

Factors Associated with Stress among Undergraduate Students in Faculty of Hospitality, Tourism, and Wellness (FHPK), Universiti Malaysia Kelantan (UMK) City Campus Post Pandemic Covid-19

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ABSTRACT

Stress is one of the most common emotional health problems among university students. The worst effects of stress are body feelings of low energy, headaches, nervousness, and shaking. The objective of the study is to examine the relationships between sociodemographic and interpersonal relationships (family dynamics) with stress among undergraduate students. A cross-sectional study was conducted among 335 undergraduate students. The convenience sampling technique is used as a sampling method in this study. A set of questionnaires comprising the Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS-21), and Asian Family Characteristic Scale (AFCS) was used to measure stress and interpersonal relationship (family dynamic), respectively. Data were analysed using descriptive analysis, reliability analysis, and Pearson Correlation analysis. The findings of the study showed that there was a strong negative correlation between interpersonal relationships (family dynamic) with stress ($p=0.001$), whereby, there was a strong negative correlation between interpersonal relationships with stress. This study could contribute to the body of knowledge regarding factors associated with stress among university students. Future research could benefit from large-scale nationwide longitudinal studies which include all possible factors related to students of stress.

Keywords: *Stress, Sociodemographic, Interpersonal Relationship, and Family Dynamic*

INTRODUCTION

Stress is a normal and emotional response to changes in one's life that occur because of events, situations, incidents, or experiences. People get stressed for numerous reasons and react in different ways. Reaction toward stress is based on how people perceive the situation. However, if stress interferes with daily routine, this stress is considered a problem. Stress problems are common among university students. This happens when students' needs exceed students' ability to cope. Stress can be caused by many things, including test and assignment deadlines, work, friendship, and relationship problems, financial problems, perfectionism, and university life balance.

Instead, stress is a result of the interaction between stressors and the students' perception and reaction to them. When students have a negative reaction to a stressful situation or when the stress level rises, their health, emotional condition, and academic performance can suffer (Ranjita Misra & Mckean, 2000). In keeping with this discovery, Waghachavare, Dhumale, Kadam, and Gore (2013) analysed a sizable sample of college students and found that healthy lifestyles and academic variables related to a certain level of stress. Bhat U et al. (2018) recently established that mental stress is common among university students, particularly engineering and art students, as well as those who live with their relatives.

There were two objectives of this research:

1. To determine the association between sociodemographic factors (namely, age, gender, and financial status) and stress among university students.
2. To determine the association between interpersonal relationships and stress among university students

Significance of the Study

Student

The findings of this study will benefit all students, which will increase awareness of serious health problems such as stress which is a big problem for a student. In addition, the studies can help develop stress program modules to prevent or reduce the number of statistical cases among public university students. However, this study will also help other researchers study stress problems among public university students in the future.

Society

This study can also benefit all society to add knowledge and give awareness to increasingly worrisome stress problems. It is because the total number rate people with stress problems are on the rise. Therefore, it can encourage society to the importance of mental health care and the benefits of undergoing treatment and counselling to ensure better mental health.

University

The study also benefits the university. The university can identify the total number of students suffering from stress disorders and know the causes that lead them to it. The university can also raise awareness among public university students about mental health and the value of both mental and physical well-being.

Future study

Future researchers could use this research to understand stress problems among university students. Moreover, this research can be used as a reference and guideline by other researchers, especially in primary health education. In addition, other researchers can use data for different populations and regions for this stress disorder. In the same way, it raises awareness and enhances a healthy quality of life, especially for university students. So that this information can be used to develop an intervention module or program to reduce stress among university students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of Stress

Stress can be defined as a feeling of emotional or physical tension. Stress can affect many people every day (Medline Plus, 2021). Stressors assist your body in modifying to new conditions. Stress can be advantageous in that it keeps us alert, motivated, and able to escape danger. If you have a difficult test upcoming, for demand, a stress response may help your body strive and stay open. On the other hand, stress becomes a concern when stressors persevere deprived of relief or times of relaxation.

During stress, it can affect our body's autonomic nervous system, controlling heart rate, breathing, vision changes, and others. When people have long-term stress, it can activate the stress response, which causes wear and tear on the body. It also causes physical symptoms such as aches and pains, chest pains, or a feeling like your heart is racing, among others. Next, stress's self-documented actions, behavioural coding, and physiological quantities can all be used to assess stress responses (Sarah E. Frazier & Sarah H. Parker, 2019).

Prevalence of Stress among University Students

The prevalence of stress among university students worldwide ranged from 35.7% to 59.70%. In developed countries, such as Italy, the prevalence of stress among university students was 59.70%. (Igor Portuguese, Fabio Peru, Maura Gillette, Marcelo Campagna, Alex Burford, 2020). As a result, monitoring and management of the population's mental health post-pandemic is an important concern. The purpose of this study is to examine current research and draw conclusions on the associated factor of stress among university students.

A previous study showed that the prevalence of stress among university students in developing countries, such as Korea was 35.7% (Kwang-Hi Park, Hyun-lye Kim, and Jae-he Kim, 2020). A total of 738 university students in years 2–4 in five four-year universities in South Korea were involved in the study to investigate the moderating impact of mindfulness on the influence of despair following the degree of existing pressure. In the moderated regression analyses, mindfulness had a moderating impact on the effect of pressure on despair in the simplest low-pressure groups.

Sociodemographic Factors

According to Shaikh et al. (2020), college students are subjected to all forms of instructional pressure wherein they constantly assume they want to do well on their exams and feel unsure about their future. The mindset of the students, particularly in Malaysia, also contributes to the ongoing pressures among university students, with most university students wanting to have a perfect Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) of their grades taken into consideration to secure a higher process for the future. This kind of mindset will lead to emotional pressure, tension, or pressure that happens because of the needs of the college's existence, which is the reason for stress among university students.

Interpersonal Relationships (Family Dynamic)

The transition to college gives students numerous new challenges, together with expanded educational demands, family factors, interpersonal stress with roommates, and romantic relationships. Studies focused on students show that interpersonal conflicts and relationships with others increase the level of suffering and are a major stressor in student life. Interpersonal stress was associated with increased symptoms of depression and anxiety as well as increased levels of anger and hostility.

Interpersonal conflicts are one of the most prominent stressors in university life, as well as middle-aged adult life because romantic relationship issues are one of the most common reasons for seeking counselling. Both adults and middle-aged adults are exposed to considerable stress (T. Kato, 2018). Friends play a lot in the way you experience life. In its simplest form, friendship is nothing more than a company. In their richest and most complex expressions, they provide a sense of belonging (Wrench, Garrett & King, 2014), support, and psychological well-being. It offers a variety of psychosocial benefits and interaction opportunities, especially for first-year students traveling through the unfamiliar realms of college friendships. Understand how friendships contribute to the psychosocial and interactive experiences of Freshmen College students. The positive effects of peer support through institutional initiatives are well detailed and exceedingly lucrative in sensitive, behavioural, and reasoning exchanges among students (Boud, Cohen, & Sampson, 2001; Kift, Nelson, & Clarke, 2010).

Research Hypothesis

The hypotheses in the study were as stated below

- H1 There is a significant association between sociodemographic factors (age, gender, and marital status) and stress in university
- H2 There is a significant association between interpersonal relationships (family dynamic) and stress among university students.

Research Framework

Figure 1 below shows the research framework use for this study

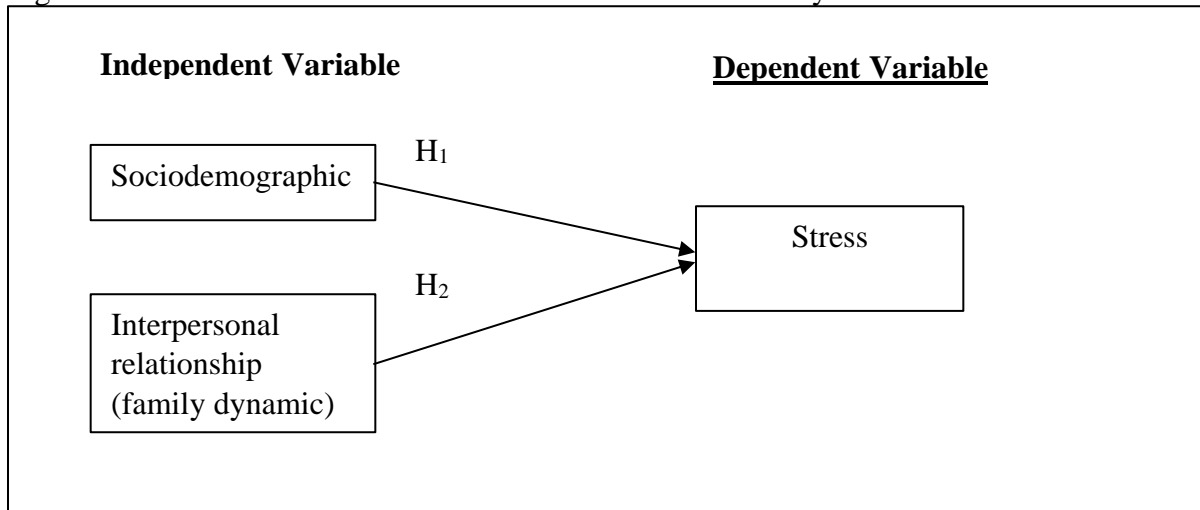


Figure 1: Research Framework

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research design in this study will be a cross-sectional study, this study used a quantitative method via statistics using large-scale survey research to collect information by distributing a set of questionnaires through Google Forms. This study aimed to determine the psychological stress among university students. Researchers decided to select university students in Malaysia, but we will just specifically mention University Malaysia Kelantan students. Researchers focus on the student's area of the city campus for the target respondent to undergraduate student researchers all respondents are from the Faculty of Hospitality, Tourism, and Wellness (FHPK).

The research instruments in the study consist of four sections. Sections A, B, and C. The study will use the Likert-scale instrument in Sections B and C. The self-completed questionnaire is designed to collect data. Section A is concerned with the respondent's demographic profile, which focuses on the respondent's demographic data such as gender, course, age, marital status, and year. For sections B and C, the question will be collaborated with dependent and independent variables which factors associated with stress (i) sociodemographic, stress (ii), and interpersonal relationship factor (iii) used in this survey.

Data Collection

A set of questionnaires was used as research instruments in the study. The set of questionnaires consists of three sections, Sections A, B, and C. The study used the Likert-scale instrument in Sections B and C. The self-administered questionnaire is distributed to collect data. Section A is for the respondent's demographic profile, such as gender, age, and year of study. In sections B and C, Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS-21) and Asian Family Characteristic

Scale (AFCS) measure stress and interpersonal relationship, respectively. This questionnaire was distributed to 335 respondents who participated in this study. The survey was conducted online, whereby, social media was used as a platform to share the Google form link such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, and Email of students from the FHPK faculty.

Sampling

The sampling method used in this study is the non - probability sampling technique because samples are not selected by random. Purposive sampling was used for this study.

$$s = \frac{x^2 N p (1 - P)}{e^2 (N - 1) + x^2 p (1 - p)}$$

n= sample size

N= population size

e = the degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion (0.05)

x^2 = chi-square of the degree of freedom 1 and confidence 95% (3.841)

p = proportion of population (if unknown, 0.5)

There were four types of data analysis used in this study, namely frequency analysis, descriptive analysis, reliability test, and Pearson correlation analysis. The data obtained was analysed by using SPSS version 26.

FINDINGS

Result of Frequency Analysis

Table 1 below shows the frequency analysis of this research.

Table 1: Frequency Analysis (n=335)

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	87	26.0
Female	248	74.0
Age		
19	10	3.0
20	16	4.8
21	52	15.5
22	47	14.0
23	175	52.2
24	27	8.1
25	7	2.1
26	1	0.3
Race		
Malay	268	80.0
Chinese	33	9.9
Indian	29	8.7
Others	5	1.5
Marital Status		
Single	323	96.4
Married	11	3.3
Divorced	1	0.3
Year		

Year 1	51	15.2
Year 2	65	19.4
Year 3	193	57.6
Year 4	26	7.8
Course		
SAS	190	56.7
SAP	87	26.0
SAH	58	17.3

A total of 335 respondents have been collected in this research. From Table 4.1, there were 248 (74 %) respondents who represented female, and 87 (26%) respondents who represented male. It shows the number of female respondents is higher compared with male respondents in this research. Table 1 shows the age of 335 respondents. Age is divided into 8 categories. There were 19 (10%) respondents who were below 19 years old. While most respondents are in the age range of 23 years old, which were 175 (52.2%) respondents. There were 52 (15.5%) respondents aged 21 years old. There were only 16 (4.8%) respondents aged 20 years old. Then, at age of 22 years old was 47 (14 %). Next, 24 years old and 25 years old just had 27 (8.1%) and 7 (2.1%). Lastly, only 1 (0.3%) respondent was reported the age 26 years old. Table 1 above showed the race of 335 respondents. For Chinese and Indian, there were 33 (9.9%) respondents and 29 (8.7%) respondents respectively. Most of the respondents were reported to be Malays, summing up to 268 (80%) respondents. Meanwhile, only 9 (1.5%) respondents are reported to be of other races instead of Malay, Chinese or Indian. Overall, respondents who divorced marital status were the minority, representing 1 (0.3%) respondent. On the other hand, the majority of the respondents were single, which made up 323 (96.4%) respondents. Married represented 11 (3.3%) respondents respectively. Table 4.1 also showed the year of the respondents. The lowest respondents in year 4 were 26 (7.8%). The highest number of respondents in year 3, represented 193 (57.6%) respondents. For respondents in year 1 and year 2, represented 51 (15.2%) and 65 (19.4%) respondents. Table 1 above shows the course of 335 respondents. For SAS, there were the higher respondents, typified 190 (56.7%) respondents. The lowest respondents were SAH, which represented 58 (17.3%) respondents. Last, in the course SAP, the respondents were 87 (17.3%).

Result of Descriptive Analysis

Table 2 below shows the descriptive analysis of this research

Table 2: Descriptive analysis

Variable	Items	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Interpersonal Relationship (Family Dynamic)	We express our love through hugging and kissing.	2.9343	0.95893
	We usually control me.	2.9672	0.76729
	We often receive praises for each other.	2.8090	0.84726
	We are concerned about the problems of each family member.	2.9015	0.89535
	We respect our elders.	3.0507	0.81185
	Each family member fulfils his/her responsibilities.	2.9642	0.82906
Stress	I found it hard to wind down.	1.79	0.788
	I tended to overreact to situations.	1.95	0.795

I felt that I was using a lot of nervous energy.	2.07	0.894
I found myself getting agitated.	2.09	0.905
I found it difficult to relax.	2.13	0.871
I was intolerant of anything that kept me from getting on with what I was doing.	2.21	0.909
I felt that I was rather touchy.	2.05	0.884

Result of Reliability Analysis

Table 3 below shows the result of the reliability analysis of this research.

Table 3: Reliability Analysis

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach Alpha
Interpersonal Relationship (Family Dynamic)	6	0.798
Stress	7	0.895

Result of Pearson Correlation Analysis

Table 4 below shows the correlation analysis of this research

Table 4: Pearson Correlation Analysis

Hypothesis	P-Value	Result (Supported/Not Supported)
H1: There is a significant association between sociodemographic factors (age, gender, and marital status) and stress at university.	-0.549	H1 is supported
H2: There is a significant association between interpersonal relationships (family dynamic) and stress among university students.	0.001	H2 is supported

Table 4 was indicating the relationship between stress and also relationship & family dynamics. Based on the result that was run in the SPSS analysis of data, the significance of the value for the relationship & family dynamic is below 0.05 and while the p is less than 0.05, that means we reject the null of the hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. This proves that there is a significant relationship between interpersonal relationships (family dynamic) and also stress among undergraduate students. After that Pearson Correlation is -0.512 which shows a strong negative correlations relationship between stress and interpersonal relationships (family dynamic).

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This research discusses which is a factor associated with stress among university students and addresses the hypothesis of whether related or not. Based on the results, the results the analysis considered that there was a significant association between the sociodemographic and interpersonal relationships with stress among students. According to previous research, there is a link between stress and interpersonal relationships along with sociodemographic. The effectiveness of DASS21 has been demonstrated (Henry & Crawford, 2005) and high internal reliability has been found in a population of young people (Tully, Zajac & Venning, 2009).

Next, from the Pearson Coefficient values of the study for this research, consequently, all the factors score weak and moderate negative correlations for the strength of correlations, but according to the value of interpersonal relationship has possible strongest correlation with stress compared to another independent variable in this study which sociodemographic followed by this independent variable showed since (-0.512). The result of Pearson Correlation test shows that there is a significant relationship between stress and interpersonal relationship (family dynamic) among undergraduate students ($p = 0.001$). The findings that we have analysed, shows that there is a strong negative correlation coefficient of 0.001. This means that interpersonal relationships (family dynamic) can avoid leading to stress problems among students. With stronger relationships and our family support in mental health can recover the loved one is set up for success.

Recommendation for further research to a suggestion or proposal as to the best course of action, especially one put forward by an authoritative body. To collect data effectively, distributing the questionnaire physically or face to face is acceptable. This is significantly easier because the researcher can urge the respondents to spend their time filling out the questionnaire. In other ways, we can keep the forms short to ensure their target respondents can have enough time to answer the survey if they want to use the online google form. The bias can be introduced by creating a form that too looks long to your subject and it also can introduce the segments into the smaller sections and skip the logic. Time constraints can negatively impact our study for the research, and it can be reduced by acknowledging this impact by mentioning a need for future studies such as developing a longitudinal study to answer these research problems. Future research could benefit from large-scale nationwide longitudinal studies which include all possible factors related to students with depression. Although online study using technology has enabled many things unimaginable, the transition to online learning has not gone as smoothly. For both lecturers and students, dealing with the difficulties of online learning is so disappointing and stressful for university students (Lisa, 2020).

CONCLUSION

This research has finalized and discussed the necessary findings of factors associated with stress among undergraduate students. The research objectives have been accomplished, research questions have been answered and hypotheses have been confirmed and accepted in this study based on the analysis of a total of 335 usable questionnaires. The findings of the survey questionnaire have been analysed using descriptive, reliability, and correlations analysis. The data obtained from the questionnaire were evaluated by a software program using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The result shows that they have a significant interpersonal relationship (family dynamic), a factor associated with stress among undergraduate students. It shows that interpersonal relationship (family dynamic) is in negative correlation of -0.512. The independent variables are significant with the main dependent variable being stress. Summary of the results based on data analysis. Therefore, all of the hypotheses (H1, H2) stated were accepted. In addition, the limitations and recommendations while conducting this research study also include those that can be used for further study.

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