



## Causes and Effects of Stress among Students and Management

### Plan for the Betterment of Online Classes During Covid-19

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#### Introduction

This report emphasizes on stress among students that has become a dilemma for the whole world students. Stress is inevitable as it is a normal part of our life. If someone is not getting any sort of stress it means he/she is not living a normal life but at the same time too much stress can cause physical or mental illness. Stress can be either positive or negative. Positive stress enables us to cope with the challenges of life while negative stress can destroy our personality. In fact, it's not the stress which harms us; it's the way of dealing it that actually matters. Hans Selye said, "It's not the stress that kills us, it is our reaction to it". It can prevent students from achieving their goals or objectives by affecting their academic performance. Carol Kennedy said, "Students who are under a lot of stress not only feel anxious about their course work, they can have difficulty sleeping or concentrating. All of those things can decrease their immune system and they could become physically ill".

"Life never goes on smoothly". We all are aware of this fact but one day life will become so complicated that the whole world has to come on its knees, became a great shock for this era and even our coming generations also have to pay for the losses. Few months ago, life was not so much complicated. Every

human being was living in its own comfort zone. But then suddenly this novel Corona Virus causing COVID-19 appeared in China, Wuhan, Hubei province in December 2019. Since then, the widespread effects of it are increasing day by day and now in a current moment we can say that almost all the world is having Corona in its pocket. Just as is the case with other global events, COVID-19 has also impacted the whole world. No one can compensate the lost lives during this pandemic but still whether it's about health sector, economic growth, stock exchange, marketing, education, poverty, security, E- business or any other sector each and everything has been changed in a jiffy.

Due to the increasing transmission of this novel virus, WHO declared it as a pandemic in January and immediately ordered to avoid public gatherings since this virus is believed to be transmitted through humans-to-humans interaction. Despite their order general public was not following the instructions given by WHO. So, after seeing its impacts on the whole world many countries put a complete lockdown to avoid detrimental effects of this novel virus.

Next when lockdown was implemented, different questions were raised. One of those obvious questions was the continuity of education. Since all schools, colleges and universities were closed, so as an alternative online system of education was adopted. Now, the online system implemented by different countries for smooth education was having different loopholes in it. Even if we specifically talk about Pakistan, this system was initially even not accepted by students and teachers due to different reasons. But still it get approved and now all Pakistani universities are currently following it. Besides its implementation HEC the major stockholder of education sector, is continuously working for its improvement so that all of its stakeholders become satisfied. Keeping in view this whole situation, HEC has approached us to make a management plan which will highlight all the problems faced by its stakeholders and what could be their most probable solutions.

### **Background Information:**

Stress is a specific reaction of an individual to daily life challenges which can be either positive stress or negative stress having different impacts on that individual who is facing it. As a student there are different reasons, contributing towards stress. Taking consecutive classes, having a lot of due assignments, projects, presentations, quizzes and sessional, terminals, cramming all the night before exams, maintaining a balanced social life and inadequate sleep etc. are some of the reasons behind a stress. All these things have a great impact on students' academic performance and their physical or mental health. It mostly affects their thoughts and behavior. It can cause headache, chronic pain and sickness, loss of appetite, insomnia, digestive issues, musculoskeletal problems, elevated blood pressure, extreme anger, disturbed sleeping pattern and so on. So, in order to ensure a stress-free life, much attention is needed.

**Statement of the problem/purpose:**

The fact is indisputable that stress in students is one the major cause of their bad academic performance. Since the last few decades, stress has become one of the most common problem among students especially among higher education students. It can be financial or it may be due to a lot of assignments, projects, transport, domestic problems and so on. The basic purpose of report was to encounter all these issues present in students, knowing their extent and finally ending with some reasonable solutions.

**Significance of the Study:**

The outcome of the study will provide how to adopt a new approach to student life which will ensure their academic and mental or physical success.

**Scope of the study:**

This report will evaluate the causes and effects of stress present in students of COMSATS UNIVERSITY, ISLAMABAD CAMPUS. These variables may vary from campus to campus (Comsats Campuses), university to university and even from country to country. But mostly students, no matter from where they belong, have almost same issues regarding stress.

**Limitations of the study:**

Due to the lack of the time and approach, surveys or questionnaires will not be carried out by other universities, so findings cannot be generalized. On the other hand, respondents' response could also pose a challenge, since many felt they would be victimized.

**Review of related literature**

Due to the negative impact of stress on student's life, such as ineffective studies, poor academic performance and the general health status, putting effective measures in place is pertinent to their academic success and general life. This is done by identifying the main causes of stress which includes changes in lifestyle, increased workload, new responsibilities, and interpersonal relationships and finding the appropriate remedy. A lot of research have been done on stress and it man- argument and pragmatic solutions given and we hope that, based on the analysis made, this thesis will be of great help in helping students to have an excellent academic life.

As we are all facing very challenging times relating to COVID-19. As a facilitator, HEC-QAA has our learners and trainer's well-being as our primary focus. We have been constantly reviewing the advice and guidance from the Government of Pakistan as well as the World Health Organization (WHO). With that in mind, we are taking the opportunity to guide Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to launch their "Virtual Learning" system, therefore, mitigating the need for our learners to attend the classroom physically. Virtual Learning can be undertaken in the office and at home. HEC has issued Guidance for HEIs, faculty, staff, teaching, Government directions and online readiness concerning COVID-19.

Rapid technological advances have facilitated distance learning (McBrien et al., 2009). "Most of the terms (online learning, open learning, web-based learning, computer-mediated learning, blended learning, m-learning, for example) have in common the ability to use a computer connected to a network, which offers the possibility to learn from anywhere, at any time, at any pace, by any means" (Cojocariu et al., 2014). Online learning can be described as a tool that can make the teaching-learning process more student-centered, more innovative and even more flexible. Online learning is defined as "learning experiences in synchronous or asynchronous environments using different devices (e.g., mobile phones, laptops, etc.) with Internet access. In these settings, students can be anywhere (independently) to learn and interact with instructors and other students "(Singh & Thurman, 2019).

The synchronous learning environment is structured in the sense that students attend live classes, there are real-time interactions between educators and students, and there is the possibility of instant feedback, whereas asynchronous learning environments are not structured correctly. In such a learning environment, the learning content is not available in the form of lectures or live lessons; it is available in various forums and learning systems. Instant feedback and immediate response are not possible in such an environment (Littlefield, 2018). Synchronous learning can provide many opportunities for social interaction (McBrien et al., 2009). In the midst of this deadly spread of the virus, such online platforms are needed where (a) video conferences can be held with at least 40-50 students, (b) discussions can be held with students to keep lessons organic, (c) Internet connections are good, (d) lectures are also accessible on mobile phones and not just laptops, (e) ability to view prerecorded lectures, and (f) instant feedback can be obtained from students and assignments (Basilaia et al., 2020).

### **Academic Stress**

Reddy et al. (2018) in their study concludes that stream wise difference in stress does exist in students. It is important to deal with stress at personal, social and institutional level. Remedies such as feedback, yoga, life skills training, mindfulness, meditation and psychotherapy have been found useful to deal with stress. To identify the main reason of stress is the key to deal with it. Professionals can develop tailor made strategies to deal with stress. The integrated well-being of the students is important not only for the individual but for the institute as well. Dimitrov (2017) in his study claimed that stress can be

addressed by ensuring that the students give utmost importance to their welfare. Food, exercise, work, recreation are some of the areas to focus on. He also concluded that the education system is more to do with the academic qualifications and does not contribute enough to the holistic development of students.

### **The challenges of online learning**

There are, however, challenges to overcome. Some students without reliable internet access and/or technology struggle to participate in digital learning; this gap is seen across countries and between income brackets within countries.

There is a significant gap between those from privileged and disadvantaged backgrounds: whilst virtually all 15-year-olds from a privileged background said they had a computer to work on, nearly 25% of those from disadvantaged backgrounds did not. While some schools and governments have been providing digital equipment to students in need, many are still concerned that the pandemic will widen the digital divide.

For our purposes, online learning refers to a type of teaching and learning situation in which (1) the learner is at a distance from the tutor/instructor, (2) the learner uses some form of technology to access the learning materials, (3) the learner uses technology to interact with the tutor/instructor and with other learners and (4) some kind of support is provided to learners (Anderson 2011a).

In the Covid-19 emergency situation, teachers have, almost overnight, been asked to become both designers and tutors, using tools which few have fluently mastered. This paper sheds some light on pedagogical knowledge that new online teachers need, in order to design worthwhile learning activities and flourish in this unfamiliar space. Our goal is to make explicit some main aspects of the online teaching expertise, akin to be transferred in the pedagogical practice of any educators, with or without experience in teaching remotely. Ultimately, we conclude that the importance of designing effective learning environments rests not only upon the shoulders of faculty but also upon institutions of higher education more generally in the form of support (funding) for faculty professional development.

### **Problems Associated with Online Teaching and Learning**

There are a large number of technologies available for online education, but they sometimes create a lot of difficulties. These difficulties and problems associated with modern technology range from download errors, installation problems, login problems, audio and video problems, etc. Sometimes students find online teaching boring and unattractive. Online learning takes so much time and flexibility that students never find the time to do it. Personal attention is also a big problem online learning face. Students want two-way interaction which sometimes becomes difficult to implement. The learning process cannot reach its full potential until students put what they learn into practice. Sometimes online content is entirely

theoretical and doesn't allow students to practice and learn effectively. Poor course content is also a big deal. Students feel that lack of community, technical problems and difficulties in understanding educational goals are the main barriers to online learning (Song et al., 2004). In one study, it was found that students were not sufficiently prepared to balance their work, family and social life with their study lives in an online learning environment. The students were also judged to be poorly prepared for various e-learning and academic competitions. Furthermore, there is a low level of preparation among students regarding the use of learning management systems (Parkes et al., 2014).

### **Hypothesis**

The quality of the instructor positively affects the satisfaction of the students.

### **Methods of the Study**

There are different methods which are used for the study. Internet resources like Google or Google Scholar are accessed. Literatures such as thesis or journals related on this topic are reviewed. Questionnaires with open-ended and close-ended questions are prepared and then administered to get views from students.

### **Data Collection:**

Data used in this report consists of both primary and secondary data. Primary data includes the questionnaires with both open-ended and close-ended questions from people lives in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Whereas secondary data includes the collection of information through internet, books, thesis and articles or journals.

### **Basis of Sample Selection:**

Sample selection was based on the questionnaires. The close-ended questions were just giving answer is yes/no whereas open-ended questions were giving an opportunity of providing the opinions of the respondents.

### **Statistical Methods:**

The information gathered through the questionnaires will be analyzed in the form of charts, graphs, tables or any other method. Figures may also be included.

### **Sampling technique**

The convenient sampling technique is used to collect the data because it's easy to collect data from those individuals.

### **Organization**

Report is divided into different sections for its reliability and comprehensiveness. All the sections of report are organized in such a way as to maintain coherence and unity between all these sections. The report starts with the background of information which is then narrowed down into problem statement, significance of the study, scope of the study, limitations of the study and methods of the study.

The coming sections will include result and discussion section, conclusion, recommendations, bibliography and appendices. All these sections are explained in such a way as to maintain logical connections between sentences and paragraphs.

### **Culture as a Constraint**

Like every organization HEC also has its own unique culture but due to the current pandemic when the World's super powers have changed their policies then how is it possible that HEC will be following the Pre-pandemic culture? Obviously not.

Before pandemic HEC always used to focus on the fact that what will be the impact of its corresponding decision on people in the organization and its affiliated shareholders. But during pandemic HEC is just trying to achieve its outcomes like the continuity of education rather than focusing on the means to achieve it and the fact how people are being affected by these policies. Similarly, Pre-pandemic culture of HEC was based more on the fact in which employees were expected to give attention to each and every thing in detail. But now HEC is just taking into account those steps which are necessary for the organization rather than giving attention to each and everything because there is a huge hesitation all around the globe. Consequently, students and teachers are suffering with lots of problems.

### **Problems Due to Online System**

Some of the major issues on the table reported by students and teachers, due to this new culture are resistance to online classes, lack of awareness to new technology and its issues, internet availability in remote areas, internet connectivity issues, cost of internet bundles, employees and students background and their behaviors, increased workload and stress etc. Furthermore, the system of examination adopted by most universities is not a right way to check students' performance as it is more conducive

to cheating. Students who work all the year round and those who just simply cheat during exams cannot be compared.

In some universities, the semester is getting too long and students and teachers can no more concentrate. Similarly, it was also reported by students that going through recorded lectures before a day to interactive session is really difficult to keep pace with it since those recorded lectures can be so boring. During recordings teachers are expected to speak in English which can create problems in delivering lectures more effectively. It is also not an easy task to record lectures for students. Teachers become so stressed since some teachers have to take more than one courses and some teachers are also the supervisors of their PhD students.

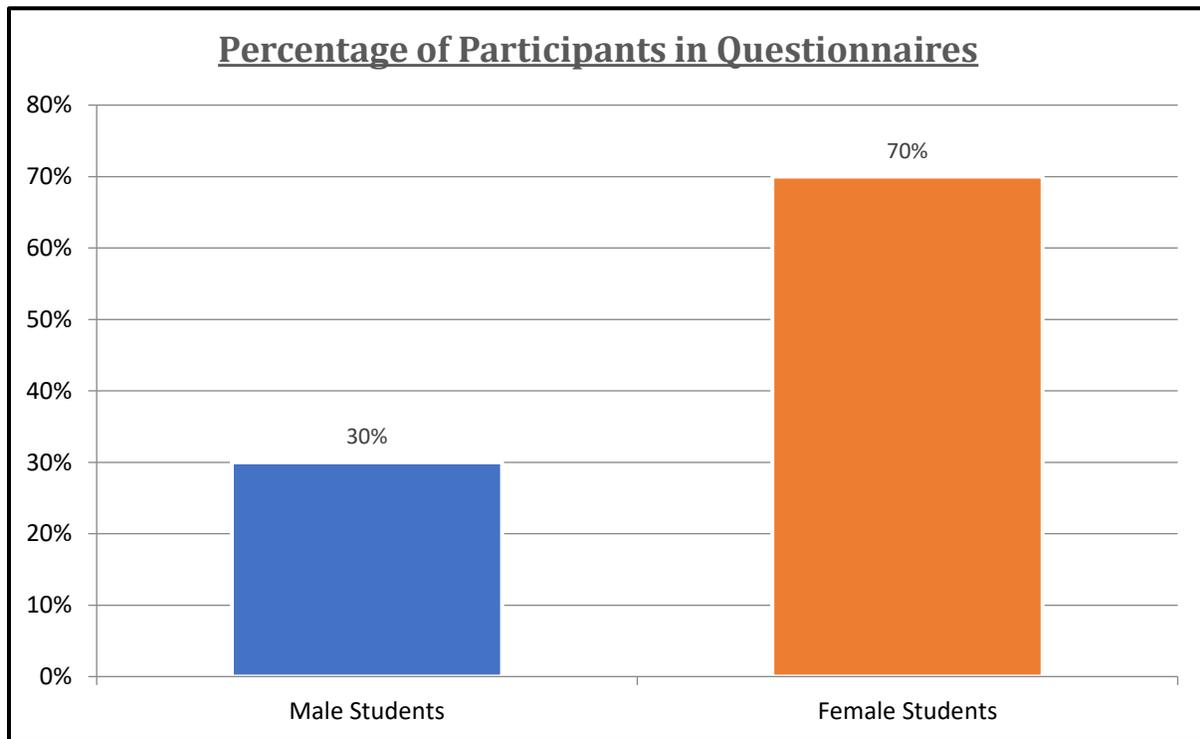
### **Managing in a Global Environment**

Nowadays we are all connected with each other in one way or the other way. All the countries around the world are having some sorts of connection between them. Specifically talking about this pandemic, all the countries who are more affected with it have at one stage or the other stage switched their physical classes into online. Now where the difference lies is the difference in implementation of this system. Each country has followed different strategies which suit them well. Here are some of the different strategies listed, which are widely used across the world successfully.

### **Results & Discussion**

Results obtained from questionnaires will be displayed in this section and then some light will be shed on them.

Here is the chart indicating the percentage of male and female students, who were involved in the questionnaires (both open-ended and close-ended).



**Figure1. Percentage of Participants in the Questionnaires**

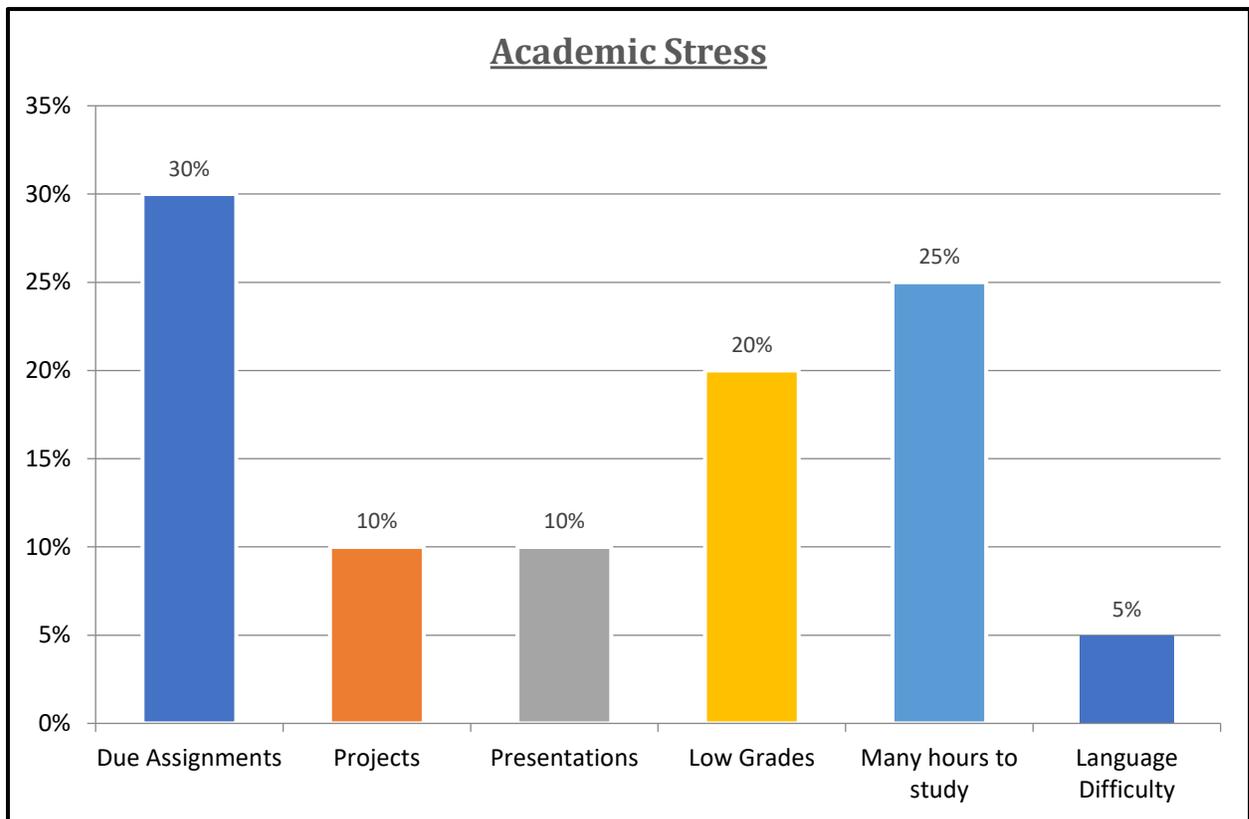
After a great analysis of the questionnaires following causes (which are responsible for stress in students) are identified.

### **Causes of stress in students of COMSATS**

Reasons for causing stress in students are:

#### **ACADEMIC STRESS:**

Following chart shows academic stress present in students.

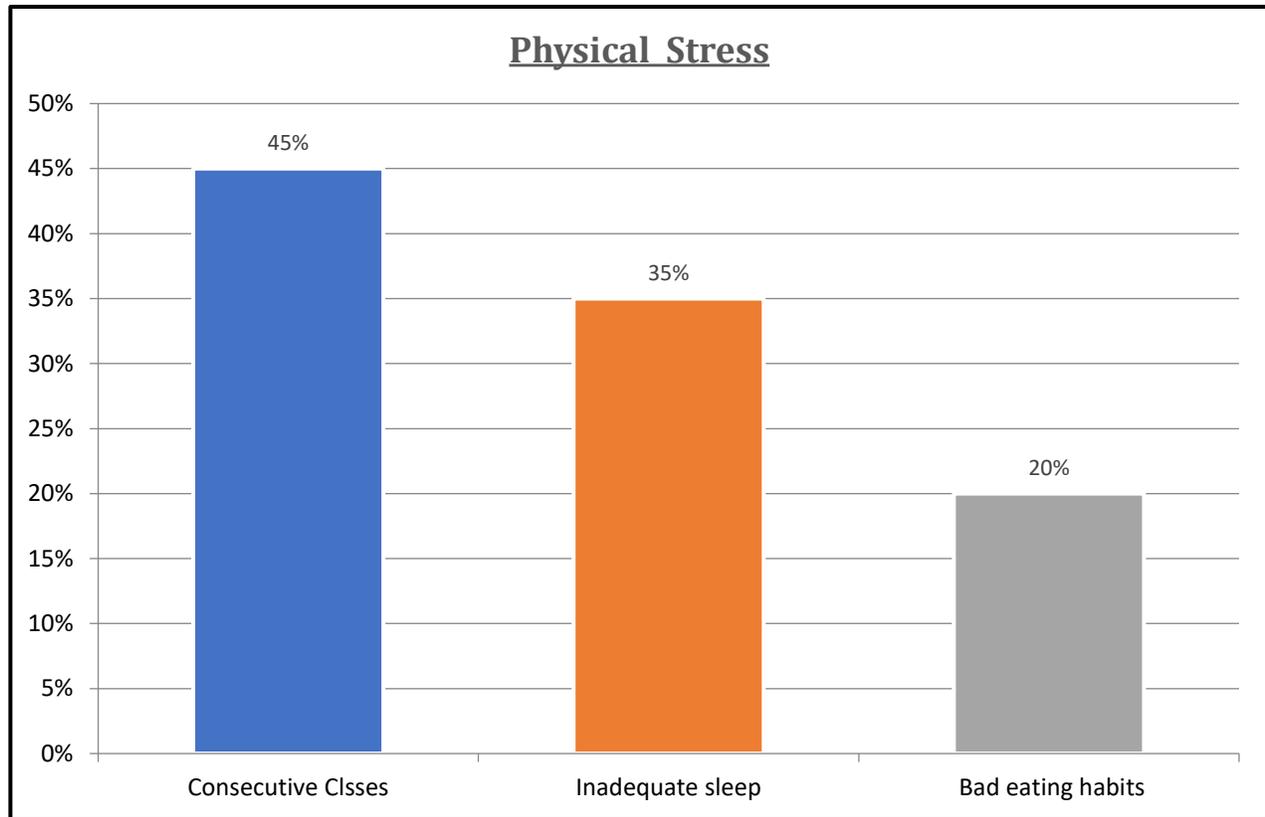


**Figure2. Academic Stress Reported by students**

Results indicate that increased work load causes a great stress among students. Due assignments have highest weightage (30%) in terms of causing stress. Students having lots of due assignments and projects become overloaded. As a result, they get confused and cannot give their hundred percent so they become frustrated. Chart clearly manifests that many hours of study (25%) is also a big challenge for students to go with it as every student has also a life outside this academic scenario on which he/she cannot compromise. Lower grades also cause stress (20%). Students having lower grades are always discouraged as in our society grades are a measure of intelligence which is not a true perception. Students getting low grades think a lot about what they didn't do and this causes a stress. Presentations and projects also put strain on students as students were complaining about it. Language difficulty (5%) is another major cause of evoking stress in students. When a student is unable to understand the teachings of his/her teacher, they stressed up because they over think how they will pass the course.

**PHYSICAL STRESS:**

Here is the chart illustrating physical stress.

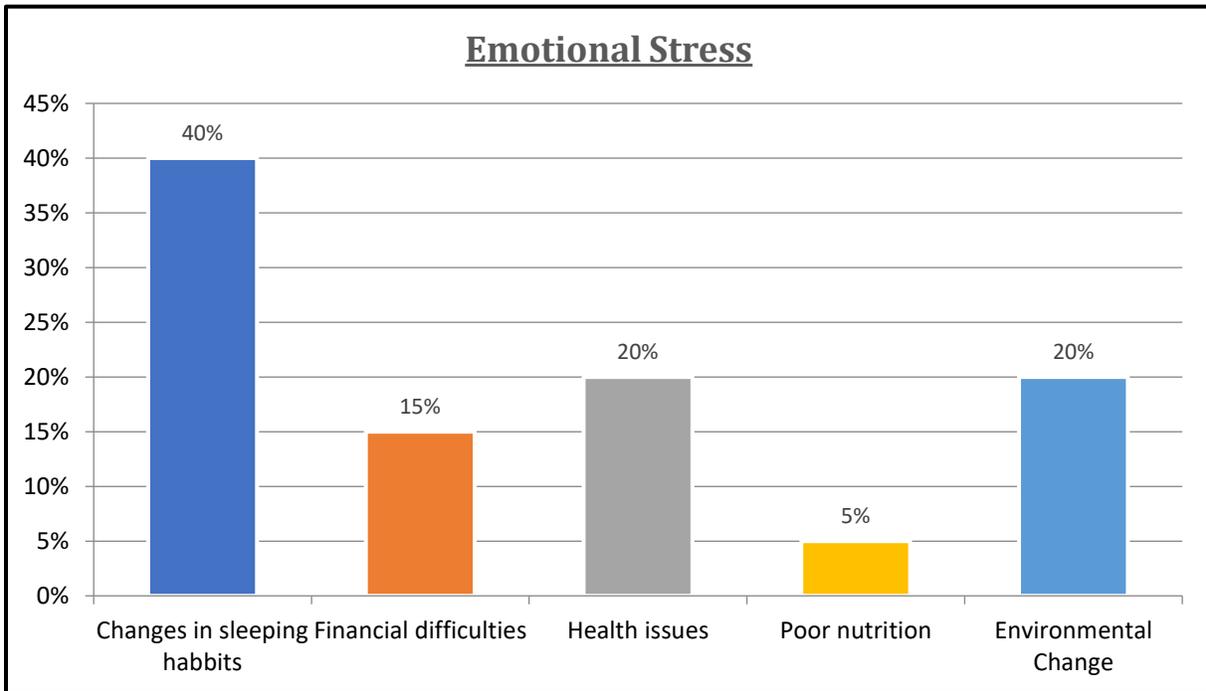


**Figure3. Physical Stress Reported by Students**

All the efforts which make students for competing with their needs make them physically stressful. Taking consecutive classes, inadequate sleep and bad eating habits disturb their metabolisms resulting in physical stress. Graph clearly shows that taking consecutive classes is one of the major reasons (45%) of Comsians to be physically stressful. Taking one class after the other makes them restless which in turn cause stress. Then inadequate sleep accounts for the major reason (35%) of physical stress. Students due to a lot of due assignments, quizzes, sessional, terminals and projects; become unable to complete their slumber. As a result, they become stressful. Bad eating habits are also on rise. Students mostly eat junk food which disturbs their metabolism and thus causing physical stress. 20% students admitted having bad eating habits.

**EMOTIONAL STRESS:**

Following chart illustrates emotional stress in students.

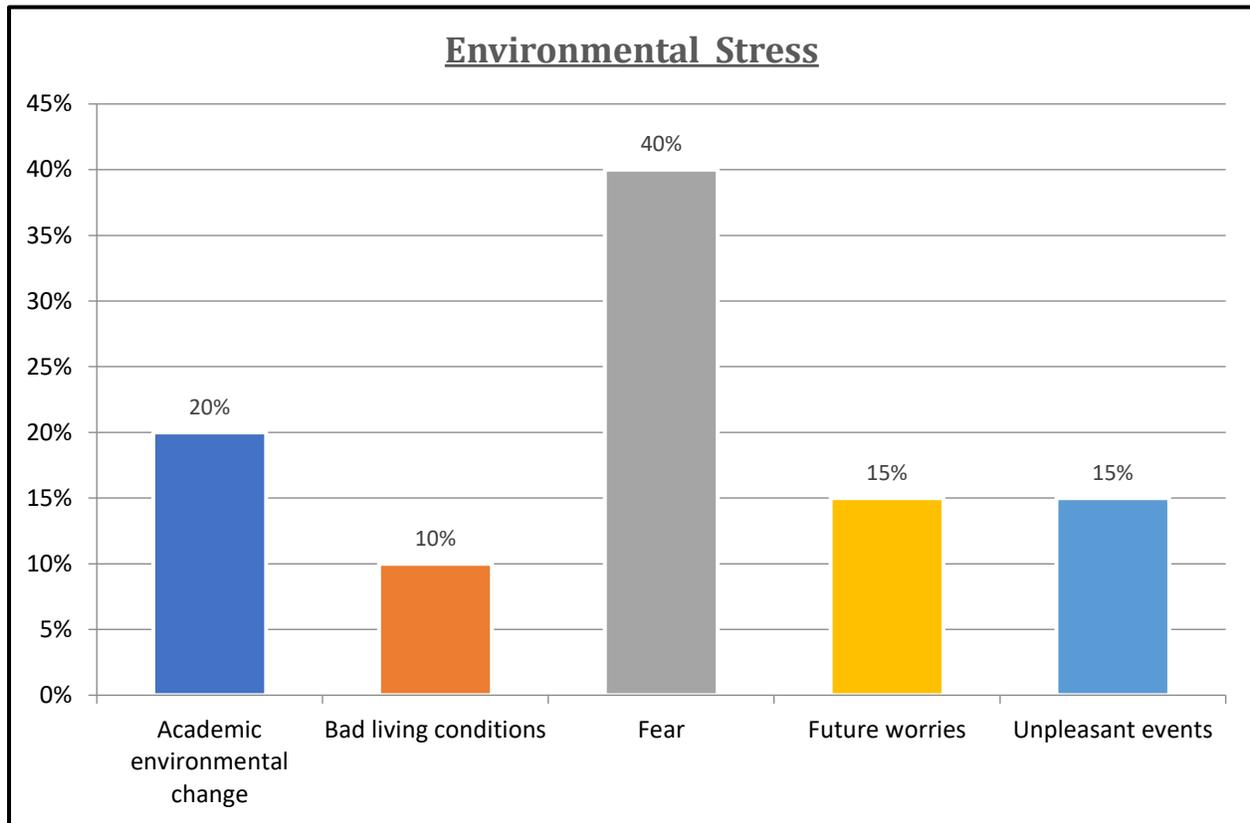


**Figure4. Emotional Stress Reported by Students**

Personal factors play a key role in the stress as stress is mainly caused by our own thoughts and behaviors. Students (40%) acknowledged that changes in their sleeping habits occur due to academic workload which cause stress in them. Some students pay their bills on their own which causes stress (15%) if someone is going through financial disabilities. If anyone is going through any sort of health issues it can also cause stress (20%). Poor nutrition habits also cause stress. Change in living environment like moving towards hostel or changing roommates, change from campus to campus or from university to university can also initiate stress when the student become unable to cope with that change. According to the questionnaires almost 20% students are suffering from it.

**ENVIRONMENTAL STRESS:**

Here is the chart illustrating Environmental stress:



**Figure5. Environmental Stress Reported by Students**

When there is a change in the environment for a student from school to college or college to university, some might like this change but at the same time some might get stressed up due to this change. 20% students admitted stress due to academic environmental change. Bad living conditions can also contribute towards stress as student gets failed; continuing their academic career, if there is any sort of uncomfortable environment. Data shows about 10% students are suffering from this stress because some people never adapt new environment, at least not so much quickly as others can. Fear is another drastic stress faced by almost 40% students because they fear about taking in public or getting failed in the exams. This can put a strain on their brain causing ultimate stress. Future worries are always a big reason of stress in any sort of individual. Data clearly indicate that almost 15% students always stress themselves when they think what they will do in future. On the other hand any sort of unpleasant event also plays a vital role in stress. Almost 15% students admitted that having domestic problems like the divorce b/w their parents, financial issues, health issues of their parents or any other unpleasant event has a great impact on their life.

### Effects of Stress in students of COMSATS

Following are some of the effects presents in the students of COMSATS:

#### **ACADEMIC STRESS:**

Academic stress has different effects on the life of the students. It can affect their grades as they are unable to concentrate on their studies while going through stress. Students failed to get their maximum output which in turn generates a new stress in their life. They become totally confused about what to do or not. They even forget what they already know. Students suffering from stress also lose their productive skills. They can't initiate new actions as they are unable to focus on the problem. Tasks which are so easy to be done during normal routine become impossible while they are stressed. All these things can affect their health, personality and grades.



**Figure 6. Stress Caused by Academic Pressure**

#### **PHYSICAL STRESS:**

Physical stress causes restlessness, fatigue, anger, irritation, temper issues, hypertension and so on. It causes muscles to tense up. Student having it, also get emotional stress because they failed to give their maximum input.



**Figure7. Stress Caused by Fatigue**

**EMOTIONAL STRESS:**

Students having personal stress or emotional stress are the most affected one. They suffer from anxiety, fear, distress, worry and burnout. They lack personal motivation for taking part in activities whether academic or social. Such students mostly seem to tapping their feet and biting fingernails. Mood swing is one of the outcomes of emotional stress. Students remain stressed most of the days and they are basically destroying their life while doing this. No one can communicate or help them out during this phase. They lose their temper and most of the time stay irritated. This can lead to their mental illness.

**ENVIRONMENTAL STRESS:**

Students suffering from environmental stress become cut off socially. Being a student means having an active social life but such students become isolated. Most of the times they remain stay away from their friends and relatives which results in their isolation. All this in turn causes poor academic performance or lower grades. Physical illness is also related with this issue.

### **Foundations of Planning**

During this current situation, planning is to be done for ensuring the efficiency and effectiveness of this online system. This in turn will give directions to reduce uncertainty, which people might have with this online system. Since COVID-19 is an uncertain environment, so it's better to have specific goals which will be made for short time period of almost one year. Then if it needs to be continued, we can opt different options. Briefly, for making management plan we are going to discuss our plans with reference to operational plans which are more related to day-to-day activities of these online classes.

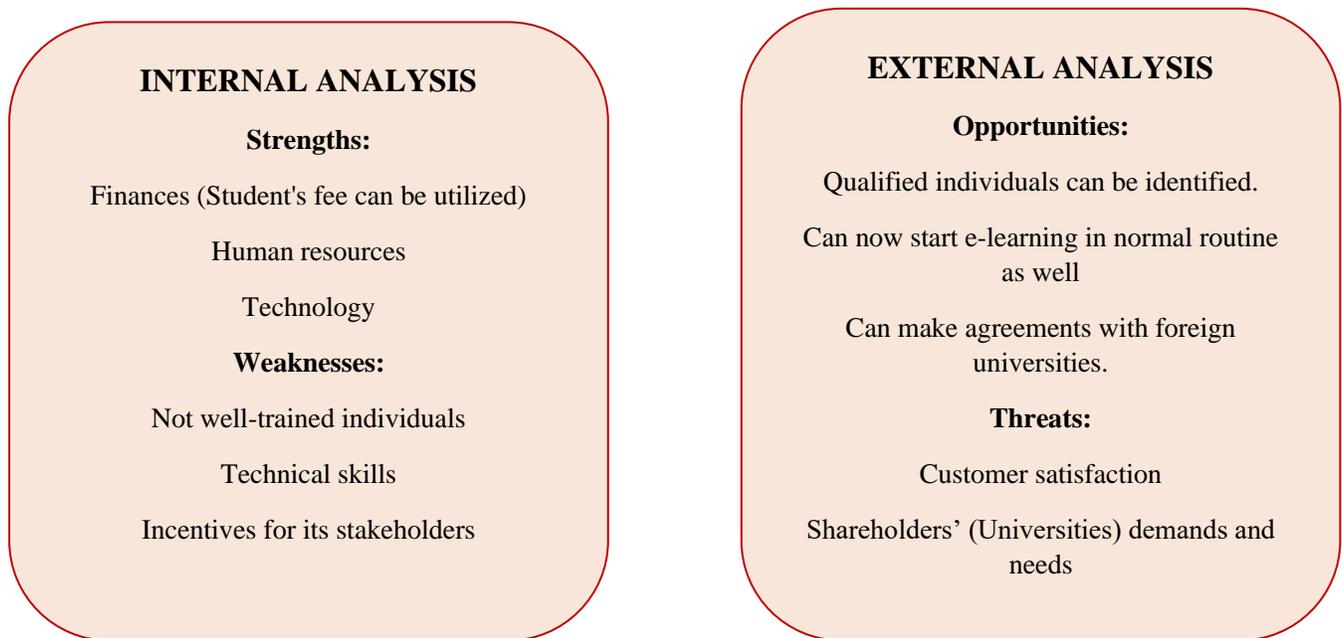
### **Management Plan for Online Classes**

Here is our whole plan for the efficiency and effectiveness of these online classes and it is formed through "Management by Objectives" theory in which employees and management both are involved till the end for achieving best results. So first of all, this perception is to be changed that "Online classes can never be effective". Although they can never compete with face-to-face interaction but still, they can be effective. Next all the resisting bodies present against this online system are to be satisfied by involving students and teachers in decision making process since they can better advocate their problems. Internet facilities are also to be provided for removing connectivity issues as a barrier against these online classes. Furthermore, these classes must be more flexible and open to experience through interesting assignments so that each and every individual takes part in his/her classes and makes the system more productive. Help centers will also to be created to listen all the complaints about these online classes. Similarly open channels for feedback are to be established for regular inspection. Employees are to be motivated to make this system more acceptable for the customers of HEC. Behavior of both students and teachers will also be closely monitored during these classes and chances of cheating will be minimized. Finally innovative ideas from foreign universities will also be consulted.

### **Strategic Management**

When final plan is in our hand then next step is to develop different strategies for implementing it. Strategic management is all about developing different strategies which will ultimately lead us towards our final goal. According to the current plan, already there on the board, we are going to take those decisions and actions which will enhance the overall performance of HEC.

**SWOT Analysis of HEC**



**Figure 02 SWOT Analysis of HEC**

**Strategies for Effective Online Classes**

After identifying current mission and goals and performing the internal and external analysis (SWOT) of HEC following strategies are to be formulated. First of all, HEC must approach different sorts of Telecom service provider companies for resolving Internet problems. Laptops must also be given to needy students. Next for controlling students and teacher's behavior monitoring teams must be there which can ensure that during online classes students and teachers are having the right attitudes, expected from them. For this purpose, these teams must monitor the recordings of interactive sessions on regular basis. Exams must be conducted in a way which reduces the chances of cheating. For example, teachers can prefer open book exams. For ensuring students and teachers involvement in the process different incentives must be there. For example, students have to pay less fee and teachers can get some bonuses if they are performing well under the roof of online classes.

Instead of recording videos which can be boring teachers should deliver the whole lecture online and that lecture must be recorded and provided later so that if someone has missed it, they can get it. While recording lectures teachers must be allowed to speak in Urdu as well since some concepts can be made more-clear if they are explained in a more routine way. There must be a platform where students and teachers can give their suggestions to improve the situation. Some questionnaire can serve the purpose. In this way more innovative ideas will come onto the floor and also students and teachers will own their suggestions. Those apps must be utilized which are easy to use and provide lots of accommodations. Finally, HEC needs to monitor universities on regular basis for avoiding any uncertain situation.

## **Organizational Structure and Design**

Once plans are there, strategies have been formulated, the next step is to design an appropriate organizational structure. This will help out in achieving the desired goals and objectives. While, designing an organizational structure for online classes, working with organic model is more-better and hence recommended to HEC since it accommodates more flexibility within it.

### **Organizational Structure and Design for Online Classes**

COVID-19 is attributing a very complex and uncertain environment so organizational structure is to be more decentralized where students and other employees of HEC are to be empowered and they can also participate in decision making. This decentralization will enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the online classes due to different innovative ideas given by students and teachers. Now for more betterment free flow of information must be maintained while making such platforms where not only students and teachers but also parents can get each and every information required and can also give their back-to-back feedback. This free flow of information will also help to make aware of HEC stakeholders that where HEC is standing and what resources are there. So, while working with new ideas people have less chance for critique.

Low formalization among Jobs is highly recommended nowadays considering the fact that during current situation employees must be allowed enough to take necessary steps in which they feel more comfortable but still HEC must monitor them so that no significant deviations can take place. This low formalization also gives them more autonomy over things which are more intensely handled by the persons who have better idea about them. For example, teachers are to be allowed making outline of their courses more according to the nature of their students because during current situations teachers may not bombard their students when they already facing an environmental bombardment.

Furthermore, wider span of control can keep things more suitable. All the employees having same set of tasks and jobs must be working under a single mentor. This will help in saving human resources and other resources as well in a situation where these saved resources can have better alternatives. As an example, you can categorize all teachers working with a similar course under a single mentor to report. In this way for example while sending recordings of the lecture a single recording should be send to all the students of all those teachers who are working with the same course. Now these recordings will reduce workload and also save resources like human resources and technology etc. Avoiding redundancy will make things more efficiently. At the same time while working under single mentor teachers can share their knowledge, expertise and technical skills. Finally work must be divided among cross functional teams which are highly trained and empowered to handle diverse activities. These teams

have to be competent enough to work out for environmental problems and then recommending the most probable solutions.

### **Human Resource Management**

After organizational structure is being finalized now it's time where we have to make things done through human resources which includes all human side. Managing human resources is one of the key factors in the success of any organization. It's an important task which provides main intuition and judgement where right number of right people are utilized at right place in right time. In an HRM (Human Resource Management) process, blend of young highly talented individuals and those with EQ level are utilized to match the job competencies.

### **Human Resources of Hec**

All the employees working under HEC and its affiliated university comes under human resource. It includes all the employees working within HEC, Rector of the university, administration workers, teachers, coordination office workers and other managerial staff and their employees. Now all of these human resources are managed by HEC after ordering universities to organize them among groups and then carefully monitoring them under their mentors. For example, teachers have to record lectures in a way most appropriate according to the nature of the course and student's attitudes. Next these recorded lectures are sent to their respective department's coordination office which further ensures whether the recording is meeting all the standards set or not. If it doesn't match with the standards then it has to be done again. Further these recordings are approved from the HOD of that department. At the same time interactive sessions are also monitored through their recording. Between this process a report with an okay signal is also sent to the superiors to check whether teachers are continuously striving for the betterment of this process or not.

Throughout this process, different factors are continuously interrupting with this process. These factors include different sort of pressure groups like students, unions or teacher unions. Recently students have stroked outside of HEC office with the demand of banning these online classes. Even students have demanded reduction in fee too. Along with these pressure groups, government decisions regarding reopening of institutions also change on regular intervals which can interrupt with the management plan made for these online classes.

### **HRM Planning for Online Classes**

Taking into consideration the human resource planning, current assessment of the job also called job analysis, for each and every employee of HEC is very much important. What sorts of skills and abilities,

knowledge, attitudes and technology is required to perform that particular job? All these things come under this analysis. Whether the respective individual is having bare minimum knowledge about the technology used in online classes or not? Does he/she have stable internet connection? What could be the future needs of those employees? All these questions are to be answered while making HRM planning.

### **Suggestions For HRM Process**

Some of the suggestions which can make HRM process more competent include employee training programs which must be conducted through MOOCs for both their general training and specific training, before introducing them to a totally new environment (Online System). General and specific training programs should follow these parameters:

#### **General Training**

**Good communication skills**

**Technical skills and knowledge for handling online classes**

**Management skills and supervision capabilities**

**Personal growth for betterment**

#### **Specific Training**

**Managing this change and be reactive**

**Good presentation skills for delivering online lectures.**

**Work skills for being best**

**Leadership skills**

Now moving forward all the required technology and internet facility must be there for the human resources of HEC. Compensations and benefits can keep their morale high so they must be there too. These can be in the form of appraisals, certificates, bonuses or through other facilities. Apart from them employees stress level management must be done on weekly basis through different sessions with psychologists. Their health should not be taken for granted.

### **Managing Change and Innovation**

Change is characterized as a deviation from status quo. Change is something natural which can create both threats and opportunities for the organization. By critically analyzing this online system, one can have a clear understanding how this change is acting as a threat for HEC. Traditional system of learning has completely switched to virtual learning. Now for virtual campuses it was quite easy to accept this change but for other people it's not acceptable even when almost three to four months have been passed

with this sort of system. Just like every change, this change was also resisted as most of the people want things in a more monotonous manner. They are never ready to accept new challenges except for few people. In fact, 70 to 80% people in the world never used to accept change in first attempt. So, in this way, this change can be categorized as a threat because teachers and students both of HEC stakeholders were not ready to accept the change created by HEC in its structure and technology due to COVID-19.

On the other hand, this change can also be taken as new opportunities because this change has also created ways to bring innovation through new ideas. Lots of people found an opportunity to use their talents. More competent individuals are identified through their work during this change.

### 10.1 Online System as a Change

Online system falls under the category of both internal and external change; internal change in the sense that due to these online classes all the organizational structure, policies, strategies, equipment, employees' attitude each and every thing has been changed. Workload has been increased for both teachers and students. On the other hand, this change is external as well. For example, for online classes technology has been changed. More automation has been taking place meaning that now many things have been replaced with technology. Instead of checking papers one by one now teachers can mark them automatically through different facilities available on the platforms used for online teaching. New tools are being used by teachers and students which have both their pros and cons, some of them are already mentioned. So, in this situation more and more work is being done in technical sector for designing those technologies that will make this system more feasible.

### Foundations Of Behaviors

Behavior is defined as the actions of people at work. We already know that behavior of a single individual affects the behavior of whole group which in turn can have major consequences related to the behavior of an organization.

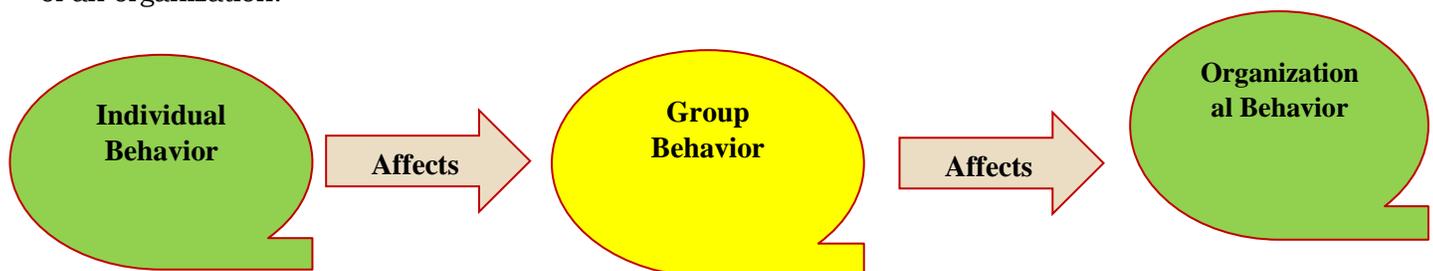


Figure 04 Behaviors

### **Behavior of Students**

During this pandemic classes are being conducted through different apps. Now the foremost problem regarding the attitude of students is their attention because how can they be so attentive when they are browsing from the same device where they have an option to browse other things as well? After joining meeting, they can switch to multiple apps like FB, Instagram, WhatsApp, twitter and others. So, it becomes really difficult for them to give attention to their classes. Although the apps they are using for their classes have provided with such facilities through which organizer can restrict individuals to whether on their mics and cameras or not. But mostly teachers are not working with these options. So, some annoying students used to play music or funny videos on their side to disturb the whole class. Similarly, if the meeting is not already scheduled under some exception students even used to remove their fellows or teachers from the meeting. They also supposed to mute mics while that particular person is speaking and the most annoying situation is that you can't understand who is doing such things.

Now if we critically analyze this behavior, we can easily predict how the behavior of just a single person is affecting the whole class meaning that an individual misbehavior is creating problems for the whole class. During such situations, students continuously suffer since they have to join meeting again and again which is quite hectic. At the same time, teacher also can't understand how to move on the whole class. Although you can go in settings for attendee exception, which will eliminate some of those problems but still the one granted with mic and camera option can used to play music or any other awkward voices just to disturb the whole class. So in one way or the other way the whole class is being affected which in turn will affect the whole organizational behavior because when students are not serious then how an organization will ensure to take those steps which can satisfy their customers? How an organization will be making those policies for its customers when they are not even ready to check the product? When the product is not being checked how its flaws will be enlisted to improve their quality?

### **Suggestions for Improving Students Behavior**

Students must be serious enough to take responsibility on their shoulders and follow the big five model of behaviors which state that person must be extraversion meaning assertive, agreeable person, conscientiousness (reflecting achievement-oriented personality), emotionally stable and open to more and more experiences. They must take online classes as a real course and should continuously undergo self-monitoring. They also need to become extraordinary conscious while studying because now they have to do lots of things on their own. For meeting the requirements, they need to be competent enough to run into deadlines of their assignments and quizzes. They should also be able to learn new technology and must help their fellows if they have any sort of problem. And the most important thing is that they must show sympathy towards their teachers because they are also suffering a lot during this pandemic.

Whether there are male teachers or female, each and every one has some expectations from their family and corresponding university which they have to fulfil.

### **Behavior of Teachers**

Teachers are also contributing towards shaping an organizational behavior. There are many teachers who are continuously striving for delivering their 100% but at the same time there are some teachers as well who aren't serious enough just like students. These teachers are just fulfilling the demands of HEC and orders of their respective university but never used to facilitate their students. First of all, they never used to deliver lecture in an appropriate manner just bombard their students with lots of assignments and quizzes. Secondly if some students have any queries, these teachers never used to fix those queries. Even some teachers do not suppose to give reply when students contact them. Another problem which students have just reported about teachers is that if some students have any light issue or internet connectivity problem, teachers do not facilitate them and simply mark them absent and give them zero marks in quizzes and assignments which they showed up late. On the other hand, these are the same teachers which arrange classes according to their own ease if caught any internet problem. So, we can have a better idea how the behavior of an individual is again affecting the behavior of group because student's grades are being affected in this way. Some students suffer from stress as well.

### **Suggestions for Improving Teachers Behavior**

Ignoring misbehavior or simply just pretending that it doesn't exist make things more and more complicated so HEC must try to ensure that teachers are cooperative enough to compensate different problems faced by students. Deadlines must be created in a way which sounds true for each and every student. Teachers should not bombard their students with lots of assignments and projects and they must use that pace which can be easily absorbed by all students. Furthermore, there should be a flexibility while making papers so students can easily attempt them because mostly concepts are not very much clear due to the vagueness of this online system. Finally, teachers should be able to lean new technology and thus try to give their 100% so that students can get all the concepts.

### **Understanding Groups and Teams**

When it was decided to switch traditional mode of learning then for accommodating this new change different groups and teams were made by HEC and its affiliated universities as well so that things can be done immediately through different brains. Now different groups and teams formed by HEC includes both formal and informal groups like Command groups, tasks group, cross functional teams and self-managed teams etc. They can be policy makers headed by a chairman, source allocators, technology

handlers and monitoring teams for the evaluation of online classes etc. Similarly, groups are also made at university level under the instructions of HEC like teachers of similar courses are categorized under one group so they can share sources for more efficient and effective system. Monitoring teams are also made in universities at department level which check whether teachers are taking their classes or not and also that students are provided with relevant materials or not. In fact, each and everything is being checked by those groups or may be teams. Groups at student's level are also made so their workload is minimized and they can produce better work.

Following points are suggested for making groups and teams more productive. Although most of the points will be valid for both students and teachers and other employees but here just more important points are enlisted.



**Figure 05 Suggestions for Making Competitive Groups and Teams**

## **Motivating Employees**

Motivation is something which energize and directs the activities in a more comprehensive manner. To get employees to put forth maximum work efforts motivation is very necessary because only motivated employees' function to their full potential. If there will be no motivation for employees, they will suppose to do work mechanically by doing with the bare minimum. On the other hand, if employees are motivated, innovative and more comprehensive tasks will be accomplished by employees.

## **Suggestions to Motivate Your Employees**

For the motivation of employees, different theories of motivation can be integrated. For example, keeping in mind the goal setting theory; HEC must set challenging but achievable goals for their employees which will lead towards expectancy theory. This theory states the relationship between individual efforts and performance, performance and rewards, and rewards and satisfaction of personnel goals which was rooted from the individual efforts based on the set goals. Now here reinforcement theory comes into focus whenever reward are to be given since employees will reinforce those acts which are rewarded. Equity theories become applicable when people will compare their work with other employees because doing comparison is simply a human nature which can never be denied. Similarly, when open feedback channels are engaged to let employees know how well they are working then automatically Job Characteristic Model comes into consideration.

Under the integration of different motivational theories employees demands and needs should be in front line of the HEC policies so they can have a clear-cut confidence about their importance for HEC and respective university. For example, teachers who have internet problems must be compensated on urgent basis so they may not become frustrated. Employees must be encouraged to implement any innovative idea they may have in their pocket. Although the economic conditions are not so good during this pandemic but still at least to motivate employees HEC can announce rewards, bonuses and other incentives on behalf of the fact that these bonuses will be given to them after the situation gets in control. Now on urgent basis HEC and the corresponding university can arrange employee-recognition programs that give them other incentives like certificates of appreciation etc. and this should be done on the basis of standard given by HEC and students evaluation back-to-back. Employees suffering with COVID-19 also need to be accommodated. Downsizing in the name of rightsizing can demotivate them so HEC must need to ensure the stability of their tenure so they can work better when their job will be secure. Back-to-back meetings should be there as an open feedback channel for giving feedback on their performance so they may think that they are accountable to their superiors. Finally, teachers must be given free access to different educational sites. This will motivate employees because in normal situation access to those educational sites is not free.

### **Foundations Of Control / Recommendations**

Controlling is done for looking into specific performance gaps and areas having room for improvement. This process is accomplished through monitoring, comparing and correcting any significant deviations. With respect to online classes, feedback control will be adopted since in this type of control, controlling is done after the activity is being done. Switching to online classes is not an easy task so in this sort of activity, one can never predict flaws before the implementation of the process. Although some major issues like internet availability in remote areas can be predicted before implementation and during implementation as well but still major problems can never be touched until there is some feedback for evaluation. Now while controlling balanced scoreboard approach and management information system (MIS) both must be used. Balanced scoreboard approach states that controlling is not just to be done in financial perspective but also in terms of customers (Students), internal processes of HEC and people. MIS is more about the information required on regular basis for making online classes more productive.

### **Conclusion**

All the above-mentioned findings conclude that stress is one of the most alarming situations, in the COMSATS University, and it's not only for this university but also for the whole world. These results are clearly mentioning the percentage of students suffering with different kinds of stresses. All types of stresses present in the students of COMSATS University have very drastic effects on their life (All these effects are clearly explained in the finding and discussion section). So, with respect to these negative impacts ample attention is needed to reduce them because if it is not checked properly, it could be fatal. There are so many things which can be done for improving the situation.

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