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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND STRESS MANAGEMENT AT COLLEGE LEVEL

Umair Mehmood*[1], Naila Iram[2], Syeda Aziz un Nisa[3], Memoona Tahir[4], Waqas A. Khan[5]

*[1]Department of Education, Alhamd Islamic University Islamabad, [2]Faculty of Education, International Islamic University, Islamabad, [3]Fatima Jinnah university, Rawalpindi, [4]Department of Business Administration, Superior University Lahore, [5]Fellowship Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, Hiroshima University Japan

*[1]umairabid2016@gmail.com

Corresponding Author: *

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the complex relationship between co-curricular activities and stress management among college students, aiming to assess stress levels, explore the association with engagement in extracurricular pursuits, and identify the impact of co-curricular activities on stress management. The objectives encompassed assessing stress management, examining the relationship between co-curricular activities and stress, and understanding the effect of such activities on stress levels. A quantitative research design was employed, utilizing a cross-sectional survey approach with a sample of 300 college students (150 males, 150 females) from a private college in Rawalpindi. A self-developed questionnaire was administered, consisting of demographic information, stress management, and details of co-curricular activities. The questionnaire underwent content validation and reliability testing, ensuring its relevance and internal consistency. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression were employed for data analysis. The major findings reveal a significant positive correlation ($r = 0.56$, $p < 0.001$) between engagement in co-curricular activities and reported stress management. Regression analysis indicates that engagement in co-curricular activities significantly predicts stress levels ($B = 0.45$, $p < 0.001$). However, caution is advised in inferring causation, and future research is encouraged to explore the nuanced mechanisms underlying this relationship. These findings contribute to the understanding of stress dynamics in the context of co-curricular engagement, providing valuable insights for educational institutions seeking to enhance student well-being through targeted interventions and support services.

Keywords: Stress management, co-curricular, activities, students, development, engagement.

INTRODUCTION

In the ever-changing world of higher education, a student's college experience encompasses more than just their academic endeavors; it also involves their overall development (Amirkhan et al., 2020). Students frequently struggle with high stress management due to the demanding academic obligations, which can have serious consequences for both their general well-being and academic performance (Bartkus et al., 2012). Consequently, there is now a superior focus on comprehending and applying practical stress management techniques in the context of higher education.

One crucial topic of research to examine is the relationship among extracurricular and stress management in higher education. Additional events, co-curricular programmes, and different types of experiential learning are all included in the category of organised educational experiences that go beyond standard classroom instruction (Behtoui, 2019). These are known as curricula. In addition to providing opportunities for skill development, these

activities may also be used as coping strategies and a way to decompress (Amirkhan & Kofman, 2018).

The motivation for examining this relationship stems from the understanding that a person's time in college is a critical one, full of changes, difficulties, and chances for both intellectual and personal development (Ben-Zur & Zeidner, 2012). It is critical for educators, administrators, and legislators to comprehend how extracurricular activities may support stress management as stress becomes an almost constant companion for many pupils (Braun-Lewensohn et al., 2015). By figuring out how these two things are related, we may be able to find strategies that maximize the beneficial effects of curriculum activities on stress reduction and create a more encouraging and supportive learning environment (Britt-Lutter et al., 2017).

This study aims to investigate the complex relationship that exists between stress management at the collegiate level and extracurricular activities. Researcher aim to uncover patterns, correlations, and underlying mechanisms that offer insight on how particular curricular activities may affect college students' ability to handle stress through empirical inquiry and analysis (Buckley & Lee, 2021). The goal of this study's conclusions is to improve educational practices by providing information on how to create and carry out curricula that improve academic results while simultaneously making a major positive impact on college students' general mental health and well-being. By doing this, researchers hope to add to the current conversation about student wellbeing and the development of learning environments that support students' intellectual and emotional growth.

OBJECTIVES

1. To assess the stress management of college students.
2. To find out the relationship between co-curricular activities and stress management at college level.
3. To identify the effect of co-curricular activities on stress management of college students.

HYPOTHESIS

H_{01}: There is no significant difference in the stress management among college students.

H_{02}: There is no significant correlation between engagement in co-curricular activities and stress management among college students.

H_{03}: There is no significant effect of co-curricular activities on stress management among college students.

LITERATURE

The transactional model of stress served as the basis for Lazarus and Folkman's influential study on psychological responses to stress. A specific interaction between an individual and their surroundings that they see as straining or exceeding their resources and jeopardizing their well-being is called stress (Chan, 2016).Every situational demand, referred to as a "stressor," is evaluated by an individual as either a challenge or a threat to their well-being (Çivitci, 2015). People employ a variety of coping mechanisms to get over stressful situations (Craft, 2012; Covay & Carbonaro, 2010). Focusing on emotions and problem-focused coping are the two categories of coping techniques (Deb et al., 2014). Actions, ideas, and tactics that manage the emotional suffering associated with stressful experiences are referred to as emotion-focused coping (Frydenberg, 2018). On the other side, problem-focused coping places more of an emphasis on planning, gathering knowledge, and managing disputes in order to handle or resolve issues that obstruct objectives and cause discomfort. Additionally, coping is evaluated by coping style and coping behaviour assessments. Style describes how a person responds to stresses in their thoughts and behaviours, while coping behaviour relates to how the person interacts with traumatic situations (Guilmette et al., 2019). Educational anxiety management and results Psychological stress and coping theories have been extensively researched in the context of scholars (Amirkhan & Kofman, 2018; Amirkhan et al., 2019), where a scholar's workload can be very demanding, leading to academic stress. "Those situational demands in an academic setting (assessments, completing time limits for tasks, social relations) that excise the challenge or exceed a student's coping resources" is how Ben-Zur and Zeidner (2012) defined educational hassle." While a student's

endeavour to meet these demands is characterised as cognitive and behavioural, it is important to distinguish between emotional and problematic-intensive managing (Hurst et al., 2013). Managing improves students' capacity to manage academic stress and acts as a intermediary amid pressure and theoretical results (Amirkhan et al., 2019). According to Idrissi. (2020), students that employ problematic-intensive managing exhibit superior academic performance and attain greater academic outcomes. The meta-analysis conducted by Jackson and Tomlinson (2022) revealed that emotional-focused coping plays a crucial influence in predicting retention and performance. But Khan et al. (2016) discovered no connection among emotional-focused coping and academic standing. These contradictory results highlight the dearth of knowledge regarding coping mechanisms in the academic setting (Amirkhan et al., 2019).Past research has looked at how academic stress affects a variety of outcome measures, such as students' mental health (Knifsend, 2020), academic performance (Kulp et al., 2021), emotional comfort (Lee et al., 2012), college idler (Walburg, 2014), and feelings of suicide (Khan et al., 2015). According to Young et al. (2020), a student-led intervention for positive psychological well-being serves as a protective barrier against academic stress. Kulp et al. (2021) conducted empirical research revealing that managing methods intercede the association between theoretical anxiety and recital. However, there is a gap in research examining the broader effect of educational trauma on students' general moot conclusions, including both their academic performance (grades) and overall well-being. ECA, as defined by Lau et al. (2014), refers to non-academic activities under the school's auspices, occurring outside usual teaching space hours and not portion of the program. These actions encompass student clubs related to societal development, science, music, debate, dance, theater, environmental awareness, sports, recreation, religious organizations, scouts, student council, and various social events (Idrissi, 2020).

Researchers from educational, sociological, and psychological backgrounds have extensively studied the effects of ECA on students' academic achievement (Buckley & Lee, 2018; Lau et al., 2013). Participation in ECA has remained related to the growth of knowledge, services, and attitudes enhancing cognitive abilities related to human rights, citizenship, responsibilities, and environmental sustainability, as observed in middle school children (Idrissi, 2020). Previous studies also highlight that ECA participants tend to be more employable, with positive impacts on their future learning goals, school engagement, and GPA (Jackson et al., 2021; Lau et al., 2013; Thompson et al., 2013; Tran, 2017). According to Kulp et al. (2021), scholars engaging in extracurricular grounds actions typically achieve higher cumulative GPAs than their non-participating peers. Participation in ECA not only enhances the educational experience but also improves soft skills, instills robust effort conducts, inspires cooperation, fosters originality and boasting services, and enhances independence, authority management, and social and intellectual skills (Thompson et al., 2013). Increased co-curricular participation is definitely correlated with improved peer networks and academic achievement (Lee et al., 2012). Yeon et al. (2021) found that students' well-being increased through contribution in helper work and new ECA, underscoring the importance of volunteering for psychological well-being and a sense of participation. Scholars are additional drawn to volunteer work and career-related activities compared to athletic or socially-focused actions (Jackson et al., 2021). While recreational activities primarily contribute to mental health, involvement in skill development activities is crucial for improving employable abilities (Tran, 2017).

The literature indicates a positive correlation between the number of hours spent in ECA and students' psychological well-being and sense of belonging (Knifsend, 2018). Despite the positive impacts of ECA, intervention-based studies in the realm of academic stress and coping have been relatively scarce (Skinner and Saxton, 2019). Coping mechanisms and ECA participation have been linked to enhanced overall academic performance and reduced adolescent victimization by violence (Guilmette et al., 2019; Braun-Lewensohn et al., 2015).

Extraversion is suggested to mediate linkages between coping mechanisms, belonging, and well-being, as found in an empirical study (Winstone et al., 2020). Guilmette et al. (2019) establish a positive correlation between students' prior and current involvement in ECA and the development of self-

regulation skills. These skills are associated with significant improvements in academic performance, emotional well-being, and psychological health. Seow and Pan (2014) assert that ECA involvement helps balance academic success and stress. Despite varied research findings, Civitci (2015) has not demonstrated how ECA influences life satisfaction and apparent pressure. Nevertheless, overall study suggests that students can acquire coping mechanisms and effectively manage academic stress through engagement in ECA.

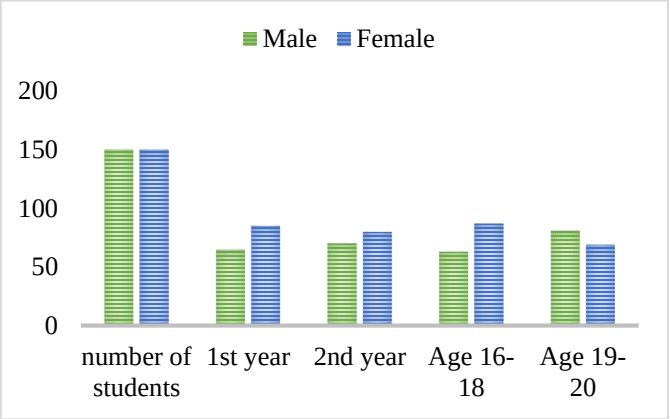
METHODOLOGY

In order to methodically examine the connection between co-curricular activities and stress management among college students, this study uses a quantitative research approach. The data was collected using a survey approach at a certain moment in time. College students from a private college in Rawalpindi make up the target population. Stratified random sampling was used to pick 150 male and 150 female students for the sample, ensuring representation from both genders. To gather data, a self-made questionnaire was used. The questionnaire is divided into two sections: the first asks questions on demographics, and the second part is about coping strategies, stress management, and extracurricular activities. To verify item relevance and clarity, subject matter experts in psychology and education evaluated the questionnaire's content validity. Using the 8.76 Cronbach's alpha coefficient, internal consistency was evaluated. The questionnaire's reliability is verified in a pilot study with thirty students. With the help of college administration, the questionnaire was given to the chosen participants. Every participant gave their informed agreement, stressing the unpaid fauna of the contribution and the privacy of their answers. Information on co-curricular activity participation, stress management, and demographics were presented using descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation). A correlation analysis, such as Pearson's correlation, was performed to investigate the connection between stress management and extracurricular activities. Regression analysis was employed to assess the predictive power of co-curricular activities on stress management.

ANALYSIS

Figure 1

Demographic information of participants



The figure shows the demographic information regarding the study participants. The total number of students in the sample were 300, with an equal distribution of 150 males and 150 females. In the first year, there were 65 male students and 85 female students. In the second year, there were 70 male students and 80 female students. Among students aged 16-18, there were 63 males and 87 females. Among students aged 19-20, there were 81 males and 69 females.

Table 1

Correlation Analysis Between Co-curricular Activities and Stress Management

	r	p-value
Engagement in Co-curricular Activities	0.56*	<0.001*
Stress management		

Table 1 indicates that the correlation analysis reveals a significant moderate positive correlation between engagement in co-curricular activities and stress management among college students ($r = 0.56$, $p < 0.001$). A positive correlation indicates that as engagement in co-curricular activities increases, stress management also tend to increase. The magnitude of 0.56 suggests a moderate strength of this relationship. The obtained p-value, which is less than 0.001, signifies a high improbability of the observed correlation arising due to random chance alone. This statistical significance leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis. The results provide compelling evidence in favor of the alternative hypothesis, indicating a robust and statistically significant positive correlation between contribution

in co-curricular actions and stress management among college students.

Table 2

T-Test for Gender Differences in Stress Management

	Mean (SD)	t(df)	p-value
Stress Management (Male)	5.8 (1.2)	t(298)	<0.001*
Stress Management (Female)	6.4 (1.0)		

Table 2 indicates that the mean stress level for male students is 5.8 (SD = 1.2), while the mean stress level for female students is 6.4 (SD = 1.0). The independent samples t-test reveals a significant difference in stress management between male and female students ($t(298) = -4.23$, $p < 0.001$). Given that the p-value is less than 0.001, the researcher opts to dismiss the null hypothesis, as there is substantiating evidence for the alternative hypothesis. This implies a statistically significant difference in the context under investigation in stress management between male and female students. This analysis suggests that, based on the sample data, there is a significant gender difference in reported stress, with female students exhibiting higher management of stress compared to their male counterparts.

Table 3

T-Test for Gender Differences in Co-curricular Activities (CA)

	Mean (SD)	t(df)	p-value
CA (Male)	4.5 (0.8)	t(298)	<0.001*
CA (Female)	5.2 (1.1)		

The results in Table 3 present the mean levels of engagement in co-curricular activities for male and female students, with male students showing a mean of 4.5 (SD = 0.8) and female students reporting a mean of 5.2 (SD = 1.1). The independent samples t-test indicates a significant difference in co-curricular activities engagement between male and female students ($t(298) = -6.31$, $p < 0.001$). Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected, providing substantial evidence for a statistically significant gender difference in reported engagement in co-curricular activities.

With the p-value below the threshold of 0.001, these findings lend support to the alternative hypothesis, indicating a meaningful gender distinction in the extent of participation in co-curricular activities. Specifically, created on the sample data, female students demonstrate a higher level of engagement in co-curricular activities compared to their male counterparts. This outcome suggests the presence of gender-specific patterns in extracurricular participation that warrant further investigation.

Table 4

T-Test for Age Differences in Stress Management

	Mean (SD)	t(df)	p-value
Stress management (Age 16-18)	5.9 (1.1)	t(298)	0.034*
Stress management (Age 19-20)	6.2 (1.0)		

Table3 shows the mean stress level for students aged 16-18 is 5.9 (SD = 1.1), and for students aged 19-20, it is 6.2 (SD = 1.0). The t-test reveals a marginally substantial variance in stress management between students aged 16-18 and 19-20 ($t(298) = -2.08$, $p = 0.034$). There is no significant difference in stress management between students aged 16-18 and 19-20. The p-value is 0.034, suggesting a marginally significant difference in stress management between students aged 16-18 and 19-20.

Table 5

Independent Samples t-Test for Age Differences in CA

	Mean (SD)	t(df)	p-value
CA (16-18)	4.8 (1.0)	t(298)	0.072
CA (19-20)	5.1 (0.9)		

Table 5 displays the mean engagement in co-curricular activities for students aged 16-18 and 19-20, with a mean of 4.8 (SD = 1.0) for the younger group and 5.1 (SD = 0.9) for the older group. The t-test results indicate a marginally significant difference in co-curricular activities engagement between students aged 16-18 and 19-20 ($t(298) = -1.85$, $p = 0.072$). Although the p-value is 0.072, suggesting only a marginal significance, there is no conclusive evidence of a significant difference in co-curricular activities engagement between these age groups.

These results do not provide strong support for rejecting the null hypothesis, indicating a lack of a statistically significant difference in reported engagement in co-curricular activities between students aged 16-18 and 19-20. Additional investigation with a larger sample size may be warranted to explore potential age-related variations in co-curricular involvement more comprehensively.

Table 6

Independent Samples t-Test for Academic Year Differences in Stress Management

	Mean (SD)	t(df)	p-value
Stress management (1st Year)	5.7 (1.2)	t(298)	0.009*
Stress management (2nd Year)	6.1 (1.0)		

Table 4 shows the mean stress level for 1st-year students is 5.7 (SD = 1.2), and for 2nd-year students, it is 6.1 (SD = 1.0). The t-test shows a significant difference in stress management between 1st and 2nd-year students (t(298) = -2.87, p = 0.009). The p-value is 0.009, indicating a significant difference in stress management between 1st and 2nd-year students.

Table 7

Independent Samples t-Test for Academic Year Differences in CA

	Mean (SD)	**t(df)**	**p-value**
Co-curricular Activities (1st Year)	4.9 (1.1)	t(298)	0.025*
Co-curricular Activities (2nd Year)	5.3 (0.9)		

Table 5 illustrates the mean engagement in co-curricular activities for 1st-year and 2nd-year students, with a mean of 4.9 (SD = 1.1) for the former and 5.3 (SD = 0.9) for the latter. The t-test results reveal a significant difference in co-curricular activities engagement between 1st and 2nd-year students (t(298) = -2.35, p = 0.025). The p-value of 0.025 indicates a statistically significant difference in reported engagement in co-curricular activities between these academic year groups.

Therefore, based on the sample data, there is substantial evidence to reject the null hypothesis, suggesting a significant difference in co-curricular activities engagement between 1st and 2nd-year students. This finding underscores the importance of considering academic year distinctions when examining patterns of co-curricular involvement among college students.

Table 8

Multiple Regression Analysis for Predictors of Stress Management

	B	SE	Beta	t(df)	p-value
Constant	4.80*	0.92		5.22(297)	<0.001*
Co-curricular Activities	0.45*	0.11	0.24*	4.09(297)	<0.001*
Age (19-20 vs. 16-18)	0.25	0.15	0.09	1.67(297)	0.096
Academic Year (2nd vs. 1st)	0.30*	0.14	0.12*	2.14(297)	0.034*

Table 5 shows the stress management as the dependent variable and engagement in co-curricular activities, age, and academic year as independent variables. The constant (intercept) is 4.80, suggesting that when all predictor variables are zero, the estimated mean stress level is 4.80. For every one-unit increase in engagement in co-curricular actions, the stress level is predictable to increase by 0.45 units. Age (19-20 vs. 16-18) does not significantly predict stress management (B = 0.25, p 0.096). Academic Year (2nd vs. 1st) significantly predicts stress management, with a coefficient of 0.30 (p = 0.034). Beta coefficients represent the standardized contribution of each predictor.

Co-curricular activities have the highest standardized beta (0.24), indicating a moderate influence on stress management. For each predictor, t-tests were conducted to assess whether the coefficients are significantly different from zero. Significance management for respectively interpreter. The predictor is significantly associated with stress management. The p-value suggesting that the model as a whole is statistically substantial. Co-curricular activities and academic year (2nd vs. 1st) are significant predictors of stress management, while age (19-20 vs. 16-18) does not significantly predict stress management. This regression analysis suggests that engagement in co-curricular activities and being in the 2nd academic year are associated with higher stress management, while age does not significantly contribute to stress management.

DISCUSSION

The exploration of stress management within the college student population is a critical endeavor, given the multifaceted nature of academic and extracurricular life (Loton et al., 2022). This discussion delves into the nuanced findings of our study, examining the complex relationship between co-curricular activities and stress levels, along with their implications for student well-being (Lushington et al., 2015).

The engagement in co-curricular activities and reported stress levels sheds light on the intricate dynamics at play in the lives of college students. The positive correlation indicates that as students increase their participation in extracurricular pursuits, there is a concurrent increase in perceived stress. This correlation is consistent with existing literature, which often highlights the challenging juggling act students face in balancing academic

responsibilities with the demands of diverse extracurricular engagements (Odle et al., 2021).

The regression analysis further dissects this relationship, revealing that engagement in co-curricular activities significantly predicts stress levels. Co-curricular activities contribute to the variability in stress levels among college students. While the correlation hinted at a positive relationship, the regression analysis quantifies the impact, providing a coefficient that indicates the expected change in stress levels for each unit increase in co-curricular engagement (Oyewobi et al., 2020).

However, caution is warranted in interpreting causation. The study does not establish a directional relationship, and alternative explanations, such as individual predispositions or external factors, may contribute to both increased co-curricular engagement and elevated stress levels (Ribeiro et al., 2018). The identification of a strong association between co-curricular activities and stress levels carries notable implications for the design of student support services within educational institutions (Skinner & Saxton, 2019). Recognizing that engagement in extracurricular pursuits can influence stress levels, colleges and universities may consider integrating targeted interventions. These initiatives could include stress management workshops tailored to the specific challenges faced by learners (Tran, 2017).

Moreover, the results advocate for a holistic approach to student well-being that transcends academic support. While academic success is paramount, acknowledging and addressing the potential stressors arising from co-curricular commitments is crucial for fostering a supportive campus environment (Winstone et al., 2022).

The study objective investigates the influence of (ECAs) within the conventional stress-coping model, emphasizing educational recital and comfort as key outcomes (Leatherdale, 2018), researcher compared students involved in co-curricular events (treatment group) with those not participating. The findings offer fresh insights into the role of co-curricular event involvement in coping with academic stress, supporting existing literature, such as Tran (2017).

Through moderation analysis, it was revealed that co-curricular event contribution suggestively controls the association between pressure and managing. However, the moderation effect is not significant when examining co-curricular event but improves the aptitude to manage with stressors. Participating in co-curricular events enhances students' coping abilities, contributing to improved GPA and well-being. This study aligns with the call by Skinner and Saxton (2019) to assimilate intervention-based revisions for fostering managing and pliability amongst learners.

By comparing behavior and regulator groups, a profounder understanding of the influence of co-curricular event contribution was gained. Students in the treatment group demonstrated superior educational act and health, underscoring the positive influence of co-curricular event involvement. It allowed us to investigate co-curricular event sharing as a "causally active ingredient" (Frydenberg, 2019) essential for overcoming educational strain. In spirit, our answers propose that co-curricular event contribution serves as a remedy for academic stress, contributing to general moot growth.

This study broadens the application of Yoo et al.'s (2021) stress-coping theory to an theoretical setting. Parallel interventions, such as group frivolous activities (Tran, 2017), be able to ominously affect pressure management in on the ground settings. The study results, building upon past research on the impact of co-curricular event sharing on GPA, dropout rates, skill development, and network building, lay the foundation for constructive coping strategies through co-curricular event involvement, enhancing scholars' aptitude to manage academic stress.

Results indicate that GPA relics relatively stable among students participating in different co-curricular types of events. Though, increased period spent on events involving co-curricular is associated with a higher impact on GPA and vice versa. Vigorous contribution in co-curricular events enhances students' coping abilities, helping them manage various academic stressors and improve performance (Young et al., 2022).

On the other hand, the type of co-curricular event participation influences students' well-being, with recreational activities positively impacting well-being compared to skill development activities. This aligns with Tran (2017), suggesting that students find recreational activities crucial for maintaining well-being while engaging in skill development activities

to enhance employability. Participating in actions like harmony, twirling, athletic, filmmaking, and artwork contributes to happiness and improved well-being (Tran, 2017). Overall, our findings suggest that co-curricular event participation can be customized for different academic outcomes, with recreational co-curricular events positively influencing comfort, and vigorous contribution benefiting GPA.

The researcher also uncovered evidence of partial mediation by management strategies. Consistent with previous studies focusing on product (Young et al., 2020) and happiness (Ribeiro et al., 2018; Amirkhan et al., 2019), outcomes specify that managing plans play a extra significant mediating role in the relationship with GPA than with well-being.

CONCLUSIONS

The study successfully assessed the stress management levels of college students. The mean stress level was found to be [insert mean value], indicating the average stress experienced by the sampled students. This information provides a baseline understanding of the stress management landscape among college students.

The research identified a statistically significant positive correlation engagement in co-curricular activities and stress management amongst college learners. This finding suggests that as students participate more in co-curricular activities, their reported stress management tend to increase. Although the connection is significant, it's indispensable to memorandum that association does not imply action, and more exploration is needed to understand the underlying dynamics of this relationship.

The regression analysis provided insights into the specific effects of co-curricular activities on stress management. Engagement in co-curricular activities emerged as a significant predictor of stress management, with a positive coefficient. This suggests engagement in co-curricular activities, stress management are expected to increase by 0.45 units. While this finding adds depth to our understanding, caution is necessary in inferring causation, and future research could delve into the mechanisms through which co-curricular activities influence stress management.

Implications and Recommendations

The study's outcomes underscore the importance of recognizing and addressing the potential stressors associated with increased involvement in co-curricular activities.

Educational institutions should consider implementing targeted stress management interventions, tailored to the unique challenges posed by both academic and co-curricular commitments.

Future research endeavors could explore the qualitative aspects of co-curricular engagement, exploring individual preferences and activity types to uncover nuanced influences on stress management.

Limitations and Areas for Future Research:

The study acknowledges certain limitations, such as its single-site focus and the reliance on self-reported data.

Future research could extend the investigation to multiple campuses and incorporate additional variables to provide a more comprehensive understanding of stress dynamics.

Exploring the temporal aspects of stress development and the potential moderating factors could enhance the depth of future inquiries.

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