

## **Student-Centred Learning and Assessment: An Approach to Mitigate Students' Academic Stress.**

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### **Abstract**

Universities play a key role in the education system, encouraging research, innovation, the growth of character, and instilling a sense of professionalism in students. Through organized teaching and learning procedures used in universities, education acts as a catalyst for the acquisition of information, values, and virtues during the formative years of adulthood. Long-standing traditions perpetuated in educational institutions serve as the cornerstone of the conventional educational system. For those who like face-to-face instruction, direct interaction with professors and lecturers, and involvement in student organizations, the traditional educational approach has a value. The limitations in access to virtual learning platforms, the requirement for physical presence, and the lack of exposure to real-world situations are all practical downsides of the traditional approach. The Student-Centered Learning (SCL) technique, which allows students to take control of their learning by choosing what they study and how they learn it, stands as a progressive alternative to the traditional approach in the field of education. Voice, choice, competency-based development, and ongoing assessment of each student's needs are the four main tenets of the SCL framework. Incorporating SCL and evaluation pedagogies is the main emphasis of this study to reduce student stress and boost performance. This study made the following hypothesis: by integrating student-centered pedagogy into the learning and evaluation of course modules, students' academic stress would be reduced, and their attitudes would be improved, leading to higher results. This concept suggests restructuring course modules for SCL, which involves reordering content, diversifying resources, and embracing project-based and collaborative learning. Performance in SCL in two semesters will be compared to traditional ones, measuring learning outcomes. Additionally, surveys will be conducted to compare student attitudes and stress levels in both approaches. This holistic study will demonstrate how SCL empowers students, improving their educational journey and reducing stress while enhancing performance, ultimately redefining teaching and learning methodologies.

**Keywords:** *Academic Performances, Student-Centred Learning, Stress Level, University Education*

## **Introduction**

Education stands as an essential necessity for early adulthood, serving as a catalyst for the acquisition of knowledge, values, and virtues through structured teaching and learning methodologies in schools and universities (Biesta, 2015). People should be educated to gain knowledge, and sharp skills and ethics towards the progress of a country by spreading the knowledge (Abdillah, 2013). Universities occupy a central role within the education system, fostering research, innovation, character development, and instilling a professional mindset among students (Barber, 2013). The foundation of the traditional educational system is rooted in long-standing customs upheld by educational institutions (Beck, 1956). In the realm of traditional higher education, lectures serve as the predominant mode of instruction providing a platform for content delivery (McGarr, 2009). Students attend those lectures, taking notes, yet interaction remains limited throughout the lesson. The conventional education approach certainly holds merit for individual keen on in-person learning, engaging directly with professors/ lecturers and participating in university-associated clubs (Upasana, 2014). However, this traditional method possesses practical drawbacks including a necessity for physical presence, restricted access to virtual learning platforms, and limited practical exposure. Another major cons of this conventional learning system is suffering students with anxiety and apprehension due to confining four walls of the lecture hall and scarcity of free moments for extracurricular activities (Forbus, Newbold, & Mehta, 2011). Consequently, a novel educational method is imperative to alleviate the stress and enhance students' satisfaction and involvement to the academic activities towards persistent degree attainment.

The Student-Centered Learning (SCL) method stands as a progressive alternative to the conventional teacher/ lecturer-centred approach in the realm of education, as it empowers students to take charge of their learning, determining both what they learn and how they do so (Wong, 2021). Further, SCL brings forth an array of significant benefits for students, encompassing shared leadership, knowledge dissemination, disciplinary enhancements, and the opportunity to seamlessly integrate into the learning community. Additionally, the SCL framework encompasses four key components: voice, choice, competency-based progression, and the continual monitoring of individual student needs (Green & Harrington, 2020). Students should raise voice to ascertain where and how learning occurs. Also, due to discrepancies in educational status of each student, it is worth to assess students by providing individual-based projects determining competency-based progression (Bouffard, 2019). Furthermore, Harrington and LeBlanc (2019) explicate the value of ongoing monitoring of students' progression using technology and providing them projects/ rubrics or observational assessment. Typically, formal assessment systems in universities rely on data-driven methods with well-defined grading systems.

However, this approach carries certain limitations, including restricting the development of a broader imaginative perspective on specific topics and the inability to adequately assess interpersonal qualities.

All above information infers that introducing a novel student-centered learning system for university students holds significant potential. This approach aims to nurture productive graduates who are poised to contribute meaningfully to the advancement of the society.

Most of the degree programmes strictly adhere to the semester system. Therefore, lecturers tend to cover the course content in traditional method of one-way teaching and written paper-based examinations. In some degree programmes, considerable portion of the course is evaluated from continuous assessments (CAs), which affect to the final overall grade. When there is a number of CAs for one course module, they are distributed throughout the semester which is typically of 15 weeks. Since, most of the courses are in this nature, altogether it is a burden for the students as they have to face paper-based assessments throughout the semester along with typical lectures and practical classes. Even this has affected to the students' participation in non-academic activities which is an essential component in developing students' soft skills (Pinto & Ramalheira, 2017). Hence, this study focuses on incorporating student-centred learning and assessment pedagogy for mitigating students' stress and improve their performances.

This study hypothesized that incorporating student-centred pedagogy into the learning and assessments of course modules would mitigate students' academic stress and improve students' attitudes resulting better performances.

## **Methodology**

Restructuring course modules for Student-centred Learning (SCL) is pivotal for enhancing the educational experience. This involves reordering content, diversifying resources, embracing project-based and collaborative learning. SCL is not a one-time shift; it spans over two semesters to comprehensively gauge its impact. Performance in SCL semesters will be compared to traditional ones, measuring learning outcomes. Additionally, surveys will probe student attitudes and stress levels in both approaches. This holistic study aims to demonstrate how SCL empowers students, improving their educational journey and reducing stress while enhancing performance redefining teaching and learning methodologies.

## **Expected Outcome**

This study expects an improvement of students' attitudes and academic performances as affected by student-centred learning and assessment pedagogies.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, reorganizing course modules to include SCL is a pedagogical change intended to give students more control over their learning.

The deployment of SCL over the course of two semesters offers a chance to carefully assess how it affects both academic achievement and student experiences. This study aims to give an in-depth knowledge on the advantages and difficulties of implementing student-centred learning in higher education using both comparative assessments and survey-based insights. The study's goal is to offer insightful contributions to the continued development of teaching and learning approaches.

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