

Relationship Between Hustle Culture And Psychological Wellbeing Of Secondary School Students

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Abstract

The phenomenon of "hustle culture" is characterized by relentless busyness and an overemphasis on productivity. Primarily it was a phenomenon related to work culture but in the recent past it has become increasingly prevalent among students globally. Students are motivated to hustle by both intrinsic factors, such as personal growth and portfolio building, and extrinsic factors, including parental pressure, competition with peers and even admission in good universities.

This research explores the phenomenon of hustle culture among high school students of Chandigarh. It also tries to study the impact of hustle culture on psychological well-being of the students. Utilizing quantitative methods, the study surveyed 92 students from various secondary schools using adapted scales for hustle culture and psychological well-being.

Results indicate a moderate to high prevalence of hustle culture among respondents, with average 59.4% demonstrating high levels of engagement. Despite these high levels of hustle, the study found no significant correlation between hustle culture and psychological well-being, suggesting that while students are highly engaged in hustling, this engagement does not yet show a clear detrimental effect on their mental psychological health. However, the study highlights potential risks and underscores the need for balanced approaches and support systems to mitigate possible long-term impacts. As hustle culture continues to evolve, it is crucial for educators, parents, and counselors to address these pressures and promote mental health awareness among students.

Key words: Hustle Culture, Psychological Wellbeing, Prevalence, Extrinsic Motivation, Intrinsic Motivation

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I. Introduction

Globalization has profoundly reshaped various aspects of modern life, accelerating the pace and intensifying competition in numerous fields. In this rapidly evolving landscape, students are increasingly driven to achieve exceptional academic performance, striving for top grades and career excellence. This heightened demand for success has given rise to the concept of "hustle culture," characterized by incessant busyness, long working hours, and an unwavering focus on productivity.

Emerging prominently since the 1980s, hustle culture has gained traction in both developing and developed countries (Iskandar & Rachmawati, 2022). Hustle culture, often described as a workaholic attitude, emphasizes excessive and repetitive effort. It glorifies perpetual toil, creating a competitive environment where merely working a standard week can make one appear less ambitious. Primarily it was a phenomenon related to work culture but in the recent past it has become increasingly prevalent among students also. This phenomenon is manifesting among young people and students, as a relentless pursuit of achievement and an almost compulsive work ethic.

In their quest to stand out and secure spots in prestigious universities, students today are burdened with a plethora of responsibilities extending beyond regular school hours. Beyond attending school for the typical 7-8 hours, students often participate in additional tuition or coaching classes to enhance their academic performance. They are also expected to engage in a wide array of extracurricular activities, from leadership roles and community service to acquiring notable achievements, all aimed at bolstering their resumes and impressing potential recommenders.

A study by Maharani, Martono, & Rizkidarajat (2024) involving 150 students from the Faculty of Social and Political Science at Jenderal Soedirman University investigated the prevalence and reasons behind

hustle culture among students. Their research, employing a survey method, revealed that a significant portion of students (61.3%) exhibit high levels of hustle culture. The study identified that many students engage in this behavior to enhance their personal branding and build a robust portfolio.

While hustle culture is driven by a desire to achieve more and a belief that relentless work equates to a sense of purpose and worth, it often comes at the expense of personal time, family moments, and opportunities for leisure. This intense competitive drive can lead to feelings of inadequacy, anxiety, and a pervasive sense of never being enough. The overemphasis on external achievements and the constant push to excel can adversely impact students' overall psychological well-being and mental health.

Given these concerns, the researchers felt the need to explore the phenomenon of hustle culture among high school students and its impact on students' psychological well-being.

II. Review of Literature

The findings of Debra (1995)'s study stated that working under time pressure and with extreme overload in the employees can be stressful because they get tensed and anxious when they have a lot to do before some deadline.

Wong, Chan, & Ngan (2019) showed that longer working hours are associated with mental distress resulting in having depressive and anxiety symptoms in the individual. It further impacts the sleep pattern and leads to sleep disturbances.

Kim et al. (2019) investigated the current trends of working hours, causes of death in the working population, and compensation rates. Their research indicated how long working hours and environmental demands can increase workers vulnerability for suicide ideation.

Balkeran (2020) found out that the tendency of being in the hustle culture can activate high levels of exhaustion and induce stress in the individual. This burnout hampers the wellbeing adversely. Burnout is emotional exhaustion in individuals and it is an unfavorable attitude to oneself and those around us.

Chu (2021) collected data from two waves (2016 and 2018) of the China Family Panel Studies (CFPS) and a total of 6972 workers were available for analysis. His study aimed to explore the association between long working hours and the self-rated health (SRH) level, taking into account gender and educational differences and the results indicated that long working hour has an adverse effect on health outcomes causing chronic fatigue.

Desnithalia, Purba, & Pengaruh (2021) conducted a study and the results stated that mental health disorders can also occur due to hustle culture. Individuals with a hustle culture feel afraid if they are left behind compared to their peers in terms of accomplishments. They have the obsession to be the best and aim success in their lives.

An article published in Psychreg (2022) addressed the consequences of hustle culture on mental health of the individuals. People feel pressured to work untiringly and these continuous struggles for achieving more and more can lead them down a dangerous pathway. Not allowing yourself any time to relax can be extremely hazardous for your psychological well-being in the longer run.

Jindal et al. (2024) investigated the prevalence and motivations of hustle culture among 111 high school students in the Tricity of Chandigarh. Data were collected using a self-constructed scale developed by the authors. The findings revealed that two-thirds of the students reported engaging in hustle culture. Similarly, the same proportion attributed their motivation for hustling to career and professional development, as well as peer influence. Only 26% of students felt that their parents played a significant role in their hustling behaviors. Additionally, there was no observed difference between girls and boys regarding their engagement in hustle culture.

Objectives

1. To study the hustle culture among secondary school students of Chandigarh in terms of prevalence of hustle culture, intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation.
2. To study the relationship between hustle culture and psychological wellbeing of secondary school students of Chandigarh.

Hypotheses

- There is no significant correlation between hustle culture and psychological wellbeing of secondary school students of Chandigarh.

Delimitation

The study was delimited to class XI & XII students of senior secondary school students of Chandigarh.

Methodology

Sample

A sample of 92 students was taken from the population of secondary school students of various schools of Chandigarh through Google forms.

Tools used

Following tools were used to collect the data:

1. Scale of Hustle culture adapted from the scale prepared by (Jindal et al., 2024).
2. Scale of Psychological wellbeing prepared by researchers themselves.

Statistical tools used

Descriptive statistics mean, standard deviation, percentages and Pearson correlation technique were used to describe the data and analyse it to calculate coefficient of correlation.

Procedure

The population and sample were defined. The scales were administered on the said sample to collect the raw data using Google forms. The data was tabulated and subjected to descriptive statistics and correlation technique.

III. Analysis of the data

The objectives of the study were analyzed by computing the data using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Table 1: Prevalence of Hustle Culture among students

| S.No. | Statements | Component | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|-------|--|------------|----------------|--------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| 1. | I am engaged in extra co-curricular activities apart from studying. | Prevalence | 50% | 21.7% | 21.7% | 4.3% | 2.2% |
| 2. | I don't have any leisure time because I am constantly hustling between a lot of activities. | | 8.7% | 26.1% | 30.4% | 32.6% | 2.2% |
| 3. | In the present times, portfolio building is very important so I engage in many extra activities. | | 34.8% | 37% | 21.7% | 6.5% | 0 |
| | Average | | 31.17% | 28.27% | 24.60% | 14.47% | 1.47% |

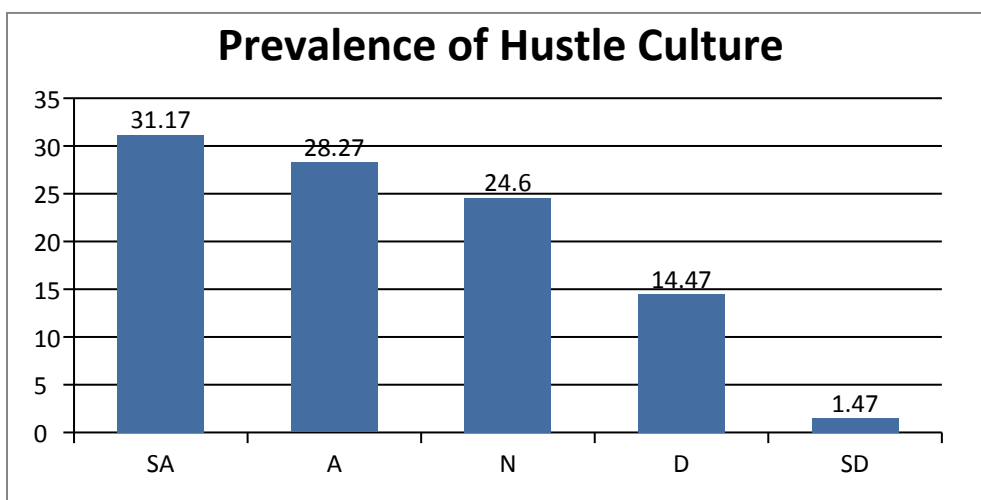


Figure 1: Prevalence of Hustle Culture

Table 1 highlights the prevalence of hustle culture among high school students of Chandigarh. On an average around 60% (31.17 + 28.27) % students agreed to hustle in their life. Only 16% (14.47+ 1.47) disagreed to it. 24.6% were not sure. 71.7% (50 + 21.7) agreed to remain engaged in extracurricular activities apart from studies. Around 35% (8.7+26.1) believed that they did not have leisure time because of hustling where as another 35% (32.6+ 2.2) disagreed to it and 30.4% were not sure. Further 71.8% (34.8 + 37) believed that portfolio building is important in present times, that is why, they engage themselves in many extra activities.

Table 2: Intrinsic Motivation for Hustling

| S.No. | Statements | Component | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|-------|--|----------------------|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| 4. | I think one cannot be successful in life by only studying. | Intrinsic Motivation | 41.3% | 32.5% | 13% | 8.7% | 4.3% |
| 5. | I believe that the | | 41.3% | 37% | 15.2% | 6.5% | 0 |

| | | | | | | | |
|----|---|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| | harder I work, the more successful I will be. | | | | | | |
| 6. | I can earn lots of money only if I work hard in both curricular and co-curricular activities. | | 17.4% | 39.1% | 34.8% | 6.5% | 2.2% |
| 7. | I engage in many activities to enhance my social media profile. | | 8.7% | 23.9% | 34.8% | 23.9% | 8.7% |
| 8. | I constantly switch between multiple activities for my personal growth. | | 13% | 30.4% | 37% | 19.6% | 0 |
| | Average | | 24.34 | 32.58 | 26.96 | 13.04 | 3.04 |

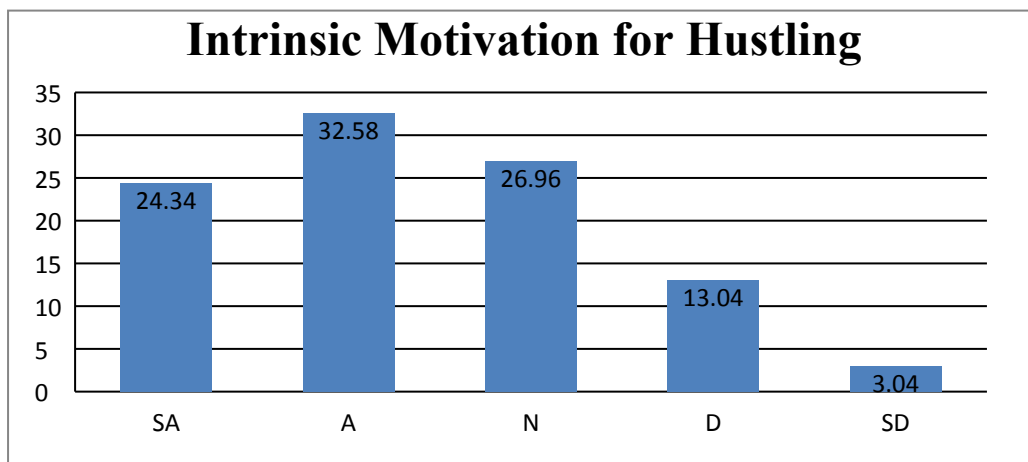


Figure 2: Intrinsic Motivation for Hustling

Table 2 points out more than 57% students are driven by intrinsic motivation for hustling and around 27% were not sure about it. Only 16% disagreed to get intrinsic motivation for hustling. 74% (41.3+32.5) students believed that they couldn't be successful in life only by studying whereas 13% (4.3+8.7) disagreed to it. 78% (41.3+37) also believed that hard work leads to success. 57% (17.4+39.1) felt that they could earn lots of money only by working hard in both curricular and co-curricular areas whereas 34.8% were not sure about this. 32.6% (8.7+23.9) believed that they remained engaged in many activities to enhance their social media profiles, 34.8% were not sure and another 32.6% (8.7+23.9) disagreed to it. 43.7% believed that they switched between multiple activities for their personal growth. 37% were not sure about this.

Table 3: Extrinsic Motivation for Hustling

| S.No. | Statements | Component | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|-------|--|----------------------|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| 9. | I try to learn many skills to get admission in a good university. | Extrinsic Motivation | 28.3% | 37% | 26.1% | 6.5% | 2.2% |
| 10. | I am always comparing my achievements with my peer. | | 13% | 26.1% | 28.3% | 19.6% | 13% |
| 11. | I always have the fear of missing out the experiences my peers gain in different activities. | | 15.2% | 30.4% | 28.3% | 15.2% | 10.9% |
| 12. | I engage in many extra activities because my parents want me to do so. | | 4.3% | 13% | 26.1% | 43.5% | 13% |
| 13. | I think I need to do lots of activities in the present to be successful in the future. | | 17.4% | 37% | 34.8% | 8.7% | 2.2% |
| | Average | | 15.64 | 28.70 | 28.72 | 18.70 | 8.26 |

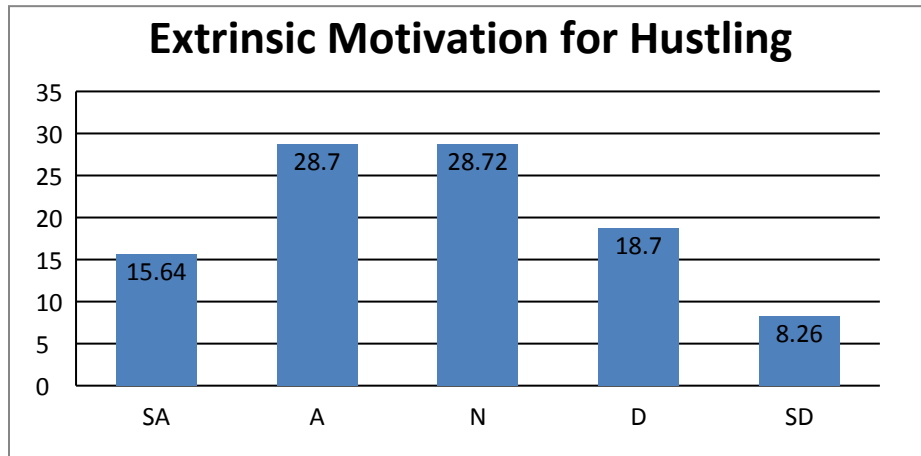


Figure 3: Extrinsic Motivation for Hustling

Table 3 points out the extrinsic motivation behind the hustling culture of the students. 44% students believed that they get extrinsic motivation for hustling and around 29% were not sure about it. Only 27% disagreed to have extrinsic motivation for hustling. Around 65% (28.3 +37) students believed that they need to try and put efforts to learn multiple skills to get admission in a good university in the future whereas 8.7 % (6.5 + 2.2) disagreed to this.

39.1 % (13+ 26.1) believed that working hard will help them to outdo their peers and help them achieve more in comparison to their peers. Competing with peers is an important parameter for students. Results show that most of the students (15.2 + 30.4= 45.6 %) also have intense fear of missing out the experiences that their peers may gain while engaging in different activities for their growth and success.Only few students 17. 3% (4.3 + 13) believed that indulge in many extracurricular activities because their parents want them to do so, 26.1% were not sure about this whereas most of the students 56.5% (43.5 + 13) disagreed to it. 54.4%(17.4 + 37) believed that they really need to do lots of activities in the present to be successful in the coming future whereas 28.72 % were not sure about this.

Table 4: Coefficient of correlation between Hustle Culture and Psychological wellbeing

| Variable | N | M | SD | r | Level of significance |
|-------------------------|----|-------|-------|------|-----------------------|
| Hustle Culture | 92 | 45.54 | 6.515 | .343 | NS |
| Psychological wellbeing | 92 | 33.93 | 5.857 | | |

Table 4 shows coefficient of correlation value for the relationship between hustle culture and psychological wellbeing of secondary school students. The mean values for hustle culture and psychological wellbeing of 92 students are 45.54 and 33.93 respectively. The coefficient of correlation value is .343 which is not significant at .05 level of significance. Hence, the hypothesis, 'there is no significant relationship between hustle culture and psychological wellbeing of secondary school students, may be accepted.

IV. Results and Discussion

With increasing global competition and a strong desire to succeed, school students are increasingly embracing a "hustle culture." This drive is fueled by both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. According to recent studies, students are motivated to work hard continuously in both academics and extracurricular activities. They believe that this relentless effort not only fosters personal growth but also enhances their chances of future success. The present study shows that intrinsically, students are driven by factors such as the desire for personal development, profile building and be more successful in future. More than 57% were found intrinsically motivated.

Extrinsically, factors such as parental pressure, competition with peers, the quest for admission to prestigious universities, and concerns about future prospects also significantly contribute to their intense work ethic. In the present study about 44% agreed to the extrinsic factors of motivation for adopting hustle culture. These results are in sink with study by Jindal.et.al (2024) which found high prevalence (64.2%) of hustle culture among school students. Also Maharani et al. (2024) found high hustle culture level (61.3%) among students. It also found that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors are responsible for hustling.

Interestingly, the present study found no clear correlation between hustle culture and students' psychological well-being. This may be because hustle culture is a relatively new phenomenon among school

students and may not yet have had a substantial impact on many of them. Additionally, the high energy and enthusiasm typically associated with school students might allow them to cope with the demands of hustle culture without immediate psychological repercussions.

However, the increasing trend of hustle culture is a cause for concern. Prolonged exposure to high levels of stress and pressure could eventually lead to psychological, emotional, and mental health issues. The constant fear of missing out (FOMO), guilt over not meeting expectations, and anxiety about the future can undermine students' ability to relax and maintain a healthy balance. This necessitates vigilance from parents and educators to ensure that students are not overwhelmed by their commitments.

V. Conclusion

As of now, hustle culture is not having a fatal impact on the psychological well-being of the school students. However, it is important for the parents, educators and counsellors to ensure that the students do not bear the cost of hustle culture by pushing their limits to the extreme. There is a need to sensitize the students that the constant pressure to be productive can lead to burnout and hamper their psychological well-being.

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