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Vulnerability of the Graduating Students to Different Symptoms of Stress and Its Influence to Level of Satisfaction

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Abstract: Due to the numerous requirements needed to comply by the engineering students on their terminal year on college, they experienced different symptoms and intensity of stress that may affect their level of satisfaction towards the student services of the university. The study focused on the differences of the respondents' levels of experiencing physical, psychological and behavioural stresses when they are grouped according to gender, birth order, mode of residence and travel time going to the university. Student satisfaction towards basic student services of the university was also examined in the study. Results showed that headache, excess perspiration and fatigue were the most common symptoms of stressed being experienced by the students in terms of physical stress while negative thinking, tense and feeling of failure are the most common being encountered in terms of psychological stress and eating fast, making mistakes and restlessness in terms of behavioural stress. Middle Born Child students are experiencing significantly higher psychological and behavioural stress than First Born Child students. Stress is not a factor that influenced the level of satisfaction of the students towards the university services.

Keywords: *psychological stress, behavioural stress, physical stress, satisfaction level, student services*

Introduction

Stress is common among college students as they endeavour to adjust and adapt to a multitude of experiences that have never been encountered before while at school (Ong & Cheon, 2009). It is a natural phenomenon that sooner or later experienced by the most rapid increase in the number of students with health problems causes deep concern to parents, schools and wider community(Stevan, 2006). Assessing the stress level among college students has been a helpful addition to the understanding of student experiences and development. A chosen degree program in college is another factor that adds to the level of

stress being encountered by the students most especially if they are enrolled in engineering programs wherein the nature on how to deal with the courses are somewhat distinct from the other programs. Aside from the fact that they are already in their terminal year, they are also trying to finish their research papers, capstones and other requirements were too rigid to accomplish.

Health is being affected by stress. The symptoms can be identified from physical, psychological, and behavioural stressors (stresscourse.tripod.com). Students are susceptible for experiencing stress and anxiety that could affect their functions (Sadeghian & Pour, 2009). General questions regarding satisfaction of the students in the efficiency of the services rendered by the university is being looked into. The researchers want to determine if the students' satisfaction is being affected by the certain level of stress. Sources of stress must be identified to provide corrective and preventive actions. It is necessary for the university to provide student development activities that would remedy or alleviate the stress of the engineering students.

Materials and Methods:

This is a descriptive type of research that used quantitative analysis using survey questionnaires which are adapted from previous studies and researcher – made instrument regarding stress being encountered by the Engineering students. The questions for determining the symptoms or problems encountered by the respondents were taken from the list of "Signs and Symptoms of Stress" (stresscourse.tripod.com) wherein the researcher only included some symptoms commonly being experienced by the typical students.

Meanwhile, in determining the effect level of the common academic – related activities mostly inside the classroom to make the students feel stress is a researcher-made instrument. The instrument was administered by the researcher before the final examination. There were an overall 31 graduating engineering students Batch 2013 included in the study as respondents. Frequency count, percentage, weighted mean, Pearson-Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, T-test, Analysis of Variance were the statistical treatments utilized in analyzing the data gathered from the instrument.

Results and Discussion:

Engineering students are experiencing headache more frequently in a week for two (2) to three (3) times while the rest of the physical stress variables occurred only once a week and the least among them are difficulty falling asleep, increased heart rate and dizziness. In terms of psychological stress, engineering students are experiencing negative thinking, tense,

feeling a failure and irritability more frequently with two (2) to three (3) times a week. However, the least psychological stress variables being encountered by the students are the feeling of frustration, anxious and blaming others. Engineering students are experiencing physical stress and psychological stress only once a week which signifies a very low possibility of stress occurrence.

Eating fast, making mistakes, restlessness, difficulty relaxing and poor time management are the most behavioural stress being experienced frequently by the engineering students twice or thrice a week while the least among the behavioural stress variables are outburst of anger and crying. Behavioural stress is being experienced more frequently by the engineering students than psychological stress and physical stress as the least. The students who considered writing essays that contributed much to their level of stress have also experiencing high level of physical, psychological and behavioural stresses.

Gender is also believed to be a contributing factor to stress due to the nature of activities and biological experiences of both genders. Female engineering students have significantly higher level of stress of experiencing the feeling of failure than male. Female students showed more total stress than male students (Sadeghian & Pour, 2009). On the other hand, male students have significantly higher level of satisfaction in terms of assessing the Computer and Science Laboratories than female respondents. Male engineering students appreciate the activities in the laboratories that resulted to greater satisfaction than female.

Oral Presentation and/or Reporting have significantly contributed from moderate to much stress to female engineering students than male. Male engineering students are more relax than female during the reporting. Based on the interview conducted, females are conscious regarding the grade they will receive from the activity. They are aspiring to get high grades in oral reporting than males.

The type of residence is included as variable to identify the difference between the levels of stress of engineering students living with or without family members as well as the travel time going to school is also considered a factor that somehow adds to their dilemma. Travel time going to the university and mode of residence are not contributory factors to determine the level or intensity of stress as well as to identify the stress causing academic activities and level of satisfaction in the case of the engineering students of LPU. This implies that no matter how near or far and how long or short their travel time going to and from the university, these variables do not play a significant role in the level of stress.

Birth order defines the gravity of the responsibilities of each member in the family that

somehow requires extra hour to carry out submissively. These obligations sometimes consume the time allotted for studies. Middle Born Child students are experiencing significantly higher psychological stress and behavioural stress than First Born Child students. Middle born child students have higher level of experiencing difficulty falling to asleep compared to first born child students. Last born child students have higher tendency of experiencing psychological stress in terms of blaming others than the First born child students. First born child students have significantly lower tendency of being anxious than the youngest and middle born child students. Firstborns often tend to be reliable, conscientious, structured, cautious, controlling and achievers. Firstborns bask in their parents' presence, which may explain why they sometimes act like mini-adults (Dalband & Nasab, 2007).

The last and middle born child students have significantly higher tendency of experiencing tension and irritability than First born child students. Middle born child students have higher tendency of experiencing psychological stress and behavioural stress than first born child students. Middle born child students have more difficulty in relaxation, being impatient and outburst of anger compared to first born. Last born child students are more prone for not having enough time to sleep than first born. Middle born students have higher possibility of experiencing stress for having a lot of responsibilities in school than the first born. Middle children are tend to be people-pleasers, somewhat rebellious, thrive on friendships, has large social circle and peacemaker. Youngest children tend to be the most free-spirited due to their parents' increasingly laissez-faire attitude towards parenting the second time around (Voo, 2006).

The Engineering students were very highly satisfied to the services being offered by the College of Engineering and Counselling and Testing Center. Meanwhile, they were highly satisfied in the services provided by the accounting office, computer and science laboratories, janitorial services, cashier’s office, medical clinic and library. However, they were moderately satisfied in the services provided by the University Canteen. In terms of the teacher factor, they were highly satisfied in the way teachers gave motivation to them, method of teaching and delivery of instruction. Nevertheless, teachers still need to improve their classroom management. On the other hand, stress is not a significant factor that affects the level of satisfaction of the respondents towards the student services.

Conclusion:

Teenagers are normally facing with stress and feelings and when the level of stress increases, they may face with problems, which would become more serious as they get older (Zeinalian,

2012). Identifying the level of stress being encountered by the Engineering students would provide insights to the College of Engineering on how they will develop services to address the specific needs of the students. Student organizations under the college will also serve as good instrument to become a medium on how to deliver the programs that will handle such activities in stress management for the students. Engineering students during their terminal year must be given by the Counselling Center the stress debriefing activities so that they will be able to handle their courses of study better with less pressure. Teachers must coordinate with the other teachers in giving reasonable schedule of submitting projects and assignments. Number of extra-curricular activities for graduating students must be lesser than the lower years.

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