JETIR.ORG ISSN: 2349-5162 | ESTD Year : 2014 | Monthly Issue
JOURNAL OF EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES AND INNOVATIVE RESEARCH (JETIR)
An International Scholarly Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

"TO EVALUATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF LIFE SKILL TRAINING ON AN ACADEMIC STRESS AMONG STUDENTS OF SELECTED NURSING COLLEGES."

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Abstract: Background-: Nursing education is rigorous curriculum, demanding clinical requirements, and high academic expectations. An excess stress in nursing students' academics can result in adverse effects that are far reaching and prolonged. The Life skills to manage this stress includes stress management, time management problem solving and interpersonal communication. **Research Methodology**: In a quantitative approach to evaluate the effectiveness of life skill training on an academic stress among students of selected nursing colleges, research design was one group pretest posttest design. 74 nursing students included in study by Simple random sampling technique. **Result:** The distribution of stress score (Post) among participants categorized into three levels: Low stress, Average stress, and high stress. A majority of participants (55 individuals, 74.3%) fell within the low-stress range (0% to 33%), while 19 participants (25.7%) experienced average stress (34% to 66%). The minimum recorded stress score was 31, while the maximum was 89. The mean stress score was 53.68, with a standard deviation of 16.470, indicating variability in stress levels among participants. The comparison of stress score before (Pre) and after (Post) an intervention using a paired t-test. The mean pre-test stress score was 80.2703 with a standard deviation of 3.69115, while the mean post-test stress score. was 53.6892 with a higher standard deviation of 16.47075, indicating greater variability in post-test scores. The standard error mean for the pre-test was 0.42909, and for the post-test, it was 1.91469. The degrees of freedom (df) were 73, and the t-test value was 13.034. The P-value was <0.001, indicating a statistically significant difference between pre- and post-test stress scores. This suggests that the intervention had a significant impact on stress scores, leading to a decrease in mean stress score post-intervention. Hence H_1 is accepted. **Conclusion-** There is statistically significant reduction in academic stress after life skill training program among students of selected nursing colleges. So, life skill training program can be used to manage academic stress among nursing students.

***Keywords**: Academic stress, Life skill training.*

INTRODUCTION

Nursing education is an essential part in students' life and is also a turning point in their academic life. An excess stress in their academics during this phase can result in adverse effects that are far reaching and prolonged. The present study is an attempt to reduce an academic stress and its effects. The main objective of the research is to find out an impact of Life Skills Training Program on academic stress, depression and happiness among adolescent students.

Dr. Hemantha kumara, in Nov 2020, conducted a study on impact of life skills training on academic stress, depression and happiness among adolescent students. The study concludes that excess stress in their academics during this phase can result in adverse effects that are far reaching and prolonged. The present study is attempted to reduce an academic stress by administering life skill training among semester pattern nursing students.[1]

Bushra Amin et.al. conducted a study in 2023, stated that the importance of grades in society is increasing rapidly, worth of a person is being calculated by their academic performance, this leads to insecurity and lack of self confidence in students which causes stress. The stress level of college students is influenced by a range of factors, resulting in different levels of stress experienced during their time in college. This study aims to develop a tool that analyses the academic stress among university students.[2]

According to Kallol Roy et.al A study conducted October 2016 Journal of Indian Association for Child and Mental Health. Nursing education is known for its rigorous curriculum, demanding clinical requirements, and high academic expectations, students in nursing colleges often face significant stress due to the challenging nature of their course, clinical responsibilities and the need to balance academic demands with personal life skills surround a range of abilities that allow individuals to handle various challenges effectively. These skills include stress management, time management, problem solving and interpersonal communication.[3]

In a study conducted by Anupama and Sarda in Indian Journal of Neuroscience in 2020 on academic stress and levels of life skills among high school children stated that the adolescence is a transition period from childhood to adulthood, filled with adjustments in the areas of physical, psychological, academic, social and family relationships. The mid adolescents need to be equipped with life skills to handle the problems, solve day today issues, cope with academic stress and achieve good mental health. Through the present study an effort was made to evaluate the academic stress and the levels of ten life skills recommended by WHO among 240 school going adolescents to undertake intervention program to improve their stress coping abilities.[4]

According to Kumar p, Manisha, Bhardwaj M, et, al Academic Stress among Nursing Students at Abhilashi Nursing, college of India. Research Article Volume 4 Issue 4 Received Date: July 09, 2021 Published Date: August 28, 2020. IN The findings show that more than half 120 (60%) nursing students had moderate level of academic stress, less than half 52 (26%) nursing students had severe level of academic stress and 28 (14%) nursing students have mild level of academic level of academic stress. Most of the nursing students 77% revealed that the syllabus is too vast and worried about examination. Around 74% stated that the stress is due to the discrepancy between theory and practical classes. About 72.2% expressed that teacher makes too many extra demands on them. Hence it concluded that the maximum nursing students have moderate level of academic stress.[5]

Mamta Nebhinani, Ashok Kumar, et, al. Community Med. Published study in June 2020 which aims to assess stress and coping strategies among nursing students of Western Rajasthan. Nearly 82.4% of the students reported moderate level of stress. Interface worries (mean score 17.88 ± 4.9) and academic load (mean score 17.6 ± 4.78) were the major source of display stress. Students considered view of other professionals regarding nursing, lack of free time, and terror of examination as most likely reasons of their distress. Active coping was the most often used coping policies. Level of stress was found to have possible association with the interest of students in Nursing.[6]

Objectives:

1. To assess the level of academic stress among students of selected Nursing colleges.
2. To evaluate the effectiveness of life skill training on the management of academic stress among students of selected Nursing colleges.
3. To find association of study findings with selected demographic variables.

Assumptions:

Life Skill Training may have some effect on reduction of academic stress.

Hypotheses:

H_0: There is no significant difference between pre and post academic stress score after life skill training.
H_1: There is significant difference between pre and post academic stress score after life skill training.

MATERIAL AND METHODOLOGY:

Research Design: One group pretest- posttest design
Setting of the study: Selected Nursing Colleges

Population: In this study, the population consisted students of Nursing colleges.

Sample: In this study sample is B.Sc. Nursing Students who meets the inclusion criteria.

Sampling technique: Simple random sampling technique.

Sample size: 74 (calculated as per result of previous study)[2]

Sampling Criteria:

Inclusion Criteria: First and Third semester B.Sc. Nursing Students. Those who have given consent and willing to participate in study.

Exclusion Criteria: Those who have already undergone similar training.

Methods of measurements: Description of Tool

Section A: Demographic datasheet: This section consisted of 4 items for obtaining information about selected demographics factor such as Age, gender, type of family and residential area.
Section B: Academic stress scale. LASS (Lovely Academic Stress Scale) has been used in this study, which is standardized scale. LASS consists of 21 items. Responses of the items are in terms of 5-point Likert scale with score 5,4,3,2,1 with options Never, Almost Never, Sometimes, fairly often, very often respectively. Score: minimum- 21 and maximum -105.

Validity and Reliability: The Cronbach's alpha coefficient is a measure of internal consistency that assess the degree to which items in a research tool. Lovely Academic Stress Scale has demonstrated a high level of internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.910 for 21 items, indicating that the items in the tool are strongly correlated and measure the same underlying construct. A high correlation between the items of the research tool indicates that it measures what it intends to measure.[2]

Description of Intervention: World Health Organization defines Life Skills as "the abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life".

A life skill training of 3 hours was conducted with interactive sessions and activities to help students to manage academic stress. Following life skills components were included in training program. Holistic approach including physical, emotional, social and mental well-being. physical well-being includes diet and nutrition, sleep cycle, exercise, circadian rhythm and energy cycles. Emotional well-being includes limbic system, managing emotions, metacognition, and emotional resilience. Social well-being includes collaboration vs. competition, communication skills and soft skills, confirmation bias and first impressions. Mental well-being includes mind set, belief systems, victim mind set vs. problem solving mind set, time management and stress management, habit building and neuroplasticity.

Result

In this study 74 BSC Nursing students of research sample was obtained. Demographic variables were age, gender, type of family, residential area. Findings were age group 17-18 years participants 66.2%, Girls was 82.4 %,77% of nuclear family, residential area- rural area had low stress as compared to urban area. Stress findings of low stress score -83.6%, average stress score-78%, high stress score -0.0%. Life skill training was effective proven by statistical findings**.**

Table No.: 1 Assessment with level of pre- test stress score (n= 74)

Stress Score (Pre)	Score Range	Level of Stress Score	
		Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Low Stress	0% to 33 %	17	23.0
Average Stress	34% to 66%	37	50.0
High Stress	67% to 100%	20	27.0
Minimum Score		72	
Maximum Score		89	
Mean stress Score		80.27± 3.69115	

The table presents the Stress Score (Pre) distribution based on different levels of stress among participants. The stress scores are categorized into three levels: Low Stress (0% to 33%), Average Stress (34% to 66%), and High Stress (67% to 100%). Out of the total participants, 17 individuals (23.0%) had low stress levels, 37 individuals (50.0%) experienced average stress, and 20 individuals (27.0%) reported high stress. The minimum stress score recorded was 72, while the maximum score was 89. The mean stress score was 80.27 ± 3.69115, indicating a moderate level of overall stress performance with minimal variation. This distribution suggests that half of the participants experienced average stress levels, with fewer individuals in the low or high-stress categories, which may have implications for intervention strategies aimed at stress management.

Table No.: 2 Assessment with level of post – test stress score (n= 74)

Stress Score (POST)	Score Range	Level of Stress Score	
		Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Low Stress	0% to 33 %	55	74.3
Average Stress	34% to 66%	19	25.7
High Stress	67% to 100%	0	0.0
Minimum Score		31	
Maximum Score		89	
Mean Stress Score		53.68± 16.470	

Table presents the distribution of stress scores (POST) among participants, categorized into three levels: Low stress, Average stress, and High stress. A majority of participants (55 individuals, 74.3%) fell within the low-stress range (0% to 33%), while 19 participants (25.7%) experienced average stress (34% to 66%). Notably, no participants (0%) were categorized as having high stress (67% to 100%). The minimum recorded stress score was 31, while the maximum was 89. The mean stress score was 53.68, with a standard deviation of 16.470, indicating variability in stress levels among participants.

Table No:3 Significance of difference between stress score in pre- and post- test.

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	df	T-test	P-value
Stress score	Pre	80.2703	74	3.69115	0.42909	73	13.034	<0.001
	Post	53.6892	74	16.47075	1.91469			

The table presents the comparison of stress scores before (Pre) and after (Post) an intervention using a paired t-test. The mean pre-test stress score was 80.2703 with a standard deviation of 3.69115, while the mean post-test stress score was 53.6892 with a higher standard deviation of 16.47075, indicating greater variability in post-test scores. The standard error mean for the pre-test was 0.42909, and for the post-test, it was 1.91469. The degrees of freedom (df) were 73, and the t-test value was 13.034. The P-value was <0.001, indicating a statistically significant difference between pre- and post-test stress scores. This suggests that the intervention had a significant impact on stress scores, leading to a decrease in mean stress level post-intervention. Thus, H_1 is accepted.

DISCUSSION:

The present study demonstrates a significant reduction in academic stress among students following the implementation of a life skill training program. Before the intervention, a substantial portion of the students (50%) experienced average levels of stress, and 27% fell into the high-stress category. Post-intervention, the number of students reporting low stress increased dramatically to 74.3%, and notably, no students remained in the high-stress category. This shift clearly indicates the effectiveness of the life skill training program in reducing academic stress and improving students' emotional well-being.

While the post-intervention phase also showed a decrease in mean skill scores (from 80.27 ± 3.69 to 53.68 ± 16.47), this reduction does not necessarily suggest a decline in students' actual abilities. Rather, it may reflect reduced performance anxiety, more realistic self-assessment, or a shift in priorities as students developed better coping mechanisms. The statistically significant t-value ($t = 13.034$, $p < 0.001$) reinforces the impact of the intervention on stress reduction.

These findings align with those reported in earlier studies. Nebhinani et al. (2020) found that 82.4% of nursing students in Western Rajasthan experienced moderate stress levels, with primary stressors including academic load and interface worries. The study emphasized the importance of coping strategies and found a connection between stress levels and students' interest in the nursing profession. [6]

Similarly, Pattanayak (2020) observed that a structured life skill training program significantly reduced stress levels among adolescent nursing students in Odisha, with the mean stress scores dropping considerably after two phases of the intervention. [7]

CONCLUSION:

Academic stress of students can be managed by effective life skill training. Improved quality life skills programs can significantly reduce academic stress in students, particularly by improving coping mechanisms, emotional regulation, and decision-making skills, communication skills and relaxation therapy.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATION:

The present study was approved by the Institutional Ethical Committee of Government Medical College, Nagpur (IEC/2098/24 dated 23.2.2024). Written informed consent was obtained from each participant and purpose of study mentioned. Participants were informed that participation in this study is voluntary and they can withdraw at any time. Confidentiality was ensured throughout the study.

LIMITATION:

The study is time bound and it is limited to B.Sc. Nursing students.

RECOMMENDATION:

A similar study can be conducted on a large scale. A study can be conducted among students of other profession

Conflict of Interest: No conflict of interest exists.

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