

The impact of stress on the education of high school students**El impacto del estrés en la educación de estudiantes de nivel medio superior**

GARCÍA-CONTRERAS, Laura Patricia*†, RAMÍREZ-CERECERO, José Ricardo and RODRÍGUEZ-AGUILAR, Jessica Sabrina

Universidad Autónoma de Coahuila, Faculty of Science, Education and Humanities, Bachelor of Science in Education, México.

ID 1st Author: *Laura Patricia, García-Contreras* / ORC ID: 0000-0002-9020-3762

ID 1st Co-author *José Ricardo, Ramirez-Cerecero* / ORC ID: 0000-0003-4529-3399

ID 2nd Co-author: *Jessica Sabrina, Rodríguez-Aguilar* / ORC ID: 0009-0004-9832-9310

DOI: 10.35429/JET.2023.18.7.10.18

Received: July 15, 2023; Accepted December 30, 2023

Abstract

The environment and context in which young people develop play a crucial role in the manifestation of stress, since the social, economic, and cultural conditions of modern life expose them to various stressful situations (Barrera, 2020). Within the framework of this research, we analyze how stress affects the daily academic life of high school students, considering aspects such as communication between peers, trust in their teachers and the tools available to deal with stressful situations. The research question that guides this study is: "How does stress influence the education of high school students?" To carry out this research, we worked with a sample of 71 high school students. An instrument consisting of four signalitic variables and 38 variables related to the phenomenon of stress was used and evaluated using a nominal scale from 0 to 10, where 0 represents the total absence of the attribute and 10 is its maximum presence. Among the most relevant results, the importance of promoting resilience as a fundamental capacity to create an enabling environment that allows students to achieve the desired educational levels is highlighted. This is achieved by promoting self-analysis in terms of mental and emotional health. As an intervention proposal, is suggested the elaboration of a quantitative study that educational institutions can use to identify stress in their students in a timely manner, thus contributing to improving their well-being and academic performance.

Resumen

El entorno y el contexto en los que los jóvenes se desenvuelven desempeñan un papel crucial en la manifestación del estrés, ya que las condiciones sociales, económicas y culturales de la vida moderna los exponen a diversas situaciones estresantes (Barrera, 2020). En el marco de esta investigación, se analiza cómo el estrés afecta la vida académica diaria de los estudiantes de bachillerato, considerando aspectos como la comunicación entre compañeros, la confianza en sus docentes y las herramientas disponibles para afrontar situaciones estresantes. La pregunta de investigación que guía este estudio es: "¿Cómo influye el estrés en la educación de los alumnos de educación media superior?" Para llevar a cabo esta investigación, se trabajó con una muestra de 71 estudiantes de bachillerato. Se empleó un instrumento que consta de cuatro variables signalíticas y 38 variables relacionadas con el fenómeno del estrés, evaluadas mediante una escala nominal de 0 a 10, donde 0 representa la ausencia total del atributo y 10 su máxima presencia. Entre los resultados más relevantes, se destaca la importancia de promover la resiliencia como una capacidad fundamental para crear un entorno propicio que permita a los alumnos alcanzar los niveles educativos deseados. Esto se logra mediante la promoción del autoanálisis en términos de salud mental y emocional. Como propuesta de intervención, se sugiere la elaboración de un estudio cuantitativo que las instituciones educativas puedan utilizar para identificar el estrés en sus estudiantes de manera oportuna, contribuyendo así a mejorar su bienestar y rendimiento académico.

Stress, Resilience, Mental health**Estrés, Resiliencia, Salud mental**

Citation: GARCÍA-CONTRERAS, Laura Patricia, RAMÍREZ-CERECERO, José Ricardo and RODRÍGUEZ-AGUILAR, Jessica Sabrina. The impact of stress on the education of high school students. *Journal Educational Theory*. 2023. 7-18:10-18.

* Correspondence to the author (E-mail: mnieves@uadec.edu.mx)

† Researcher contributing as first author.

Introduction

Stress is currently one of the most recognised phenomena in society due to its significance in the post-pandemic context. Stress is the physical response that the body experiences when an individual is exposed to an overload of tasks in any of the areas in which he or she develops. As a risk factor, not only for physical health but also for emotional well-being, it is necessary to identify coping strategies where those affected can find a new balance in their lives.

There are authors who mention different aspects of stress. It can be seen as a disease that the subject provokes by not finding balance, others approach it as a silent affectation that takes the aspects that surround the person as the main incentive and finally, others say that it is a combination of both situations.

In this research, it will be approached from different axes, to finally culminate with what academic stress is, focused on high school students.

Justification

The main beneficiaries of this research will be the students of Secondary Education. Through this study, knowledge will be gained of the factors that contribute to stress among students, which in turn negatively impacts their academic performance. By identifying and understanding these factors, it will be possible to implement specific strategies to address stress and improve the performance of students at this educational level.

In addition, it is important that the academic bodies will have concrete and well-founded proposals to optimise the teaching-learning process and, in this way, improve students' performance during their classes. These proposals can then be applied more broadly, benefiting the entire student community.

Finally, the findings of this research will provide a deeper understanding of stress as a risk factor in student performance.

This will enable institutions to implement preventative and supportive measures that help students cope with stress more effectively and ultimately achieve better academic performance across all faculties and campuses of the university. In summary, this research has the potential to significantly improve the academic experience and success of students across the Autonomous University of Coahuila.

Research question

How does stress interfere with education in high school students at the Universidad Autónoma de Coahuila Saltillo unit?

General objective

To find out how stress intervenes in the education of high school students at the Autonomous University of Coahuila, Saltillo unit.

Specific objectives

- To explain the relationship between anger and learning.
- To explain the relationship between anxiety and interaction.
- To explain the relationship between emotions and attending classes.

Research questions

- What is the relationship between anger and learning in high school students at the UAdeC Saltillo unit?
- What is the relationship between distress and interaction in high school students at the UAdeC Saltillo unit?
- What is the relationship between emotions and attending classes in high school students at the UAdeC Saltillo unit?

Theoretical framework

According to Barceló (2018), the word "stress" has become an everyday term, which is generally recognised as a source of disorder in the behaviour of individuals who suffer from it, affecting their behaviour and quality of life.

It is important to note that, although one of the ways in which stress resonates is through physical ailments such as headaches and muscle tension, the emotional side also plays a major role in the imbalance experienced by individuals. When emotional wellbeing begins to be affected, it is sometimes difficult to detect, as it is often kept hidden unlike physical signs.

However, there are authors such as Rodriguez (2020) whose definition is that stress is a phenomenon that is sometimes treated as a physical problem and not as a consequence of an alteration in mental health Arredondo (2022), explains that stress in young people is not only related to the academic load, the time available for activities and the available resources of information, skills and professional and peer support. Family factors also often arise due to age-related conflicts, given the quality of emotional relationships with their parents, especially mothers.

Both the environment and the context of young people play an important role in delimiting the phenomenon of stress. The social, economic and cultural characteristics of current life generate greater exposure to different conditions that can generate such situations Barrera (2020).

Valdez (2022) states that it is an important disorder present in a person's learning period, with increasingly high rates in 21st century societies. Research on stress and human illness is complicated by the fact that stress is only one condition that contributes to most disease states.

In other words, stress leads to multiple diseases that contribute to the decline of the subject. These health problems have their own meaning and symptomatology, suffering from stress can lead to anxiety, discomfort, distress, uncertainty, anger, and depression (to name a few).

Pinilla (2020) mentions that anxiety is one of the disorders that causes the greatest disability and years of life lost, compromises academic performance, favours dropout and increases the risk of alcohol and psychoactive substance consumption.

On the other hand, Rodriguez (2020) explains that depression is defined as a serious affective or mood disorder considered as the fourth leading cause of social disability in the world, one of the main concerns related to the risk of suicide.

The combination of anxiety and depression within a stress framework is highly related to the physical factor, such as muscle tension and anger, in the emotional factor.

Muscle tension is defined as any psychosomatic situation that forces the body to become rigid, while anger is the emotional state of constant annoyance and disagreement with the different activities and people around the subject.

The need for early attention to stress is not only necessary, but also opportune, since, seeing the subject as a unit, it is understood that, within their possibilities, they must look after their physical and psychological wellbeing. When a subject begins to have complications with the basic aspects of their daily life, that is when they should stop to make an introspection of what is happening.

Psychological well-being, according to Dávila (2019), delineates a person who stops to observe their development, to appreciate both their positive and negative characteristics, who has a positive assessment of their individual history and who is capable of anticipating and committing to new goals for their growth.

In relation to stress, which is not seen as a symptom, but as a situation that derives from the constant overload of work that the subject has, is nutrition.

Due to the rhythm of life that a stressed person leads, in many cases he or she neglects to eat correctly. Eating is not only eating the food that is needed for energy. It is a process where the person takes the time to rest, relax and have a moment with him/herself.

Therefore, maintaining balance in all aspects of daily life is essential, although for a person with a fast-paced life it is not functional to meet their basic needs, making space for recreation can be an activity that, on some occasions, prevents stress.

Guzmán (2019), mentions that every day conditions such as depression, anxiety, alcoholism, violence and suicide among other psychosocial problems increase in the world, especially in young people.

However, the author Rozo (2019), expresses that stress is a phenomenon that affects human beings regardless of age, race, sex or stratum; hence the concern arises to investigate it and to know about its impact on life.

Although stress makes no distinction, it is imperative to point out that young people are part of this vulnerable stratum of the population, in relation to their status with adultcentrism, where they are often the object of anger and scolding from people older than them.

Rojas (2020), mentions that stress is a process that involves different elements, such as: the precise characteristics of the event, the cognitive assessment and the tactics used by the individual to deal with it.

In other words, if the person who is under stress does not have the tools to cope with it, he or she will not find a way to return to a balanced life, running the risk of developing illnesses that will subsequently become increasingly difficult to cope with.

Speaking specifically about stress in the school or academic environment, it is recognised that, even before the beginning of the 21st century, education played a fundamental role in people's daily lives.

Nowadays, students dedicate a large part of their lives to academic training, so classrooms become a second space for growth and interaction. When a student is overwhelmed by the academic load to be fulfilled, the dynamics that begin to develop become complicated to the point of general stress.

The main stressors of academic stress that students present are: exams, homework overload, the personality and character of the teacher Villacrés (2022).

Due to this, stress has been investigated as a work, family, social and academic phenomenon, Acebo and Samada, (2019).

It is found that there are factors within the student's context that contribute to starting a lifestyle that leads to stress.

Young people between the ages of 17 and 25, commonly go through a stage of life where important issues converge such as the search for identity, changes in social and emotional relationships, risky behaviour, addictions, maladaptive patterns, eating and sleeping disorders, academic overload, socio-economic deprivation, violence, unemployment, all of which require resources that lead them to adapt in the best way for themselves, Barrera (2020).

Young people relate to each other according to the affinities they share with others, moving within their own reality as well as the context in which they live. Sometimes they share too much of their lives with other young people of the same age, who may come to accept the opinions of those they consider their friends.

Almeida (2022) explains that, for young people, school is presented as a space where these skills can be better developed, as its students are in the midst of cognitive, attitudinal and socioemotional training.

From the above literature review, the following variables are distilled in terms of the stress axis: Frustration, overwhelm, tiredness, anxiety, relaxation, holidays, somatization, muscle tension, anguish, stressors, vulnerability, confusion, performance, performance, daily activities, emotions, mental health, environment, lifestyle, food, physical disorders, pressure, physical responses, productivity, symptomatology, anger, depersonalization, self-esteem, rejection, resilience, work.

Regarding the education axis: Teaching, use of ICTs, academic activities, learning, online interaction, digital competences, distance classes, face-to-face classes, interpersonal relationship, internet, confinement, attendance, guided discussion, virtual classrooms, assessments, didactic resources, timetables, training, connectivity, videoconferencing, educational platforms, student autonomy, computer-mediated instruction, participation, communication, adoption of technologies, innovative technology, resource optimisation, planning, cost reduction, knowledge dissemination, dynamics.

Methodology

The research design involved 71 high school students, an instrument consisting of four signalistic variables and 38 variables of the study phenomenon, using a scale of 0-10 where zero is the absence of an attribute and 10 its maximum presence.

The research participants are young people between the ages of 14 and 20. They all have different socio-economic levels, most of them are currently fashionable, most of them are male, most of them depend on their parents for their studies.

The pilot test was developed using Google Forms. The test was administered by means of a QR code that was scanned by the participants.

In order to explain the behaviour of the variables, we worked with the statistical levels of univariate, characterization and correlation in order to carry out an objective investigation.

Results

Frequency and percentage:

It is observed that the smallest part of the participating population first semester, representing by 50.81% which shows that they are mostly represented.

As for the female gender it is presented with a frequency of 30, a percentage of 49.18% and the male group with a frequency of 31 and a percentage of 50.81%.

Characterisation

It is observed that with respect to the Z-statistic (Z), the variables food (Z=2.12), resilience (Z=1.96), anxiety (Z=2.07), interpersonal relations (Z=2.15), communication (Z=1.99), timetables (Z=2.59), performance (Z=2.08), participation (Z=2.03), autonomy of the students (Z=2.64), and examination (Z=2.72), have confidence levels greater than 95%. It is inferred that the data obtained in the variables are predictors in populations with equal characteristics.

With regard to the mean (it can be read that the variables that are found in the high values of the scale high values of the scale (7, 8, 9, 10) are; exams (=8.10), attendance (=7.93) and student autonomy (=7.38). It can be inferred that students who have the criteria to make decisions on their own because they are aware of the context in which they find themselves, are not stressed when they attend examinations in their subjects.

In the mean of means it is observed that, of all the variables that make up the study phenomenon stress and education contrast, only the variable videoconferences (=1.1), is below the parameters of the lower limit (Li=2.17 =5.42 Ls=8.67). It is inferred that the students who do not show stress are in function of not taking classes via videoconferencing.

Correlation

It is observed that the subjects of investigation that generally have time to eat while they carry out their daily activities, potentiate their mental health (r=0.46), in relation to that they take breaks to relax (r=0.53), in this way, they generate tools to overcome adverse situations (r=0.52), learning the contents of the classes with minimum inconveniences (r=0.55), achieving a direct impact in their productivity (r=0.51). It is inferred that nutrition potentiates emotional and academic balance in students, reducing the possibility of generating stress.

The research subjects who have time to relax inside and outside the educational institution, have the ability to self-analyse (r=0.45) in relation to the fact that they also show balance in their mental health (r=0.45), thus, they optimise the tools they already have to face situations that arise and are outside their routine (r=0.58), this in relation to reflecting on their actions by making their own decisions (r=0.44). It can be inferred that the rest taken by the students to carry out extracurricular activities is a fundamental element in avoiding stressful situations.

It is observed that the research subjects who say that they feel pain in their muscles relate it to one of the main elements that generate stress ($r=0.48$), which means that they feel anxious about situations of which they are unaware ($r=0.47$), of which they have no knowledge ($r=0.47$). 47), of which they have no control, it also leads them to feel fragile ($r=0.59$), due to this, they cannot clearly perceive ($r=0.47$) the teachings given by the teachers and this potentiates the restlessness ($r=0.64$) for all those academic activities that they have to carry out for which they feel pressured. It is inferred that feeling stiffness in the muscles is one of the physical discomforts that cause stress, as the students do not have the emotional tools to face the academic load, they do not reach the expected educational levels, since the overload of tasks leads them to disorganisation at an academic and mental level.

The research subjects who tend to be overwhelmed, show attitudes of rejection towards the company of their classmates ($r=0.49$), as well as feeling distanced from everyone ($r=0.60$), they get angry easily ($r=0.46$) in relation to feeling pressured ($r=0.71$), leading to intrusive thoughts ($r=0.60$) that accompany them throughout their day. It is inferred that stress is one of the potentiators of stress, as it prevents students from having clarity about the contents that can be seen in class, due to the academic load that they have at that moment.

The research subjects who perceive themselves to be mentally healthy, take holidays ($r=0.52$) when school terms are over, show openness to communicate with their peers within the academic environment ($r=0.50$), as well as having the time to make their own decisions ($r=0.48$), thus, their performance in exams during the school cycle ($r=0.44$) enhances their academic productivity. It is inferred that students who have mental health, maintain educational quality, communicate effectively with their peers, from the time they give themselves to rest, this, makes students show a minimal relationship with stress.

Acknowledgements

Universidad Autónoma de Coahuila (without funding).

Conclusions

After analysing the factors that influence student stress and its impact on academic performance, we can draw some important conclusions:

Food and Rest: Adequate food and rest are fundamental aspects to maintain an emotional and academic balance in students. Good nutrition can reduce the likelihood of experiencing stress, and adequate rest, especially after extracurricular activities, is essential to prevent stressful situations.

Physical and Mental Effects of Stress: Stress can manifest itself through physical symptoms, such as muscle stiffness. When students lack the emotional skills to handle the academic load, they may experience disorganisation in both their academic and mental lives. In addition, overwhelm can make it difficult to understand academic content.

Mental Health and Communication: Maintaining good mental health is crucial to maintaining educational quality and promoting effective communication among students. Taking time to rest can reduce stress and improve peer interaction.

Resilience and self-analysis: Fostering resilience through self-analysis is an effective strategy to help students cope with stressful situations. This allows them not only to cope with academic challenges, but also to develop skills that will be valuable in their life outside of school.

Variety of Materials and Participation: The use of diverse materials in the classroom can enrich students' learning experience and enable them to apply what they learn in everyday life. In addition, the ease with which students exchange ideas and actively participate in the institution enhances their understanding of the subjects and strengthens their skills.

In summary, stress management in students is essential for improving their well-being and academic performance. Promoting resilience, self-analysis and effective communication, along with attention to nutrition, rest and the use of a variety of learning resources, can help students achieve desired educational levels and develop skills that will be useful in their personal and professional lives.

Discussion

In the results of this research, it has been found that nutrition plays a crucial role in students' emotional and academic balance, which significantly reduces the possibility of experiencing stress. According to Yuri, R (2017), food is essential in providing the body with the necessary nutrients to maintain health and life. Furthermore, it is through food that the body obtains the materials necessary for its functioning, which supports the idea that proper nutrition contributes to both emotional and physical well-being.

Furthermore, according to Rojas, O (2020), stress is a process that involves various elements, such as the specific circumstances of the events, the cognitive evaluation made by the individual and the strategies used to cope with it. The results of this research support the idea that promoting resilience and self-analysis are key to creating an enabling environment in which students can achieve desired educational levels. When students are equipped with these emotional tools, they are better able to cope with challenging situations, which decreases the likelihood of experiencing stress.

In relation to the use of various materials in the classroom, it has been found that this practice enhances students' learning and allows them to apply the knowledge acquired in their daily lives. Although Alvarez, L (2018) mentions that knowledge and learning can be stressful and demanding, the results of this research suggest that access to a variety of learning resources, as well as curiosity and willingness to investigate topics of interest, can motivate students to study outside of school and actively resolve their doubts.

In terms of the relationship between mental health and stress, the findings of this research indicate that students who maintain adequate mental health have higher educational quality and effective communication with their peers. This is achieved through time spent resting and recharging, which contributes to maintaining a minimal relationship with stress. This differs from the opinion of Arredondo, N (2022), who suggests that stress in young people is mainly due to academic load and availability of resources, whereas this research emphasises mental wellbeing as a key factor in stress management.

Finally, in relation to participation in the institution, it has been found that this facilitates the development of both academic and personal skills, allowing students to extrapolate the knowledge acquired. Although Villacrés, M.J. (2022) mentions that exams, homework overload and other factors are the main triggers of academic stress, this research argues that the ease of participating in activities and the ability to be involved in institutional life can influence students' experience of stress significantly.

Intervention proposals

Carry out an intervention project that addresses the management of students' emotions.

- Development of a quantitative study that institutions can use to detect stress in time.
- Create a department within the institution to provide psychological support to students.
- Cycle of conferences on the importance of a balanced diet.
- Implement in classes that the teacher gives a speech on the importance of rest.

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