the sources of stress in their daily academic life in the university as they think that it leaves them with no time to enjoy their social life. Financial problems, uncertainty about getting job after completing studies, relationship with girlfriend/boyfriend, and academic life and the changing environment were also listed by students as major causes of their stress in a higher learning institution.

Table 4. Differential analysis in academic stress sources among undergraduate and postgraduate management students

Component	Academic level	Count	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	p-value
Curriculum & Instruction Related	Undergraduate	178	3.0983	.78754	-4.380	.205
	Postgraduate	33	3.7399	.68584		
Teamwork Related	Undergraduate	178	2.7177	.93315	-5.507	.213
	Postgraduate	33	3.6742	.81845		
Assessment Related	Undergraduate	178	2.9697	.76784	-3.619	.005**
	Postgraduate	33	3.4727	.50204		
Placement Related	Undergraduate	178	2.7556	.88377	-3.867	.022*
	Postgraduate	33	3.4394	1.16765		

Note: p* < .05; p** < .01

Table 4 above shows that both undergraduate and postgraduate management students in Bahir Dar University faced a moderate stress from the four basic components of academic stress. By comparing the mean scores of the components of academic stress among the two groups, the findings shown that students studying at the undergraduate had the lowest mean score in all of the four basic components of academic stress (curriculum and instruction, teamwork, assessment and placement). On the other hand, students studying at the postgraduate level (Master of Business Administration/MBA, Executive Master of Business Administration/EMBA and Master of Public Management and Governance/MPMG) had the highest score; the first being in the case of curriculum and instruction related issues. However, undergraduate and postgraduate management students in Bahir Dar University showed significant differences in the assessment and placement related sources of academic stress. It means that the hypothesis that there is no statistically significant difference in the sources of academic stress among undergraduate and postgraduate management students is rejected. The findings indicated that postgraduate students feel more stress from assessment and placement related sources of academic stress than undergraduate students. This is mainly due to the exposure of postgraduate students to the higher learning environment while at the same time working or learning on a part-time basis. This is especially true for students in the continuing education program. In addition, it can be said that continuous assessment is better practiced among undergraduate students (especially in the case of regular program) than postgraduate students. Further, students in the postgraduate worry about promotions as well as related changes in their jobs after they complete their postgraduate degrees which in turn contribute for their stress.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics of basic components of stress in the academic work of management students

Components	N	Min	Max	Mean	Rank	Std. Deviation
Stress	211	1.00	5.00	3.02		0.946
Curriculum and Instruction Related	211	1.33	4.92	3.20	1	0.805
Teamwork Related	211	1.00	4.75	2.87	3	0.978
Assessment Related	211	1.00	4.80	3.05	2	0.754
Placement related	211	1.00	5.00	2.86	4	0.963

Source: Survey (2016)

The first objective of this study was to find out the main components of academic stress experienced by management students in Bahir Dar University. Table 5 above describes the mean scores and standard deviations of the four major components of academic stress. As it can be seen from Table 5, curriculum and instruction related stressors have contributed the highest for the overall stress level of management students (Mean=3.20). The second most important component was assessment related stressors that has a mean score of 3.5 and a standard deviation of 0.754. On the other hand, placement related stressors were reported to be the least contributors of academic stress for management students. Therefore, much of the academic stress among management students is related to what students learn and how they learn it.

Table 6: Regression analysis to determine the significant sources of academic stress

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std.Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	-.529	.168		-3.153	.002
Curriculum & Instruction Related	.459	.061	.391	7.504	.000
Teamwork Related	.176	.052	.182	3.392	.001
Assessment Related	.275	.067	.219	4.117	.000
Placement Related	.258	.043	.263	5.969	.000
F				125.808	
R				84.2	
R ²				71	
Adjusted R ²				70.4	

After diagnosing the variables for outliers, multicollinearity, heteroscedasticity and the fit of their distributions with the assumptions of regression, multiple linear regressions analysis was performed. The multiple linear regressions was conducted to determine the degree to which of the components of academic stress (namely curriculum and instruction related, teamwork related, assessment related and placement related) significantly contributes to the overall academic stress of management students of Bahir Dar University. A significant regression equation was found ($F(4,206) = 125.808, P=0.001$), with an adjusted R square of 0.704. The regression model explains 71% of the proportion of variations in perceived academic stress of management students ($R^2 = 0.71$). It reflects the goodness of fit of the model in the population. All the four components (curriculum and instruction, teamwork, assessment and placement) show a statistically significant effect in explaining the change in perceived academic stress of students. Curriculum and instruction related component is found to be the significant source of academic stress at ($P=0.001$). The significance of the placement related factors is also high at ($P=0.001$) calculated at alpha 0.043. In a nutshell, the multiple linear regressions reveal that all the four basic components of academic stress are the significant contributors to the overall academic stress of the respondents. More specifically, the finding concludes that the main contributor or the main sources of academic stress among management students are curriculum and instruction related issues.

Conclusions

Studies confirmed that stress has always been an issue among university students. This particular research is carried out to discover the micro-issues causing academic stress among the undergraduate and postgraduate students of management department in Bahir Dar University. Besides creating greater awareness and ensuring that the students developed in both cognitive and psychological aspects, this study also helps in considering the need of designing stress interventions for the students by the concerned bodies. As per the findings of this research, curriculum and instruction and assessment related stressors were found to be the major elements of academic stress among management students.

From the micro issues, studying for tests and exams and achieving academic goals topped the sources of stress respectively. The study also revealed that students' major stressors are academic workload, teaching methodology & aids, academic performance (e.g. exam nature, sitting for exams, making presentations, grade expectations), lack of confidence, difficulty of courses, relationship with faculty, fear of failure and inadequate resources. Further, lack of preparation and tough exam schedule are the sources of stress in their daily academic life in the university. There was a significant difference between undergraduate and postgraduate management students in the extent of their experience of the sources of academic stress in the university. However, both undergraduates and postgraduates were more likely to experience

higher levels of stress from curriculum and instruction related stressors in comparison to the other components.

In summary, the findings can serve as a starting point for conducting important studies focusing on the stress of students in Ethiopian context, specifically analyzing the micro components stressing them. It will also serve as a greater awareness of the leading actors of higher education in the development of different programs to manage stress in students with the main purpose of improving student's academic performance. Doing so will contribute something towards creating a healthier and balanced society.

Finally, related research is needed to be conducted in the university as well as in other institutions in Ethiopia from time to time to discover sources of academic stress and help guide students to reduce their stress levels as this can enhance their academic success.

Recommendations for Intervention and Future Research

The finding suggests the need for administrators or authorities to revisit the course guide books and ensure that the continuous assessment is properly implemented. The result also calls for administrators to properly plan the program for examinations with reasonable time gaps by considering course characteristics. Besides, lecturers are advised to make sure that they are in line with their students in their teaching methodologies and the teaching aids employed. It means they have to provide students with a suitable teaching and learning methods in order to decrease their academic stress. In addition, care should be given in the timing of assessments to help students to have enough time to prepare without being overloaded. Doing so helps students to overcome the pressure of last minute crowd of tasks. Instructors should also try their best to approach their students positively. This will enable students to feel free to share their problems and in turn lessen their stress by eliminating stressful situations.

Further, university administrators/authorities could help students feel less pressurized by implementing better strategies. It stands to reason that when students enter in to a higher learning environment, they should get academic support and counseling services. Besides, it is advisable to enroll them to a life skill training session to enable them to master their ways and to become successful in their endeavors. On the other hand, the management students should learn to understand and accept their limits, take a positive attitude toward getting along with their friends and instructors, learn to express and manage their emotions so as to develop positive relations and an optimistic view of life. In their learning process, they should know how to relax, examine their own problems, seek solutions, and in turn cultivate an undisturbed spirit. It would help management students to take a different perspective and learn to cope with it by changing their views.

However, this study is not without limitations. For one thing, this study used a small sample of students drawn from only Management Department of Bahir Dar University in Ethiopia. The findings cannot be generalized for students in other departments of the university as well as other university degree programs. Hence, replication of this study with a larger, stratified random sample would expand knowledge of academic stress among professional students. Interventions for these students are needed and repeating this study in other departments and universities is recommended here with. Therefore, the researcher recommends that further research would develop the understanding of academic stress among undergraduates and postgraduates with different backgrounds. Specifically, future research should use larger sample size from other institutions and investigate the impact of stress on the academic performance of students. The results would support the existing findings and help officials to control the stress factors for students in a higher learning environment. Lastly, curriculum and assessment related issues should be revisited as majority of students reported to experience stress and tension due to these factors.

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