OFFICIAL ABSTRACT and CERTIFICATION

Evaluation of Academic Stress on Intellectual Performance through the Stroop Effect

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The dilemma of academic failure has spiked in recent years, increasing the number of failing students in New York by thousands (Serrano, 2019). One of the primary reasons for failure itself is stress and its impact on an individual's psychological demeanor. The purpose of this study was to test whether or not academic stress directly impacts intellectual performance. High School students (n = 55) between the ages of 15-17 were randomly selected to voluntarily complete an academically modified version of Sheldon Cohen's Perceived Stress Scale survey followed by a Stroop Task during the month of December and again in January just before midterms. A correlation matrix was conducted between stress levels and stroop test results $r = 0.041$ and a $p = 0.767$ for December, and $r = 0.135$ and a $p = 0.320$ for January, showing no significant correlation. However, female students reported a statistically significant higher stress levels than males $t(54) = 3.924$ $p < .001$. Students with medium workloads and high stress levels performed best on the Stroop Task, suggesting that students with moderate levels of stress and workloads displayed optimal performance.

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