

PSYCHOLOGICAL STRESS OF COMPETITIVE EXAMS IN INDIA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO UGC-NET

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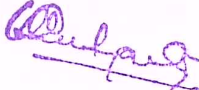
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Abstract

The current state of the planet, despite the advances in science, technology, and education. In most contexts, the term "education" refers to the acquiring of some form of teaching, information, training, or expertise in any area of human endeavour. However, the environment we live in now features a high level of competition at every turn. The level of competition is quite fierce in the educational sector, as it is in practically every other industry. Pupils live lives that are especially fraught with anxiety due to the many sources of pressure they are subjected to, including that of their peers, professors, and parents. In 2006, the pressure and stress of competitive examinations led to the deaths of six thousand people who committed themselves. Individuals committed suicide when the results of their examinations were announced each year because of their poor performance. India's population is the second largest in the world after China's. As a result, it should not come as much of a surprise that there is intense competition in virtually every industry. The ability to



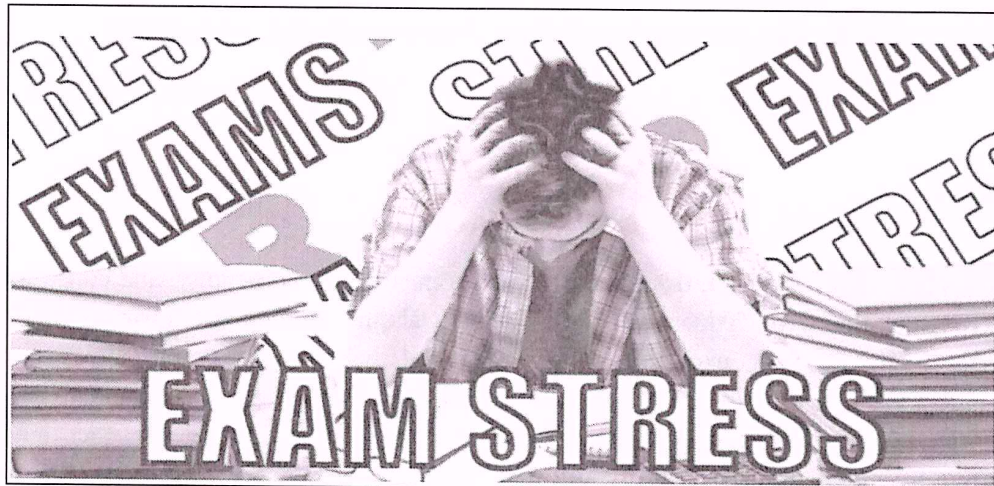

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perform better in the work market is facilitated by higher levels of education and graduation from reputable institutions. At all levels of education and work life in every country, there is a sense of competition for good results, grades, and good jobs. However, due to increasing huge stress rate in our country in the recent past, it has highlighted the urgent need to emphasise the seriousness of this domain and suggest the various remedies to combat and minimise the rising undue stress of the faculties. The purpose of this research article is to explore the repercussions of stress among faculty members who are participating in the UGC-NET competitive test and to assess the amount of stress that is caused by the UGC-NET competitive examination among sampled faculties. In the course of this research, the T-test was utilised by collecting data on six primary dimensions that lead to psychological strain. Respondents' responses were collected as primary data, while secondary sources were used to develop the theoretical framework.

Keywords: Psychological Stress, UGC-NET, Faculties, Competitive Exams, India

Introduction

Humans are increasingly susceptible to the negative effects of stress, which can lead to ill health. No matter what they do, they will eventually end up in a stressful situation. This is as a result of the fact that they prioritise their requirements for affiliation while attempting to link their hectic lives with jobs and studies. A real or perceived imbalance between an individual's capacity to adjust to the demands of their surroundings and the requirements of their environment can lead to stress in that individual. It not only causes physical illness but also mental illnesses such as anxiety, sadness, irritation, headaches, neck pain, asthma, ulcers, and so on in the life of an individual.



There are a variety of factors that can contribute to someone's experience of stress in their life. Those people may be fearful of losing a loved one, coming under pressure from their families, not having enough money, having too much work, or other things whereas other researchers discovered that students suffer high amounts of stress. When we focus on the students, we find that there is evidence that students do experience some stress (Brown &



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Ralph, 1999). It's possible that their stressor is enormous; among those, exams are a major contributor to the stress that students experience throughout their academic careers.

According to “Lee & Larson (2000) and Lou & Chi (2000)”, During the time of examinations, students often report feeling an unusually high level of disruption as well as pressure. According to the findings of a large number of studies, the primary cause of a variety of emotional problems that are the stepping stones to trauma disorder is stress endured during exam days. This test stress is caused by a number of circumstances, including pressure from the side of parents, concentration on the opinion of others, and contemplation of future growth, among other things. Psychological stress among students has been studied for a number of years. Faculties who are planning on taking the UGC-NET examination during their time at university are under a disproportionate amount of pressure. This is because management education is the foundation for developing the qualities and abilities that are necessary to successfully navigate an organisational setting. As a result, the UGC-NET agendas in universities comprise of numerous different curricula, which may be perceived as stressful by either students or faculty. When considering the faculty of an Indian university or college, one must also take into account the medium of education as a component that contributes to a significant percentage of the faculty's stress. However, there is no field of research that has been carried out to investigate the actual elements that cause stress among UGC-NET faculty members who are competing in this exam.

Review Literature

According to the findings of **Reddy et al. (2018)**'s study, the type of academic programme has no bearing on the total level of stress. On the other hand, stress should be addressed on three levels: the personal, the social, and the institutional. It has been discovered that several techniques, such as psychotherapy, yoga, training in life skills, mindfulness, meditation, and the feedback approach, can be helpful in overcoming the effects of stress. In their study from 2017, **Subramani and Kadhiravan** investigated the connection between the stress of academics and the mental health of students. The results of their investigation show a strong association between stress caused by academics and mental health. The pupils are subjected to a great deal of pressure from both the school and their parents over their academic achievement; nevertheless, they do not receive equally good guidance. When students exhibit behaviour that is constructive and consistent in the academic forums, we can say that their mental health is good. According to the findings of the study, there is a discernible gap between the psychological well-being of pupils attending public and private educational institutions. He stated that pupils attending private schools benefit from a unique nurturing environment and extensive exposure, in contrast to students attending government schools, who come from less affluent socioeconomic backgrounds and have less overall experience. This is one of the reasons why the level of tension has increased recently. The study by **Deb et al. (2014)** was conducted on 400 male students & these students were in years 10 and 12, respectively. It was discovered that 35% of students suffer from high levels of academic stress, and that 37% of students suffer from high levels of anxiety. The results of



research carried out by **Manjula et al. (2012) & Edmunds (1984)** indicate that the causes of exam stress and anxiety are a change in the medium of instructions, test anxiety, fear of failure, as well as competitiveness for grades. According to the findings of a study that was carried out by **Saima R. and Qadir B. (2011)**, factors such as the setting of the test hall, shorter attendance in class, examination pattern, and the behaviour of invigilation staffs all received scores that were greater than 3. According to the findings of the research, the academic performance of university students is influenced by a variety of elements, including educational, psychological, and physical aspects. According to the findings of **Takatsuji K and colleagues' (2008)** research, the timing of examinations is an optimal factor that causes mental stress in students. . According to **Chafra (2006)**'s findings, university students face stressful situations as a result of the pressure to perform well on examinations and the limited amount of time they are given.

Objective of the study

- To identify the level of stress for UGC-NET competitive examination among sampled faculties
- To study the consequences of the stress among faculties for UGC-NET competitive examination

Hypothesis of the Study

H01: There is no significant stress level associated with sampled faculties for UGC-NET competitive exams.

Ha1: There is significant stress level associated with sampled faculties for UGC-NET competitive exams.

H02: There are no many consequences of the stress among faculties for UGC-NET competitive examination.

Ha2: There are many consequences of the stress among faculties for UGC-NET competitive examination.

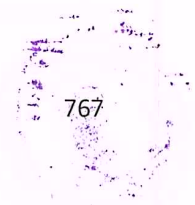
Research Methodology

This research has opted many sources to capture data. Primary source is used on the basis of structured questionnaire of 100 respondents purposefully selected from private higher education institutions/Universities/Colleges. The sampling area is Tamil Nadu, Kerala & Maharashtra. As per convenience sampling methodology, approached only those faculties, who are appearing in UGC-NET or who has already cleared UGC-NET examination. Approached respondents on call first & then asked to fill questionnaire. Secondary data has been collected from various manuals, articles, google search & government websites. Through a survey, the study's authors zeroed down on their most valuable respondents. This study was conducted in the city of Kerala, Pune & Maharashtra



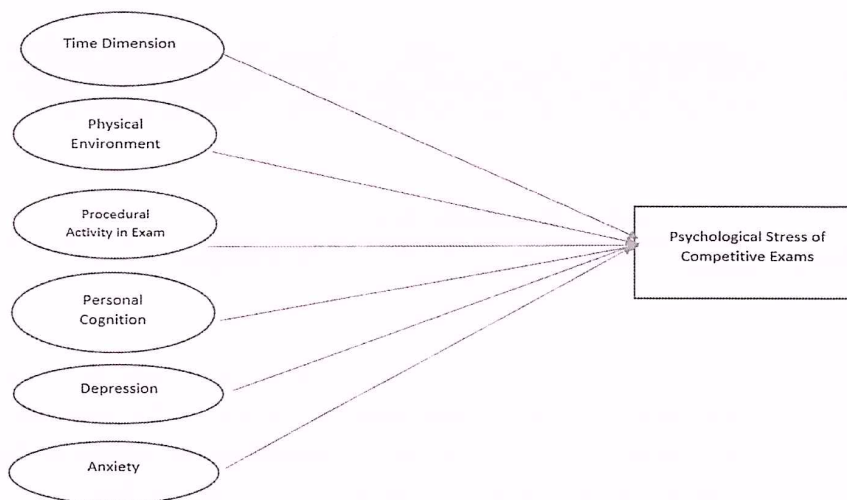
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S.No.	Items of Research Blueprint	Description
1.	Selection of sample	Faculties in the private higher education institutions/Universities/Colleges. constituted the study population. Approached only those faculties, who are appearing in UGC-NET or who has already cleared UGC-NET examination A total of 100 people were chosen through purposive sampling.
2.	Location of Research	Kerala, Tamil Nadu & Maharashtra
3.	Type of Instrument used for research	Structured questionnaire based on survey responses used for research.
4.	Software used for analysis	SPSS Software used for the analysis of the study.
5.	Dimensions Taken	Time dimension, Physical environment, Procedural activity in exam, Personal cognition, Depression, Anxiety

The conceptual framework for the study



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Result and Discussion**Demographic Analysis****Table 1: Demographic Analysis**

Demographic Analysis			
Gender		Frequency	Percent
	Male	35	35%
	Female	65	65%
Age	25-30	35	35%
	30-35	45	45%
	35 and above	20	20%
Marital Status	Married	78	78%
	Unmarried	22	22%
Education Level	Post-Graduation	60	60%
	Ph.D	25	25%
	Others	15	15%

Table : Reliability Test

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.670	.6

A reliability test has been carried out using SPSS in order to determine the internal consistency of the instrument using an average inter-item correlation as the basis for the analysis. The results of each variable's Cronbach's alpha test, as well as the overall findings, are presented in the table above. If the Cronbach's alpha score is higher than 0.60, the instrument is deemed to have a high level of reliability and a good level of internal consistency of the data and scale. On the basis of this, the findings of each of the six



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parameters of the Examination stress indicate strong dependability, with the overall result showing 0.670. As a result, it can be concluded that the measurement that was utilised in this investigation was likewise a good instrument.

All 06 dimensions at a glance:

1. Time Dimension: When time is taken into consideration as a significant aspect, it results in increased feelings of worry and depression during the testing period. The length of the examination, the pressure to finish the syllabus as quickly as possible before the examination, the amount of time that passes before the next examination, and inadequate or extensive revision times are all examples of time-related factors that contribute to stress during examination periods. According to Goodman (1993), time is considered to be one of the stressors that are impacting the faculties in preparation for the UGC-NET competitive test.

2. Physical environment : During the time of the UGC-NET examination, the physical environment of the examination hall could be regarded a factor that causes stress. During the assessment, aggravation and fury should be caused by factors such as a noisy setting, damaged furniture, and bad lighting of the surroundings.

3. Procedural activity in exam: Stress might be caused among faculty members when there is disruption during an examination. Exams' procedures such as verifying ID cards, signing in application forms, and filling out lengthy instructions on answer sheets can be a source of stress for instructors when students are taking exams; as a result, the level of pressure will increase in the examination room.

4. Personal cognition: The personal ideas that run through the minds of faculty members throughout the exam also contribute to the stress they feel. During an examination, feelings of despair and pressure might be brought on by thoughts of failing the test, comparing yourself to others, or being afraid of receiving worse grades. According to Goodman (1993), stressors that are self-imposed impair a person's capacities in the same way that other stressors do.

5. Depression : Depression is also one of the main cause for psychological stress among faculties for UGC-NET examination. Depression comes from family pressure & college/University pressure to clear the examination at any cost to sustain in job.

6. Anxiety : Due to anxiety, sometimes faculties can confuse in all concepts & syllabus. During UGC-NET exam they feel gastric or uneasiness that divert their focus in examination hall.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics						
	N	Minimu m	Maximu m	Mean	Std. Deviation	
Personal Cognition	100	1	5	3.23	.833	
Time Dimension	100	1	5	3.35	.768	
Physical Environment	100	1	5	3.01	.702	

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Procedural Activity in Exam	100	1	5	3.12	.723
Depression	100	1	5	2.89	.717
Anxiety	100	1	5	3.29	.823
Valid N (listwise)	100				

Table 2 depicted the descriptive analysis and identify that time dimension having highest mean which shows that psychological stress occurs due time variant (Mean = 3.35 and Standard Deviation = .768). Whereas on the basis of respondents' analysis, another stress generating dimension is anxiety (Mean = 3.29 and Standard Deviation = .823), during exam faculties feel some gastric problem, nervousness or uneasiness all such symptoms generate due to anxiety. Another important stressful activity is personal cognition (Mean = 3.23 and Standard Deviation = .833) which means while writing exam, a though comes in mind like grade, fail in examination etc. On the other hand, procedural activity, depression & physical environment in UGC-NET exam is least bothered.

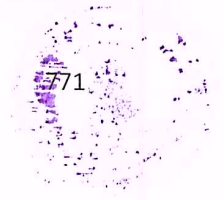
Table 3: One-Sample Test
One-Sample Test

Test Value = 0

	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Personal Cognition	89.832	100	.000	3.181	3.21	3.29
Time Dimension	95.587	100	.000	3.423	3.26	3.37
Physical Environment	76.921	100	.000	2.889	2.99	3.10
Procedural Activity in Exam	84.753	100	.000	3.425	3.11	3.28
Depression	68.991	100	.000	3.207	2.84	3.49
Anxiety	92.337	100	.000	3.321	3.17	3.30



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This table depicted that t-test value for time dimension is high (T-test value = 95.587), which confers that time dimension impact majorly during UGC-NET examination while anxiety dimension places at second position (T-test value = 92.337), this means in order to control anxiety in examination hall for UGC-NET exam, it impulsively create psychological stress. Similarly, personal cognition having (T-test value = 89.832), which describes that fear to fail in exam or less marks, grades etc creates huge stress in mind & divert concentration in examination hall.

Hypothesis Testing Results

The observed findings of the study highlight that time is the most important dimension which somehow the main reason of creating psychological stress. Although, faculties know about the timings & duration of the exam very well but sometimes they focus on long & typical questions which results, the time lapses very fast and ultimately keep on stressing at the same and therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected & alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Future Research

Researchers in the fields of psychology and education have recently started concentrating their research proposals on the topic of stress. They largely stayed in the fields of professional stress, stressful life events, and stress owing to various chronic diseases and conditions, among other types of stress. However, less attention has been paid to the issue of examination stress among faculty, particularly UGC-NET, despite the fact that this is a current day need in the field of education, where the emphasis is placed on mobilising and directing the inner potentialities of faculty to better deal with challenges and achieve greater success.

Conclusion

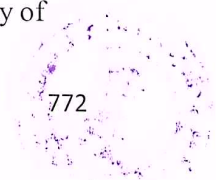
Exam stress is a specific kind of stress that almost everyone has at some point in their lives, although the reasons why someone would have such a sensation can vary widely depending on the circumstances and the setting in which they find themselves. The degree to which a faculty member experiences such stress might also vary from one faculty member to the next. Stress can occur in a person's life when their goals and aspirations are unrealistically high, but their skills, interests, attitudes, and capacities do not match up with those goals. An individual faculty member may be exceptional in a restricted field, but when that individual faculty member strives to be exceptional in other aspects of life without taking into account their own capabilities or underestimating their own selves, they may experience stress.

The characteristics of examination stress have been chosen for the purpose of research, in particular because of the relationship that it has with an individual's cognitive functioning. Personal Cognition, Time Dimension, Physical Environment, Procedural Activity in Exam, Depression, and Anxiety are the aspects that have been chosen for this particular study's selection of dimensions. In the event of a UGC-NET examination, educational institutions respond in the same manner as the aforementioned dimensions. It has not yet been determined whether or not more experienced faculty view the examination as a challenge and use their utmost effort to perform at the highest possible level. Time possesses a variety of



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characteristics, any one of which may assist the faculties in acting in a particular manner in response to upcoming possibilities. The stress of examinations plays a part in every aspect of life, despite the fact that certain faculties strive to achieve a standard of excellence in every aspect of life. It is possible for it to change depending on factors such as the level of personal cognition, time dimension, physical environment, procedural activity in the exam, anxiety, and depression. As a result, the investigator decided to conduct the present study to address the topic of the psychological stress that is associated with competitive exams, specifically with reference to India's UGC-NET.

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