Study on Psychological Stress of University Graduates—A Survey Based On X University

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ABSTRACT

This paper is based on a survey of 261 graduates of X University via Symptom Checklist-90 (SCL-90). The result shows that most graduates to some degree feel the psychological stress, and the feelings are different according to their gender, major and grade. The research results are helpful for further find out method to coping with their stress in practice.

INTRODUCTION

With the continuous development of China’s higher education, the rapid expansion of graduate enrollment scale and severe employment situation intensifies, the graduate students’ psychological problems are attracting more and more attention. As a special group in higher education, compared with ordinary college students, graduate students’ physical and mental development has been basically mature, and their self-adjustment and self-control ability are stronger[1], while since the social expectation is very high to the graduate employment, the learning pressure, family economy, marriage problems and monotonous way of life, often lead to strong psychological conflicts, so that some of them are prone to anxiety, depression, irritability and insomnia and adverse symptoms. Long lasting psychological stress may even cause mental disorder or mental illness.

Psychological stress refers to a variety of life events, sudden traumatic experience, chronic tension (work stress, family tension) caused by psychological tension in daily life[2][3]. A lot of research about stress showed that moderate physical and psychological stress on the organism to adapt to the environment, to deal with the problem is beneficial, but if the stress is too strong and persistent, more than the body’s own ability to adjust and control, it may lead to psychological and physiological disorders and disease[4]. Therefore, this study attempts to system questionnaire investigation of main source of graduate students psychological stress, understand the basic characteristics of different levels of psychological stress of graduate students, analyze the reasons and to
help them relieve stress, enhance psychological adjustment ability, provide a theoretical basis to improve the level of mental health.

STUDY OBJECTS AND METHODS

Research Objects

The survey was conducted by graduate students at X University. In order to ensure the reliability of the survey results, attention should be paid to the proportion of students in different majors, grades and departments, so that the data is more representative. The survey was conducted mainly by questionnaire, which is based on SCL-90\(^5\).

This research chooses the graduates in Harbin Institute of Technology; and try to make the sample to cover as much as possible. Finally, it got a sample of a total of 261 copies. The data analysis and discussion, as well as the formulation of the later research plan, will be based on the results of this data collection.

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<th>TABLE I. BASIC COMPOSITION OF THE OBJECTS. (n=261).</th>
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RESULTS ANALYSIS

Overall situation

STRESS VALUE

Through analyzing the questionnaire, we can get some results:
(1) The total score of the SCL - 90 scale was 147.7, and the mean of the total score was 1.64. The average number of positive items was 32.1, and the average number of positive items was 2.6, indicating that there were psychological stress problems in our college students.

(2) There are 10 factors in SCL-90, which respectively represent 10 aspects of psychological symptoms. They are F1-Somatization, F2-Obssessive compulsive, F3-Interpersonal sensitivity, F4-Depression, F5-Anxiety, F6-Hostility, F7-Phobic anxiety, F8-Paranoid ideation, F9-Psychoticism and F10-Additional items. The average value of F2 obsessive compulsive disorder was 2.02, and the average of the other 9 factors were all concentrated between 1-2, which indicated that compulsive symptoms were common among college students.

GENDER-DIFFERENCES

Gender differences have always been the focus of attention in the study. Comparison of male and female students’ results, it can be seen:
(1) The mean and total mean scores of male SCL - 90 scale in the sample were not significantly different between male and female.
(2) The average number of masculine positive items was higher than that of females, and the mean number of negative items was lower than that of females, indicating that the psychological pressure of males was higher than that of females.

(3) As can be seen in figure 2, factor F2, factor F3, factor F4, factor F5 and factor F7, these factors of female are higher than that of male, while the other factors of female is higher than that of males.

In general, both male and female are facing great psychological pressure, and male stress is higher than female.

But in particular, male and female face different stress priorities. Obsessive compulsive symptoms, interpersonal sensitivity, depression, anxiety and fear were higher in females than in males. Male subjective physical discomfort, hostility, paranoid state, psychotic status were higher than women. This result may be related to gender roles.

Figure 2. Gender Difference Comparison.

MAJOR DIFFERENCES

Results between different majors (liberal arts and science& engineering) shows:

All four overall index (the total score, mean score, number of positive items, positive item scores), graduates of science & engineering are higher than that of liberal arts. That means the graduates of science & engineering feel more stress than that of liberal arts. The ten factors differences are show as figure 3.

Figure 3. Major Difference Comparison.
Overall, both liberal arts and science & engineering students are facing to psychological stress, especially obsessive compulsive symptoms. However, the stress of latter is generally higher than that of the former.

GRADE DIFFERENCE

There are little difference between the average values of the 10 factors between grade 1 and grade 2. Figure 4 shows their difference in 10 factors.

In general, students in grade one and grade two are all facing to the stress, while the psychological pressure of senior students is higher than lower grade.

![Figure 4. Grade Difference Comparison.](image)

CONCLUSION

In general, all graduate students are facing to psychological stress, especially obsessive-compulsive symptoms; however, the pressure of science & engineering students is generally higher than that of liberal arts students. Male students’ stress is higher than female’s. The psychological pressure of senior students was higher than lower grade; male and female psychological pressure mainly concentrated on slightly different majors. On the other hand, this study presents a novel result, focus on sexual psychological pressure, specific obsessive-compulsive symptoms, interpersonal sensitivity, female students’ depression, anxiety and fear are higher than that of males. Male students’ subjective physical discomfort, hostility, paranoid state, psychotic status are higher than that of female. This result may be related to gender roles.

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REFERENCES


