

Impact of Mindfulness on Academic Stress among Management Undergraduates in State Universities in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Academic stress is one form of stress that is essential to address in university students to improve mental health and academic performance. Mindfulness has been recognised in the international literature as one of the effective strategies of minimising stress, yet it is not widely utilised in the context of Sri Lankan higher education. Accordingly, this study intended to identify the impact of mindfulness on academic stress among management undergraduates, with special reference to state universities in Sri Lanka. The research used a quantitative research design where mindfulness was considered as the independent variable and academic stress as the dependent variable. The data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed physically and via Google Forms to a sample of 209 management undergraduates from two Metropolitan and two peripheral state universities in Sri Lanka, namely the University of Colombo, the University of Kelaniya, the University of Ruhuna, and the Rajarata University of Sri Lanka. The questionnaire measured respondents' levels of mindfulness and academic stress using validated Likert scale items. Statistical analyses, including both descriptive and inferential techniques, were conducted using SPSS 25 version. The regression model revealed that mindfulness accounted for 14.3% of the variance in academic stress among management undergraduates. Accordingly, the independent variable, namely mindfulness ($\beta = -0.379$, $p < 0.01$), showed a significant negative effect on academic stress among the management undergraduates. The study's results show that it's important for universities to include mindfulness-based interventions in their programmes to help students better manage their emotions, pay attention, and deal with stress. Theoretically, this finding adds to the body of knowledge regarding the relevance of mindfulness in the context of higher education in Sri Lanka, along with supporting practical interventions like incorporating mindfulness-based training into student development programmes.

Keywords: academic stress, management undergraduates, mindfulness, state universities, Sri Lanka