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College Student Stress

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to clarify college student stress levels and understand possible correlations to their environments. Is there a difference in student stress levels based on their ages or genders? Is there a difference in student stress levels based on their perception of high stress? The participants of this research consisted of (N=99) undergraduate college students. A modified stress scale, College Student Stress, was administered to measure the students various stressors and a t-test was used to evaluate the significant differences between variables. The results of this study showed that there were significant differences between the variables; traditional and nontraditional students, genders, and perceived stress levels.

BACKGROUND

Research addressing student stressors is particularly important considering several potential stressors are rising among college students (Hurst, Baranik, & Daniel, 2012). In a study of undergraduate students there appears to be minimal significant gender differences in stress levels among college students (Feldt & Updegraff, 2013). Results of a study conducted on traditional and nontraditional student showed that nontraditional students were more learning-goal oriented and less performance-goal oriented than traditional students, had higher GPAs., and significant relationships to stress were found, among other variables (Bennett, Evans, & Riedle, 2013). It is a common assumption that the impact of a stressful event is, to some degree, determined by ones perception to their own stressfulness (Cohen, Kamack, & Mermelstein, 1983).

METHODS

The purpose of this quantitative comparative analysis study was to determine stressors that influence stress levels in college students. This study was a quasi-experimental design. An IRB was sent to Montana Tech and the University of Montana Institutional Review Board and was approved for this study. Using a sample of convenience, (N=99), traditional and nontraditional, male and female undergraduate college students were given a survey to fill out that pertained to their current stressors to determine stress levels. There were (n=73) traditional, (n=26) nontraditional, (n=45) females and (n=54) males. A modified version of the ASU wellness test was used. Paired samples t-tests were used to evaluate the data.

RESULTS

Table 1
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances for Comparison of Traditional and Non-Traditional Students

Variable	M	SD	t	p
<i>Make New Friends</i>			1.49	
18-24	3.51	1.02		.016*
25+	3.27	.919		
<i>Significant Other</i>			-.783	
18-24	3.33	1.59		.437
25+	3.62	1.60		
<i>Experienced Death of Close Friend</i>			1.35	
18-24	3.12	1.46		.072
25+	2.46	1.61		
<i>Parents' Marriage Successful</i>			1.05	
18-24	3.00	1.62		.311
25+	2.62	1.63		
<i>Terminally Ill Family Member</i>			2.46	
18-25	3.96	1.09		.807
25+	3.88	1.40		
<i>Experienced Death of Family Member</i>			1.07	
18-24	3.26	1.53		.293
25+	2.83	1.76		
<i>Pursuing Best Degree</i>			-1.34	
18-25	3.81	1.02		.186
25+	4.12	.993		
<i>Overwhelmed in Classes</i>			-1.12	
18-25	2.62	1.01		.271
25+	2.92	1.26		
<i>Financial Aid</i>			3.00	
18-25	2.40	1.39		.003**
25+	1.54	.706		
<i>Poverty</i>			3.22	
18-25	3.79	1.19		.002**
25+	2.83	1.54		
<i>Middle Income</i>			2.15	
18-25	3.75	.925		.034*
25+	3.27	1.15		
<i>Wealthy</i>			3.25	
18-25	2.49	1.14		.002**
25+	1.77	.908		
<i>Currently Employed</i>			1.60	
18-25	2.55	1.47		.115
25+	2.04	1.18		
<i>Came to Butte for MT Tech</i>			.624	
18-25	3.55	1.42		.536
25+	3.33	1.41		
<i>Living in Dorms</i>			2.09	
18-25	2.44	1.59		.039*
25+	1.73	1.12		
<i>Comfortable with Roommate</i>			2.00	
18-25	3.25	1.36		.032
25+	2.62	1.39		
<i>First Time Outside Parents Home</i>			3.13	
18-25	3.12	1.53		.000***
25+	1.50	.860		
<i>Often Drink Alcohol</i>			-2.98	
18-25	3.38	1.29		.004**
25+	4.19	.891		

Table 2
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances for Comparison of Stress Levels of College Students

Variable	M	SD	t	p
<i>Make New Friends</i>			-.131	
No- High Stress	3.65	.883		.896
Yes- High Stress	3.68	1.16		
<i>Significant Other</i>			-2.89	
No- High Stress	2.98	1.54		.005**
Yes- High Stress	3.87	1.53		
<i>Experienced Death of Close Friend</i>			-.181	
No- High Stress	2.92	1.52		.857
Yes- High Stress	2.99	1.54		
<i>Parents' Marriage Successful</i>			1.92	
No- High Stress	3.19	1.66		.058
Yes- High Stress	2.57	1.54		
<i>Terminally Ill Family Member</i>			1.58	
No- High Stress	4.12	1.08		.118
Yes- High Stress	3.74	1.24		
<i>Experienced Death of Family Member</i>			-2.36	
No- High Stress	3.12	1.59		.814
Yes- High Stress	3.19	1.61		
<i>Pursuing Best Degree</i>			-.637	
No- High Stress	3.83	1.06		.526
Yes- High Stress	3.96	.977		
<i>Overwhelmed in Classes</i>			3.93	
No- High Stress	3.08	1.01		.000***
Yes- High Stress	2.28	1.02		
<i>Financial Aid</i>			1.26	
No- High Stress	2.33	1.35		.212
Yes- High Stress	2.00	1.23		
<i>Poverty</i>			1.91	
No- High Stress	3.79	1.14		.059
Yes- High Stress	3.28	1.51		
<i>Middle Income</i>			-.685	
No- High Stress	3.69	.875		.495
Yes- High Stress	3.55	1.14		
<i>Wealthy</i>			1.47	
No- High Stress	2.46	1.09		.144
Yes- High Stress	2.13	1.15		
<i>Currently Employed</i>			1.50	
No- High Stress	2.62	1.37		.138
Yes- High Stress	2.19	1.44		
<i>Came to Butte for MT Tech</i>			.463	
No- High Stress	3.56	1.48		.644
Yes- High Stress	3.42	1.36		
<i>Living in Dorms</i>			2.17	
No- High Stress	2.56	1.56		.032*
Yes- High Stress	1.91	1.38		
<i>Comfortable with Roommate</i>			3.46	
No- High Stress	3.52	1.23		.001***
Yes- High Stress	2.60	1.41		
<i>First Time Outside Parents Home</i>			1.54	
No- High Stress	2.92	1.57		.128
Yes- High Stress	2.45	1.52		
<i>Often Drink Alcohol</i>			-.482	
No- High Stress	3.65	1.67		.631
Yes- High Stress	3.53	1.33		

Table 3
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances for Comparison of Genders Among College Students

Variable	M	SD	t	p
<i>Make New Friends</i>			-.790	
Male	3.74	.894		.432
Female	3.58	1.16		
<i>Significant Other</i>			-.861	
Male	3.28	1.56		.392
Female	3.56	1.63		
<i>Experienced Death of Close Friend</i>			1.69	
Male	3.19	1.42		.095
Female	2.67	1.61		
<i>Parents' Marriage Successful</i>			2.21	
Male	3.22	1.61		.029*
Female	2.51	1.58		
<i>Terminally Ill Family Member</i>			3.12	
Male	4.26	.805		.002**
Female	3.56	1.41		
<i>Experienced Death of Family Member</i>			1.51	
Male	3.37	1.44		.135
Female	2.89	1.73		
<i>Pursuing Best Degree</i>			-1.81	
Male	3.72	1.02		.074
Female	4.00	.996		
<i>Overwhelmed in Classes</i>			1.36	
Male	2.83	1.00		.177
Female	2.53	1.16		
<i>Financial Aid</i>			2.34	
Male	2.44	1.30		.021*
Female	1.84	1.24		
<i>Poverty</i>			.824	
Male	3.65	1.32		.412
Female	3.42	1.39		
<i>Middle Income</i>			-.354	
Male	3.57	.924		.581
Female	3.69	1.10		
<i>Wealthy</i>			-.064	
Male	2.30	1.08		.949
Female	2.31	1.20		
<i>Currently Employed</i>			2.27	
Male	2.70	1.37		.025*
Female	2.07	1.40		
<i>Came to Butte for MT Tech</i>			1.64	
Male	3.70	1.47		.105
Female	3.24	1.32		
<i>Living in Dorms</i>			4.61	
Male	2.83	1.63		.000***
Female	1.56	.967		
<i>Comfortable with Roommate</i>			4.18	
Male	3.57	1.18		.000***
Female	2.49	1.41		
<i>First Time Outside Parents Home</i>			3.95	
Male	3.22	1.53		.000***
Female	2.07	1.36		
<i>Often Drink Alcohol</i>			-1.16	
Male	3.46	1.18		.251
Female	3.76	1.32		

CONCLUSION

Stress in college students is a common occurrence, the variance of stressors in an individual's life are based on their personal environments and influences. According to the results of this research, there appears to be significant differences in all three of the variables listed. When looking at traditional and nontraditional students, an example of a significant difference is in the consumption of large quantities of alcohol. Traditional students seem to consume more than those students who are of nontraditional age. In the data based on the differences in genders, an example of significant difference is in current employment. The data appears to show that females surveyed were currently employed more often than the males. When comparing the data based on students perceived levels of stress, an example of significant difference appears within the category of feeling overwhelmed in classes. Those who indicated that they had a