

Prioritizing Student Mental Wellness: Nurturing Resilience for Academic and Personal Success

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Abstract—The Undergrads Currently are in the pressure cooker that is never off. Unending duties on the top of demands, overwhelming demands that are crashing everyone, and even attempting to manage real life as an adult at the same time, it is not stress anymore. The vast majority of them are simple chronic boozes, who run on empty months. We continue using this team resilience as though it is some magical superpower that is going to save everything “just spring back, you can do it. However, very few take a moment to consider that maybe it is precisely the perpetual effort to be viewed as tough that prevents students to reach out to someone the moment they finally bang at the wall. We talked to 102 students. The thing that reoccurred many times is the sadistic: nearly all of them are totally submerged. They’re barely hanging on. Drowning quietly. There are counsellors in the campuses, mental health, support desk, all the things. Of those who come in, however, there are but a very few students who ever come through those doors. The disparity is sincerely devastating. These children are doing their best to remain strong, to tough it out, not to bother anyone and they are being tormented in utter silence due to it. This ought to be a shrieking eye opener to all universities in existence: It is no longer sufficient to tell students to become tougher. We must literally create a culture within the campuses were uttering the statement of I am struggling; I need some help is not associated with the feeling of defeat or lack of strength but rather a normal healthy aspect of the college experience.

Keywords— Academic Stress, Resilience, Help-Seeking Behaviour, Student Mental Health, Coping strategies, Institutional support.

I. INTRODUCTION

College is no longer some sort of adventure. It is rather a marathon never ending with the finish line shifting more and more away. Students are never off -over- scheduled with deadline on deadline, trying to meet this unattainable notion of being the most at everything, at the huge burden of the unknown of what to do after graduation. It’s not just being busy. It is this true root of fatigue that steals the life out of you and leaves even what you once treasured learning about to drag and monochrome. It is not that they should be tougher, stronger, there are things they have to run through – that is what we continue to tell students until we say that they must be tougher. However, the point is here; resilience has become a two-sided sword. Of course, it will keep you alive during a ludicrous week or two.

Still, it does not protect you against just burning out. And there comes a point when stopping Gutting it out does not serve, anymore, and you do need some real assistance, such as seeing a counsellor or finding a professional ally of some kind. And yet, despite having Counselling places right on campus (literally crossing the quad), the majority of students simply keep their head low, remain silent and attempt to cope on their own.

It is this bitter irony: those are just kids who are well aware of the stressed level they are going through, who are desperately struggling to hold it together, and yet, they are living in complete silence. It makes you sit and pose the hard question why do you see the students who are trying the hardest to remain

strong cannot reach out to get help because it will seem like they have failed in some way?

The actual issue is that breach of connection. They do not have coping tools or lack trying. It is because seeking professional assistance is an acknowledgement that they were not tough enough to be, rather than merely being intelligent enough to take care of themselves. This paper explores just that tug-of-war: the exhaustion behind the academics, stress to always appear strong, and the fear of appearing weak by doing so.

We cannot continue delivering the simple idea to students to be strong and declare it good. We must transform the culture we are currently having on campus in a way which makes seeking help a stand as an intelligent survival technique and not an admission of defeat. As though it is simply a part of being human during your struggle of trying to make it through college.

11. RESEARCH GAP

It is vividly evident in the body of literature that students are extremely stressed. Student are stressed by academic pressure and expectations, competition, and other demands put on them, thus taking a toll on their mental state. Numerous researchers are presented in which the impact of resilience, mindfulness, and peer support are discussed as to their role in reducing academic stress. Other researchers acknowledge that the students have ample justification as to why they do not seek help, they are not only stigmatized but also fearful and embarrassed to seek out a counsellor. However, these findings have mostly been provided in isolation. We are aware that students are stressed. We are aware that resilience would be helpful. We are aware that the levels of help-seeking are low. However, what we are unaware of is how all these come together in the real world of stressed students. This is because when students know that they are under stress academically, and they possess some degree of coping skills in the shape of resilience, why are they still not utilizing the mental health services at their disposal?

This is the question that lies in the gap between the existing literature. A low amount of the study has been conducted that focuses on academic stress, resilience and help-seeking behaviour among the same group of students. In the absence of these insights, the academic institutions will keep providing help to the ones who are not interested in it. This research is expected to close this gap by analysing whether stress and professional intervention remain out of touch.

III. OBJECTIVE

The literature reviewed (LR 1 – 15) also highlights consistently three primary issues with mental wellbeing regarding students: the ubiquity of academic stress, the coping effect of resilience and the unremovable barriers to accessing professional mental health services are not utilized to the fullest. Nevertheless, these dimensions do not interact with each other. Based on the outlined issues and the existing gap in the research, this paper is informed by the following objectives: To investigate the nature

of academic stress in terms of its routine and continuity among undergraduate students, as opposed to an infrequent academic difficulty.

To determine how perceived resilience of the students compares to degrees of the stress they experience hence testing the potency and constraints of coping capacity as indicated in the earlier research.

To examine the real use of the institutional mental health facilities, to establish whether the barriers found in literature still affect the behaviour of students. In an attempt to investigate the association between exposure to stress, levels of resilience, and the behaviour of help-seeking among the same population, a gap in the literature characterized by the absence of integrated study will be filled.

To find out and empirically prove the presence of a help seeking gap, in which stressful students who do have coping awareness still do not reach out to professional support systems

To create evidence that would inform the institutional strategies, it is essential to make mental health services not passively available but engage the students in the process.

IV. RELATED WORK

An array of scientific works has studied the psychological welfare of students in the higher learning institutions, all of which have found the academic setting to be a significant factor behind the deceit of psychological stress. Consecutive research indicates that students feel anxious, emotionally feeble and distressed as a result of continuous grades, performance enthusiasm, timelines, and social strains. The transition to online education during the COVID-19 season only aggravated these problems, as it even raised feelings of isolation, doubts, and feelings of less socialization.

All of these pieces of literature confirm that the phenomenon of academic overwhelm is not a rare event but a chronic state that has a profound impact on the emotional stability of students, their motivation towards studying, their ability to focus on what they do, and their achievement in school.

To address these issues, scholars have delved deep into the nature of resilience and coping as the defensive psychological variables. The importance of mindfulness, emotional regulation, adaptive thinking, and peer support is often emphasized as those approaches that help students to cope with the stress, and reserve balance. Resilience is defined as ability to heal after a failure and adjust appropriately in the life despite academic stress enabling students to stay at work even amid these relatively academic stresses. There are indications that, resilient students have high emotional control, greater adaptability and better academic results. Yet, the degree of resilience in students, however, has also been reported to be moderate instead of remarkably high, and this implies that the ability to endure prolonged stress in students.

Parallel with this, there is a serious concern that literature points out with regard to the help-seeking behaviour. Regardless of institutional counselling facilities and mental health programs available, students tend to resist professional help. Stigma related to mental health, milk of being judged, ignorance, feeling out of place around counsellors and preferring informal peer support and mentioned again and again as obstacles. It has been shown that students often internalize stress and are trying to cope on their own instead of accessing existing institutional resources. It shows a contradiction of the fact that the support systems are present, but very little use is made of them.

Although current research has had a solid amount of evidence based on academic stress, resilience and help seeking barriers, few studies have explored the interconnections of these three dimensions within a unifies layer of analytical analysis. In a particular, existing sources fail to answer the question as to why the students with high degrees of academic overwhelm and having the coping skills, nevertheless, do not seek the assistance

of the professional mental healthcare. There is a lack of research on the relationship between exposure to stress, the capacity of resilience, and the reality of help seeking behaviour. This absence of an integrated understanding generates a disjuncture in understanding the difficulty of managing mental health in reality among students in school. The current research fills this gap by empirically investigating the co-existence of these factors and the way they interact and affect the behaviour of students.

V. METHODOLOGY

To truly get into that internal tug-of-war that students are pulling through every day, this research venture takes a step out of the great abstract ideas and takes root in something more tangible a quantitative, descriptive research that will capture the very heart beat of what is happening in the life of students today, right here and now.

Our choice of survey-based method was partly due to our desire to have concrete, quantifiable proof right at the ground level – figures that would indicate how exactly academic overwhelm combined with the consistent urging to be resilient and the unwillingness to seek assistance intersect with each other in the lives of students. The heart of this study lies in a questionnaire which we have prepared in the form of a structured questionnaire and shared via Google forms. It was not simply a matter of yes/no-boxes and we created it to enable students to apply real worlds and numbers to what they were going through. By providing frequency scale (as in how often does this happen), Likert scale (as in how strongly do you agree?), we provided a means of expressing something that otherwise might feel fuzzy, such as how often do they feel entirely underwater, or what degree of real belief that they have in being able to bounce back when everything gets out of control.

Our target respondents were 102 university students, with a majority of them between 18 and 20 years. Such a critical audience, this group of young adults on the nexus of peak academic stress, exact in the middle of that high-consequence transition between being a student and whatever follows in life. Our sampling method was convenience sampling and it enabled us to access willing and ready people. No one felt pressured to answer so everyone volunteered and this allowed people to give the king of raw, honest response that can easily get lost when things are too formal or forced.

We remained concentrated on three anthropocentric works:

Academic Overwhelm— Frequency with which things begin to visibly mount and begin to seem as an unbearable burden.
Resilience Level— That inner conviction of themselves as gritty, the degree to which they believe in self to push them through rough circumstances.
Help seeking Behaviour—do they even make the step to utilize the mental health resources this close to campus is?

In order to process those 102 separate voices into something we could all interpret, we have processed the data using simple descriptive statistics, and given it a graphical treatment. Horizontal bar charts, stacked percentage bar charts, donut charts – these are not fancy decorations but rather straight forward maps that indicate where the cracks are located. They point at the thematic unmet points – the very points where strength has been exhausted and silence has replaced. Everything hinged on trust, at the start and the finish of it. The involvement was fully voluntary and absolutely anonymous, the amount of personally identifiable information gathered by us was zero. That anonymity provided actual security to the students who could be their vulnerable selves, tell the truth about what they were going through without fear of being judged and faced with reprimand. What emerged through this is a good and most certainly human snapshot of what it feels like to be the student it actually is to keep afloat in college today.

Indicate whether it sounds a bit too high on your voice or you prefer it to be a trifle more formal in a few parts, more emotionally expressive, shorter sentences, or any other possible

refinement. I retained the entire fullness and professionalism with the same making it sound as though someone is intensely interested in telling this story.

VI. RESULTS

The statistics of those 102 students provides us with crude, straight forward glimpse at the very interactions they are going through day-by-day, the problem of a right-hand squeeze against the background of a stricter that forces them to study, and the passion of the inner urge to look good tough that they continue to have to fight against. We have put it all in three major images and frankly speaking, they are not just charts or graphs. These are doors into real lives the lives of an entire group of students desperately clinging to their head above the water line at the same time as everything is drawing them down.

The severe truth of being overwhelmed. The initial graphic impression is a knock to the head: It depicts the frequency of the students being overwhelmed by their assignments.

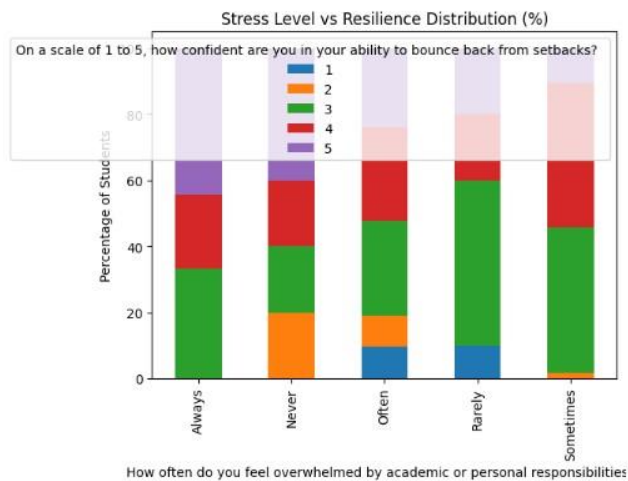
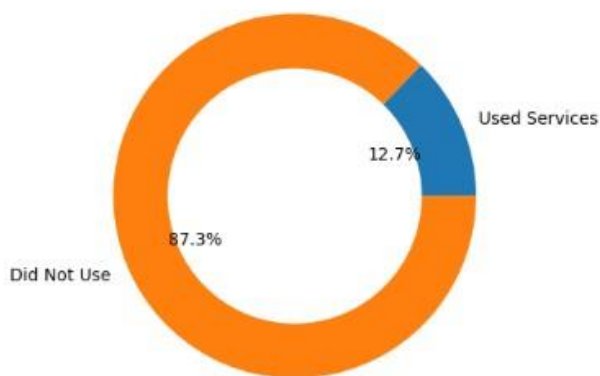


Fig. 1. Academic Overwhelm Distribution

And it is not some occasional stress that they run on. It is the air that they are breathing day by day. It is the incessant background noise of mental tension, to which this entire research was developed in order to shed light. The location of resilience in the real world. Spring that stress upon their perception of resilience, and it becomes even more complicated. Even with the students who report that they are overwhelmed, even often, their own perceived resilience mostly falls in the middle- think a 3 or 4 out of 5. Very few of them dared to commit themselves down to a 5, as they actually felt to be inviolable.

Actual Utilization of Mental Health Services



Here is the hard fact which comes through, these students possess real grit. They continue arriving, continuing to press. However, that grit is not a magic shield, it is not sufficient to gush the pressure and fuel their tanks again. Their way of coping is on fumes. It demonstrates that the resilience can get through the situation, but it is not capable of bearing the whole burden indefinitely. The silence of agony concerning help. Then the part that genuinely leaves you completely frozen, in spite of all this stress and moderately strong back-ups they are hinging on, a very small percentage of them have ever walked into a counselling centre or utilized the campus mental health resources. Most haven't, they are reluctant due to any reason possible silent hesitation, lack of knowledge on how or where

to begin, it is the voice that tells them, my troubles are not worth bothering anybody with.

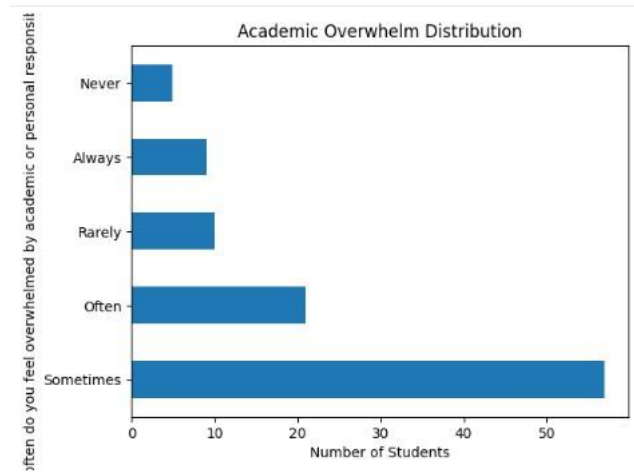


Fig. 3. Utilization of Institutional Mental Health Services

It is the deepest and most agonizing hole in the data. The students are in pain, they know that there is a way out, and yet they remain quiet. Hurting every single time, when you are in the middle of the support. Add it all up, and these data are really knocking hard: students are in a chronic state of stress, they have a real grit to push through, but hardly any of them is addressing the issue professionally.

Its not only statistics but an eye opener that the bridge between barely making it through and one actually receiving support is shattered. There is no use being resilient as an individual; pretence will not solve this. it is time to step over that bridge with such that seeking assistance is not heroic, risky and stupid, but rather like wisdom.

VII. DISCUSSION

These Results among the 102 students are not merely figures, it is a plain, straight forward mirror of how undergraduate life is today, that is, how it really is. The statistics reveal that the academic overwhelm is not rare anymore, as it has become the new reality. Most students consider they are often or sometimes (nearly no one reported to be rarely or never). Stress is the new reality and is wearing out their feelings, concentration, and equilibrium every single day. Then there is the agonistic so called "resilience paradox". Students rate their grit as intermediate – typically 3 or 4 out of 5- but not sufficient to be keeping pace with pressure increase. It serves as a cushion (slim), and not a shield. They continue to present themselves and pretend to be okay, but on the inside, they are operating on empty. They spend all their resources trying to survive, and cannot find time to recover, and seek assistance.

The most heart-breaking thing is that there can be difference in knowing they are struggling, and getting some assistance. They are very much stressed, but only a few actually avail themselves of the campus counselling and resources. Stigmatization is not the problem, or the absence of the information, but an ethos which dictates that to be a successful person, you have to survive on exhaustion. Professional assistance is a sort of last

Fig. 2. Stress Level vs. Resilience Distribution

resort measure, but not something you resort to when you are TLR: they no longer feel upheld. It is time to come to an end of expecting students to be able to manage everything independently and begin to make support seen normal, safe, and even smart, not an act of personal failure.

VIII. CONCLUSION

These are not simply statistics on a sample of 102 students, but a clear, straight forward, reflection of what the life of the undergrad actually is like nowadays. The figures indicate that academic overwhelming is no longer a rare case but rather a new reality. A majority of students regard to be rarely or never. They are day by day being weary of stress as a background that slowly wrings their feelings, concentration and balance.

The next one is the agonizing paradox of resilience. Grit is rated moderate by students (they often graduate with a 3 or 4 out of 5) but to an insufficient degree to cope with pressure increasing. It is but a blanket shield, not a shield really. They continue to appear and do not seem bad, but in the insides they are operating at full capacity. Their energies are expended on surviving and they have nothing left to recover or seek assistance.

The greatest disappointment is the distance between realising that they are struggling and support. They are experiencing serious stress, but hardly anyone takes the university counselling or services. It is not merely stigma and ignorance but a culture of saying that to be successful we must suffer exhaustion. Professional assistance is an act of desperation, which should be used when you are totally broken, and not when you are chronically exhausted and barely coping.

Conclusion: They are no longer being taken around just by being resilient. We must put an end to the robes and bells, and review, reread, and reconsider, and begin to feel perfectly nature and secure, and even intelligent, to ask students to be assisted rather than to work alone.

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