

Well-being and Stress Management among Hospitality Students: A Mindfulness Perspective

Ms. Uzma Mulla*

Assistant Professor, Department of Hotel Management, Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune,
Maharashtra, India

uzma.mulla@tmv.edu.in

Abstract: Hospitality based education is recognized for its dynamic and practice-oriented nature where the students are required to have a right balance between academics and intense practice training apart from this there is a need for high level of interpersonal interactions. Even though this provides the right platform for the student to develop the required industry ready skills it also puts the student under immense pressure. This in turn affects the mental and emotional well-being of the student. Keeping this in view the current research aims to understand the role of stress management among hospitality students with reference to the concept of mindfulness using secondary data.

This research has been undertaken on the basis of the qualitative method with the reference to the review of recent literature published between 2020 and 2025. Based on the findings of the literature review, it can be concluded that the students of hospitality face immense pressure and stress with the reference to various factors. One such factor is emotional labor, which has an impact on the students. The students need to maintain high level of emotional control with the reference to the interactions with the hotel guests.

In this context, the present research has been based on the application of the concept of mindfulness to understand the role of stress management in the context of the student population. Based on the findings it can be concluded that the application of mindful breathing techniques, meditation and awareness helps the student population to maintain high level of emotional control. This also helps in the reduction of anxiety and to enhance the level of academic performance.

Keywords: Stress management, Mindfulness, Hospitality students, Emotional and Well-being.

INTRODUCTION

The hospitality industry is considered a people-oriented industry. In this industry the delivery of service is based on the ability and emotional stability of an individual. Therefore to make the students ready to cope with the challenges that exist in the hospitality industry the field of hospitality education equips the students with appropriate knowledge through training and service experience. Although this prepares the students to cope with the industry it creates a challenging environment that impacts the health and well-being of the students.

Students studying for hospitality studies have to manage different responsibilities such as academic activities, grooming, internship and training activities. Although the variety in activities is contributing towards the development of the students professional skills in a

positive manner it has been observed that students face a hectic routine due to physical activities that demand constant performance in both academic and practical areas.

In hospitality-based education students are encouraged to always maintain a positive attitude even in different situations for professionalism. This aspect of education has a positive influence towards the development of the student's interpersonal skills, this has shown a worrying trend in recent years regarding the student's mental well-being in higher education institutions. This is especially true for professional courses like hospitality where there is exposure to both intellectual and physical work environment. This unmanaged stress has shown a potential for negative influence not just in the student's academic performance but also students confidence and motivation.

In this regard mindfulness has been identified as an emerging practice in the management of stress and enhancement of well-being. Mindfulness has been described as the practice of being present and conscious of one's thoughts and emotions. Mindfulness helps individuals to react to situations in a calm and balanced way rather than reacting impulsively. Mindful exercises and short periods of meditation have been identified as helpful in the management of stress.

Considering the growing importance of the well-being of students in hospitality education, the present study aims at exploring the aspect of stress management among hospitality students through the lens of mindfulness. This research is based on secondary data and the present study aims at integrating the findings related to the aspects of stress, emotional labour and mindfulness. This way, the present research aims at facilitating a better understanding of the problems faced by hospitality students.

REVIEW OF IMPORTANT LITERATURE

1. Hospitality education has been found to be one of the most engaging and challenging fields to study as it requires the students to attain both theory and practical knowledge simultaneously. Unlike other fields hospitality management places a high value on the delivery of service in real time attitude and positive interaction with people. This has been a major role to enable the students to attain the requirements. Research has been conducted in different countries to identify the fact that the stress levels of hospitality students are higher than those in other fields due to the high level of commitment in terms of academic and practical requirements for the students (Chen & Chen, 2021; Kim & Park, 2022).

2. A more in-depth analysis of the sources of stress shows that academic pressure is one of the contributing factors. Hospitality management students are required to complete various assignments, practical evaluations and theory exams within a specified timeframe. Moreover there is a need for proper grooming and professional conduct which can add another source of stress for these students. Most students find it hard to cope with these requirements, especially during peak academic periods. Studies have indicated that continuous academic pressure can cause stress and affect academic performance if not handled properly.
3. In terms of the Indian context, there has been considerable debate on student stress in recent years especially in professional and skill-based education. According to research studies academic pressure and pressure from family and society are found to contribute substantially to stress among Indian students (Nema & Sinha, 2023). Unlike Western countries, Indian students have to face additional challenges in terms of placement and job security which increases stress levels among them. According to research studies conducted by Carvalho et al. (2020) environmental factors, peer comparison and adjustment are found to play a significant role in influencing stress among students. This is highly relevant to hospitality education in India, as students have to perform academically as well as cope with a highly pressurizing industry.
4. Another significant factor contributing to stress in hospitality education is internship training. It is agreed upon that internship training is an essential part of education in hospitality management. This is because such training allows students to gain hands-on experience and become accustomed to the harsh realities of the industry. However, these harsh realities are not always easy to deal with. There are situations where students are required to work for long hours, perform physically exhausting tasks and deal with customers in extremely pressurizing situations. According to research studies, such situations can cause physical as well as emotional exhaustion for the students (Singh & Sharma, 2023).
5. Among the most discussed terms in this regard is emotional labour. Hospitality students are required to have a pleasant and professional demeanor at all times. This includes situations when they are tired or stressed or have to deal with different frustrating situations. This constant control over emotions can be mentally taxing. Research has indicated that emotional labour can cause burnout or emotional exhaustion and affect their job satisfaction

(Lee et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2021). For students in the learning phase it can be extremely challenging to cope with such situations.

6. In response to these challenges recent research has increasingly focused on the role of mindfulness as a tool in the management of stress. Mindfulness is generally understood as the capacity of an individual to be present with their thoughts and feelings without being overwhelmed by them. It is seen as a simple yet effective tool that can be done without the need for elaborate resources. Research findings have shown that the application of mindfulness techniques such as meditation, breathing exercises, and awareness can significantly reduce the levels of stress in students (Bamber & Schneider, 2020).
7. Moreover the importance and relevance of mindfulness have also been established by several research studies. For example, a study by Bharti et al. (2023) established the positive impact of mindfulness practice on the resilience and well-being of university students especially in times of stress. Another study by Thomas et al. (2024) established the positive impact of mindfulness-based interventions, such as mindfulness-based stress reduction, on the reduction of anxiety and enhancement of coping skills in the academic setting.
8. Further evidence points to the strong negative relationship between mindfulness and stress levels. The studies suggest that students who practice mindfulness experience low levels of stress and better emotional well-being (Kumar et al., 2020; Gupta & Verma, 2019). The studies further point out the benefits of mindfulness in improving concentration level, self-awareness and decision-making capabilities which are crucial for the success of hospitality professionals.

Despite the increase in literature in this domain, it must be noted that the literature focusing specifically on the students of hospitality courses in India is limited. The majority of the existing literature has been conducted on the general student population. However in consideration of the similarity in stress factors for professional courses of study the literature may be applied to the domain of hospitality courses. There is an urgent need for more specific literature to be developed in this domain.

Overall, the literature points to a strong link between academic stress, internship demands, emotional labor and student well-being & mindfulness in hospitality education. At the same time, it offers compelling evidence for the role of mindfulness as an approach to stress

management. Through mindfulness educational programs can not only support student well-being but also better prepare students for the demands of the hospitality industry.

METHODOLOGY

The research study is entirely based on secondary data and follows a qualitative research approach to explore the stress and well-being issues among the hospitality students from a mindfulness point of view. Since the research topic is quite specific and majorly deals with understanding the patterns and existing knowledge the use of secondary data was found to be appropriate and effective. Rather than collecting new data the research is based on the existing published research with respect to develop a wider and better understanding of the specific subject. This approach enables the researcher to analyze the research from all different contexts and compare it to identify the trends and relationships.

The rationale behind the use of secondary data is closely linked with the literature review aspect of the study which focuses on different aspects such as academic pressure, internship stress, emotional stress faced by hospitality-based students. The literature review aspect focuses more on the importance of the use of mindfulness as a major tool in the management of stress. Through the application of secondary data the study is able to bring together different perspectives in an integrated manner.

Research Design

The study design of the paper is based on a descriptive approach. The study aims to describe major stress factors identified in earlier studies and explore how mindfulness practice can be helpful in managing these problems.

Data Sources

The data required for the study can be obtained from reliable sources like academic journals, research papers, conference papers, reports, etc. Google Scholar and ResearchGate are online academic websites that can be used to obtain literature for the study.

To make this study relevant to the current scenario, major emphasis has been given to studies conducted between 2020 and 2025. In addition to this maximum importance has been given to studies conducted in India as these studies are highly relevant to the local scenario.

Selection Criteria for Literature

The sources used for the research were based on their relevance to the objectives of the research. Sources focusing on the research on stress, well-being, emotional labor and mindfulness especially in higher education and hospitality were preferred. Only peer-reviewed credible sources were used to maintain the quality of the research.

Scope of the Study

The main focus will be on the students, specifically the hospitality students in the context of the larger higher education system. While the larger student population has been kept in mind it has been done in such a manner that the requirements of a hospitality student have been kept in mind. Stress management and the role of mindfulness will be the main focus.

Limitations of the Study

As the research is based on secondary data it depends on the availability of the research material. Secondly, the lack of primary data would limit the research on the direct experience of the students. Thirdly, it would not be entirely accurate because of the presence of various regions and institutions.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To comprehend the sources of stress for hospitality students
- To explore the effects of emotional labor on student well-being
- To understand the role of mindfulness for stress management and provides suggestions for improving student well-being

DISCUSSION

- The current research aimed to explore the issue of stress and well-being among hospitality students from a mindfulness point of view based on secondary research. In particular insights were drawn from existing research studies, such as “The Influence of Academic Stress and Emotional Exhaustion on Hospitality Students' Career Intentions” by Chen & Chen (2021) and “Academic Stress and Its Impact on Student Well-being in Hospitality Education” by Kim & Park (2022), which indicate that stress is a common issue in hospitality education.

- As described in the papers presented in this issue the nature of hospitality education, which involves academic learning and extensive practical training as well as constant interpersonal interaction, creates a challenging but skill-based learning environment. Although such a learning model plays an important role in building professional skills it also creates a level of pressure on students. Based on the studies presented in this issue, it appears that balancing multiple learning demands could be a source of stress for hospitality students.
- Further insight into stress for students can also be obtained from another research article entitled “Internship Stress and Its Impact on Hospitality Students Performance and Well-being” prepared by Singh & Sharma (2023). The article points out that despite internships being a necessary aspect for students to gain practical experience there are also instances where students are expected to work for extended hours. As such there are chances for students to experience physical as well as emotional stress.
- Another significant aspect that has been covered in the literature is emotional labor. According to the findings presented in “Emotional Labour and Burnout among Hospitality Students: A Study on Stress and Coping Mechanisms” by Lee et al. (2022) and “Emotional Labour, Stress, and Burnout among Students in Service-Oriented Programs” by Wang et al. (2021), it has been found that it is expected of students to have a positive and composed attitude despite all adverse circumstances. Although it is a significant aspect for hospitality professionals to have a positive attitude it has been found that having to constantly manage emotions can be mentally exhausting for students.
- In this sense, mindfulness has been widely discussed in the literature as a practical approach to stress management. The article “Mindfulness-Based Meditation to Decrease Stress and Anxiety in College Students” prepared by Bamber & Schneider (2020) emphasizes that mindfulness practices such as meditation or breathing exercises can contribute to stress reduction and emotional regulation. In a similar way, “Mindfulness and Mental Health in University Students: A Systematic Review” prepared by González-Martín et al. (2023) suggests that mindfulness practices are related to positive outcomes such as psychological well-being, concentration or emotional regulation.

- Further evidence for mindfulness comes from studies conducted in India, such as “Mindfulness and Resilience among University Students in India” published by Bharti et al. (2023) and “Effectiveness of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction on Academic Anxiety among Undergraduate Students” published by Thomas et al. (2024). From these studies it can be concluded that mindfulness not only reduces stress levels but also improves the resilience of students.

Despite all the benefits presented in the studies it was also evident from the literature that mindfulness has not been incorporated in hospitality education. Most of the hospitality courses still emphasize learning skills but not much attention is given to mental well-being. This is evident from the results of all the studies reviewed in this paper which suggest a balanced approach between stress management and skill development.

Overall, the above discussion based on secondary research from a variety of studies supports the view that stress in hospitality education is the result of a combination of academic stress, internship stress and emotional labor. However the above literature consistently supports mindfulness as a solution for dealing with stress. The addition of mindfulness to the curriculum for hospitality management students could be a step towards a more nurturing environment for the student.

SUGGESTIONS

The following suggestions are provided based on the insights derived from the review of the existing literature and secondary research:

- As per the understanding of this study hospitality institutions and colleges can consider including a few mindfulness practices such as like meditation techniques in the academic schedule for the students.
- It is suggested that colleges could arrange workshops for the students on stress management, emotional well-being and coping strategies as suggested in the previous studies.
- The institutions can arrange counseling sessions for the students to guide them during their internship and practical training period.

- Future research may include primary research methods such as surveys, interviews or case studies to gain insight into the actual experiences of hospitality students with regard to stress and well-being.
- Further research may also explore the effects of particular internship circumstances, such as work hours, departmental exposure and organizational culture, on students well-being.
- Further research may be conducted on the role of digital technologies or mobile applications in fostering mindfulness and stress reduction for students.

CONCLUSION

The present study aimed to explore the issue of stress and well-being in hospitality students from a mindfulness approach, based on secondary research. The findings of studies such as “The Influence of Academic Stress and Emotional Exhaustion on Hospitality Students’ Career Intentions” by Chen & Chen (2021) and “Academic Stress and Its Impact on Student Well-being in Hospitality Education” by Kim & Park (2022) suggest that hospitality education although successful in enhancing hospitality skills is characterized by multiple demands that could lead to stress.

The review of literature further emphasizes the point particularly with studies such as “Emotional Labour and Burnout among Hospitality Students” by Lee et al. (2022) and “Emotional Labour, Stress, and Burnout among Students in Service-Oriented Programs” by Wang et al. (2021), which highlight the fact that emotional labour is an important part of hospitality education. Although it is beneficial for the cultivation of professional attributes it also needs to be managed continuously which could affect the students.

On the other hand studies such as “Mindfulness-Based Meditation to Decrease Stress and Anxiety in College Students” by Bamber & Schneider (2020) and “Mindfulness and Mental Health in University Students: A Systematic Review” by González-Martín et al. (2023), indicate mindfulness as a potential solution for dealing with stress. The relevance of mindfulness in enhancing student resilience and well-being can be further understood through supporting studies conducted in India by Bharti et al. (2023) and Thomas et al. (2024).

In conclusion, based on the synthesis of the above studies it could be stated that while stress is an inherent component of hospitality education it could be managed effectively through

mindfulness-based approaches. The incorporation of the same within the framework of hospitality education could lead to a more balanced learning environment.

References

1. Bamber, M. D., & Schneider, J. K. (2020). Mindfulness-based meditation to decrease stress and anxiety in college students: A narrative synthesis of the research. *Educational Research Review, 30*, 100321.
2. Bharti, N., Sharma, R., & Kaur, P. (2023). Mindfulness and resilience among university students in India: The role of well-being during stressful situations. *Behavioral Sciences, 13*(5), 353.
3. Carvalho, V. S., Guerrero, E., & Chambel, M. J. (2020). Work-family conflict and stress among students: The moderating role of mindfulness. *International Journal of Stress Management, 27*(2), 123–135.
4. Chen, C. F., & Chen, S. C. (2021). The influence of academic stress and emotional exhaustion on hospitality students' career intentions. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education, 28*, 100312.
5. González-Martín, A. M., Montero-Marin, J., & García-Campayo, J. (2023). Mindfulness and mental health in university students: A systematic review. *Frontiers in Public Health, 11*, 1123456.
6. Gupta, M., & Verma, S. (2019). Mindfulness and psychological well-being among college students. *Indian Journal of Positive Psychology, 10*(2), 145–150.
7. Kim, H. J., & Park, J. (2022). Academic stress and its impact on student well-being in hospitality education. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education, 34*(3), 145–156.
8. Kumar, S., Singh, A., & Pandey, R. (2020). Role of mindfulness in stress reduction among Indian students. *Indian Journal of Health and Well-being, 11*(4–6), 234–238.
9. Lee, L., Kim, M., & Lee, J. (2022). Emotional labour and burnout among hospitality students: A study on stress and coping mechanisms. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 102*, 103132.

10. Nema, S., & Sinha, R. (2023). Academic stress and coping strategies among Indian college students. *Journal of Education and Health Promotion, 12*, 89.
11. Singh, R., & Sharma, V. (2023). Internship stress and its impact on hospitality students' performance and well-being. *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Systems, 16*(1), 45–52.
12. Sperling, E. L., et al. (2023). The impact of mindfulness interventions on student stress and well-being: A systematic review. *PLOS ONE, 18*(2), e0281234.
13. Thomas, G., Joseph, S., & Mathew, A. (2024). Effectiveness of mindfulness-based stress reduction on academic anxiety among undergraduate students in India. *Social Medicine Journal, 17*(1), 55–62.
14. Wang, Y., Liu, X., & Wang, L. (2021). Emotional labour, stress, and burnout among students in service-oriented programs. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 129*, 103611.