

Prevalence and Motivation of Hustle Culture Behaviour Among High School Students

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Abstract

In this competitive world, the spirit to excel and move ahead of others has become a common phenomenon. For this, the individuals work hard for long hours and engage in many activities, even at the cost of their own wellbeing. So this culture of hustling leads to many physical and mental problems. Though hustle culture is primarily a phenomenon related to the work environment, in the recent past it has also seeped into the lives of school students.

Investigators aimed to study the prevalence and motivation behind this behavior among high school students. The study was conducted on a sample of 111 high school students from the tri-city of Chandigarh. A scale for prevalence and motivation of hustle culture behavior was prepared by the investigators, and data were collected through Google Forms. The raw data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics using SPSS version 20. The results of the study showed that 2/3 of the students agreed with the prevalence of hustle culture among the students. 2/3rd students agreed that the motivation behind hustling was career development or professional development. Around half of the sample students agreed that peers play an important role in the development of hustle culture among the students. Only 26% of students believed that parents were the motivation behind the hustling behavior of the students. While studying the difference between girls and boys regarding the prevalence of hustle culture and motivation behind hustle culture, no difference was found between them for both parameters.

Keywords: Hustle culture, motivation, prevalence

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I. Introduction

Hustle culture promotes the idea of working hard all the time, even at the cost of one's own well being, to achieve more in life. Though, it seems that working hard leads to an increase in productivity and achievements, but soon it starts taking a toll on one's health and mental wellbeing. Continuous work leaves no room for leisure and relaxation.

Hustle culture is the social pressure to constantly work harder, faster, and stronger in every area of one's life. It is the idolization of work holism and mindset that one should be working to the point of exhaustion, (Tiongson, 2021).

Though hustle culture started as a modern workplace phenomenon that emphasizes hard work and long working hours as keys to success, it soon permeated various aspects of life, including work, entrepreneurship, academics, and personal development. While hustle culture can promote ambition and drive, it also has its downsides, such as burnout, stress, and a skewed work life balance. In the pursuit of reaching the unrealistic expectations imposed by oneself or society, one depletes or exhausts one's physical and mental resources, (Absher, 2020).

Long working hours (> 55 hours a week) may lead to the onset of cardiovascular disease, (Virtanen, & Kivimäki, 2018).

In the recent past, hustle culture has seeped into the lives of adolescents, as they live in a society fixed on the idea of achievement and status. In society, success is often equated with constant activity and productivity, influenced by role models who glamorized round-the-clock work and the merits of hustling to achieve dreams. To achieve success, teenagers find themselves caught in a cycle of perpetual motion, from academics to extracurricular and even pursuing personal passion. However, the pressure to excel at everything can lead to feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt, as well as a fear of failure. Moreover, the competitive nature

of hustle culture can strain relationships and erode the sense of community and collaboration among peers. While ambition is undoubtedly a driving force for progress, it is crucial to foster a culture that values balance, self reflection, and compassion.

The reasons/ motivations behind hustling range from self motivation to peer pressure, parental expectations, and even securing admission to a good University. Additionally, social media and peer influence create constant pressure to excel and showcase achievement in every sphere. Students feel pressure to confirm the expectations, of others to gain acceptance so they start prioritizing academic success over other aspects of life like rest and relaxation.

In the present times of capitalism, students want to earn lots of money and enjoy success. They think that if they don't follow the current trends, they will lose a lot of social capital in their lives. So for the sake of gaining social capital for the future they start sacrificing their present by hustling and working hard all the time, (Maharani et al., 2024).

In the pursuit of acceptance into prestigious universities, students are compelled to constantly build impressive portfolios. So apart from additional coaching to improve academic performances, they are engaged in a wide range of extracurricular activities to improve their resumes. The intense competition to seek leadership positions or community service opportunities compels them to hustle all the time. And then they tend to sacrifice their physical and mental wellbeing and personal interests to outperform their peers.

Regardless of the reason for hustling, working hard continuously without rest and relaxation, leads to physical and mental exhaustion and an increased risk of illness. Pushing oneself too hard leaves no room for failure and realistic expectations in life.

Significance

The impact of hustle culture on the physical and mental health of workers and professionals is being studied by many researchers. But in the recent past, this phenomenon has been seen percolating in students or adolescents as well.

Intense academic pressure, peer and parent influence, and a constant strive for success force them to work tirelessly and hustle all the time. So more and more students are entering the zone where they are at risk of mental and physical health issues. Understanding the prevalence of hustle culture can help identify 'at-risk individuals' and develop intervention strategies to promote mental health. Examining the motivations behind hustle culture can help us understand the role of social comparison, family, and peer influence in shaping adolescents attitudes towards achievement and success.

So studying the prevalence of hustle culture among high school students and the motivation behind it is crucial for understanding its multi-faceted impact on mental health, educational outcomes, social dynamics, and even long-term consequences. So the researchers felt motivated to take up the study.

II. Review of Literature

Balkeran (2020) studied the hustle culture among employees at the workplace. It aimed to study the impact of hustle culture on the quality of professional relationships within the workplace. With the rise of remote work due to COVID-19, the study emphasizes the need to reevaluate healthy work expectations in the digital age to ensure sustainable career opportunities amidst global connectivity.

Pujarama (2021) studied the experience of Indonesian students who hustled through the internet to learn new skills to build their profiles during COVID. The study found that the students felt the compulsion to hustle alone to learn new skills when there were no opportunities for group work. The study also emphasized the need to research further the implications of rising hustle culture among students.

Rosa (2022) wrote an article on the impact of hustle culture on mental health and wellbeing. In her article, she cited the observations of the research team of the Private Rehabilitation Clinic, Delamere, which found that hustle culture is extremely toxic and can cause a negative impact on people's mental health and wellbeing. Stress, anxiety, exhaustion, fatigue, and decreased productivity are the outcomes of hustle culture.

Yuningsih, Mardiana, Jima, & Prasetya (2023) studied that lifestyle changes in Indonesia were the result of globalization that resulted in the adoption of hustle culture among the people. Hustle culture led to psychological distress that had a negative impact on the work environment. This article studied hustle culture as a theoretical factor contributing to psychological distress. Self-compassion acted as a moderating variable in the influence of hustle culture on psychological distress. The result revealed that hustle culture had a positive impact on psychological distress. The results further indicated that self compassion, an independent and moderating variable in the study, weakens the influence of hustle culture on psychological distress. Another finding of the study highlighted that 2/3rd of the respondents considered hustle culture as a positive aspect, which means that to achieve the capitalist goals, working hard and pushing them to exceed their limits, that is, hustling, is a positive aspect.

Maharani, Martono, & Rizkidarajat (2024) pointed out that people with hustle culture behavior are addicted to work. This phenomenon has become prevalent during the last three years among the students. The existence of late capitalism and digital portfolios resulted in such behavior. Fear of being unsuccessful in life, fear of missing out, and fear of being unsatisfied with their education pushed students to adopt this culture. In this study, 150 social and political science students of Jenderal Soedirman University were taken as a sample. A quantitative survey research was done on the sample. The study aimed to find the reasons and levels of hustling behavior. The results showed that 61.3% of students show high hustle behavior. Out of this, 41.3% believed that for good personal branding in their portfolios, they adopted this behavior.

Objectives

1. To study the prevalence and motivation of hustle culture behavior among high school students.
2. To study the difference in the prevalence of hustle culture behavior between high school girls and boys studying in various schools of Chandigarh tricity.
3. To study the difference in the motivation of hustle culture behavior between high school girls and boys studying in various schools of Chandigarh tricity.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the prevalence of hustle culture behavior between high school girls and boys studying in various schools of Chandigarh tricity.
2. There is no significant difference in the motivation of hustle culture behavior between high school girls and boys studying in various schools of Chandigarh tricity.

Sample

A sample of 111 students was collected from the population of high school students studying in the city of Chandigarh. Sample students were given questionnaires through Google Forms so as to collect the data.

Tools

- Self prepared questionnaire of prevalence and motivation of hustle culture behavior

Procedure

The research was conducted to study the prevalence and motivation of hustle culture behavior among high school students. A descriptive survey method was used to study the variable. 111 high school students were surveyed for the study. Investigators constructed a scale for prevalence and motivation of hustle culture behavior to collect the data. The data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Statistical tools used

Descriptive statistics, percentages, mean, standard deviation, standard error of mean, inferential statistics, and t-tests were employed to analyze the data.

Analysis of data

The raw data was analyzed by testing the concerned objectives using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Descriptive Statistics

1. To study the prevalence and motivation of hustle culture behavior among high school students.

Table 1: Percentage agreement of high school students related to prevalence and motivation of hustle culture

S.No	Components	Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	Prevalence	I believe that the harder I work in the present, the more successful I'll be in the future.	61.3	31.5	6.3	0.9	-
2.		I am constantly switching between multiple activities every day.	19.8	33.3	32.4	12.6	1.8
3.		I have no leisure time because I am constantly hustling between various activities.	15.3	25.2	29.7	22.5	7.2
4.		Long breaks from work make me feel guilty.	31.5	38.7	12.6	12.6	4.5
		Average	31.98	32.18	20.25	12.15	3.3
5.	Parents driven Motivation	I engage in various extra activities because my parents want me to do so.	4.5	22.5	29.7	31.5	11.7
6.		I am engaged in various circular and co-circular activities because my parents want me to excel in every field.	9.9	15.3	28.8	35.1	10.8
		Average	7.2	18.9	29.25	33.3	11.25
7.	Profile	I engage in many activities in order to	9	20.7	27	25.2	18

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	enhancement Motivation	enhance my social media profile.					
8.		I believe more the programs/ internships in my profile , easier it will be to get admission in a reputed college.	35.1	48.6	11.7	4.5	-
9.		I try to learn as many skills in order to get into a good college.	27.9	41.4	23.4	4.5	2.7
10.		I pursue many hobbies not just for my passion, but also to develop my personality.	35.1	44.1	17.1	2.7	0.9
		Average	26.78	38.7	19.8	9.23	5.4
11.	Peer driven Motivation	I always have the fear of missing out the experience my peers gain in different activities.	21.6	28.8	26.1	18	5.4
12.		I am trying to do more activities, by seeing my peers do it.	11.7	34.2	28.8	18.9	6.3
		Average	16.65	31.5	27.45	18.45	5.85

Table 1 shows the percentage agreement related to prevalence and motivation of hustle culture.

On average, around 64% (31.98+32.18) students agree to the prevalence of hustle culture among the high school students of Chandigarh tri-city, whereas around 15% (3.3+12.15) disagree with it. Analyzing it further, it has been found that 93% (61.3+31.5) of students believed that the harder they worked in the present, the more successful they would be in the future. 53% (19.8+33.3) students found them constantly switching between multiple activities every day, whereas around one third are not sure about this. 40% of students believed that they did not have any leisure time because they were constantly hustling between various activities. 30% were against this view, and another 29.7% were not sure. Around 70% feel that long breaks from work make them feel guilty, whereas only 17% did not believe so.

As far as motivation for hustling is concerned, high school students drove motivation from parents, peers, and professions. 26% (7.2+18.9) were of the view that they do hustling because their parents want them to do it, whereas around 45% (33.3+11.25) were against this view. 43% (11.7+31.5) students disagree to the statement that they remain engaged in various extra activities because their parents want them to do so, whereas 29.7% were not sure about this. Around 46% (10.8+35.1) students disagree with the statement that they remained engaged in various curricular and co-curricular activities because their parents wanted them to excel in every field. Only 25% (9.9+15.3) agreed to remain engaged in curricular and co-curricular activities because of their parents. 28.8% were not sure about this. Close to 70% (27.9+40.4) tried to learn as many skills in order to get into a good college.

Building a professional career was yet another parameter that motivated students to hustle. Around 65% (26.78 + 38.7) students believed that building a profession motivated them to hustle, whereas 15% (5.4 + 9.23) students did not believe this. Around 20% were not sure. 30% (9+20.7) engaged themselves in many activities in order to enhance their social media profile, 43% (18+25.2) disagreed with it, and 27% were not sure. The majority of 84% (35.1+48.6) still believed that the more programs/internships in their profile, the easier it will be to get admission in a reputed college. 80% (35.1+44.1) pursued many hobbies not just for their passion but to develop their personality.

Peer pressure is again a reason for the hustle culture among the students. Around 48% (16.65+31.5) reeled under the peer pressure for hustling, 24% (18.45+5.85) didn't believe to do so, and 27.45% were unsure. 50% (21.6+28.8) felt that they always had the fear of missing out on the experience their peers gain in different activities; 24% (18+5.4) were not in favor of this, and 26.1% were unsure. 46% of students tried to do more activities by seeing their peers doing it, whereas 28.8% were not sure and 25% (6.3 + 18.9) were against this view.

Inferential Statistics

1. To study the difference in the prevalence of hustle culture behavior between high school girls and boys studying in various schools of Chandigarh tricity.

The significant difference between mean values of hustle culture behavior between high school girl and boy students can be studied by testing the concerned hypothesis by calculating the t-ratio value.

Table 2: Difference in mean values and t-ratio for prevalence of hustle culture behavior between high school girls and boys

Variable	Gender	N	M	SD	SEm	df	t-value	Level of significance
Prevalence of Hustle Culture Behavior	Girls	71	14.94	2.190	.260	109	-1.271	NS
	Boys	40	15.48	1.974	.312			

Table 2 shows that the mean values for prevalence of hustle culture behavior between high school girls (71) and boys (40) are 14.94 & 15.48, respectively, and the standard deviation values are 2.190 & 1.974, respectively. The t-value for 109 degrees of freedom is -1.271, which is not significant at the .05 level. Hence the hypothesis, 'There is no significant difference in prevalence of hustle culture behavior between high school girls and boys in various schools of the tri-city of Chandigarh, may be accepted. This means that both high school girls and boys showed similar levels of prevalence of hustle culture behavior.

1. To study the difference in the motivation of hustle culture behavior between high school girls and boys studying in various schools of Chandigarh tricity.

Table 3: Difference in mean values and t-ratio for motivation of hustle culture behavior between high school girls and boys

Variable	Gender	N	M	SD	SEm	Df	t-value	Level of significance
Motivation of Hustle Culture Behavior	Girls	71	26.83	4.611	.547	109	-.854	NS
	Boys	40	27.65	5.260	.832			

Table 3 shows that the mean values for motivation of hustle culture behavior between high school girls (71) and boys (40) are 26.83 & 27.65, respectively, and the standard deviation values are 4.611 & 5.260, respectively. The t-value for 109 degrees of freedom is -.854, which is not significant at the .05 level. Hence the hypothesis, 'There is no significant difference in motivation of hustle culture behavior between high school girls and boys in various schools of the tri-city of Chandigarh, may be accepted. This means that both high school girls and boys showed similar levels of motivation for hustle culture behavior.

III. Results and Discussion

The results of the study show a high prevalence of hustle culture among high school students. Around 64% of the students are in agreement with the statements, such as that they have no leisure time because of multiple activities; they even feel guilty to take long breaks. These results show that hustle culture has seeped deep into the lives of students. They are not able to think about relaxation and leisure; rather, they feel pressurized to hustle for various reasons. Though the reasons can be many, the study found that the profile building to get admission to a good college or university is the major reason to do lots of activities at a time. This may be due to the fact that in today's time, getting admission in good colleges has become very competitive and challenging. The results are in agreement with the study of Maharani et al. (2020) which found that 61.3% have hustle culture, with most of them agreeing that they hustle to build their profiles and personal branding.

Further, around 48% of the students reported that they engage in many activities because their peers do the same. When some students engage in many activities, it becomes a trigger point for others to do the same; otherwise, it is felt that they may miss out on many experiences.

Around 26% of the respondents feel the pressure from the parents to engage and excel in many fields or areas. The results are in sync with Jindal et al. (2022), which found that adolescents perceive parental pressure to excel in academics as well as co-curricular activities.

IV. Conclusion

The high prevalence of hustle culture among students found in the study raises a serious concern about their physical and mental well-being. Youth is a vibrant time in one's life marked by energy, enthusiasm, and a carefree attitude. But hustle culture is stealing this prime time from them. By understanding the reasons behind, there should be efforts both at the policy as well as social level to mitigate the toxic effects of hustle culture among students.

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