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A study on the coping strategies used by Music students, who are active pannists during the Panorama season, at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus.

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to learn about the coping mechanisms of Music students who take part in Panorama and the stress that comes from it. This research was undertaken to assist students and the administration and staff of the University of the West Indies in understanding a recurring issue that Music students experience. It is also an aim to start a conversation on finding strategies to aid in providing assistance and guidance to students when dealing with stress. Twenty-four students were respondents to this research. They indicated lifestyle changes that occurred during the Panorama season. They also identified the stress symptoms they experienced during that period and the ways in which they managed stress. The major stress symptoms experienced were: (i) increase in fatigue, (ii) increase in alcohol consumption, (iii) tense muscles, (iv) headaches, and (v) increase in the consumption of caffeinated drinks. The major coping mechanisms used were: (i) prayer, (ii) relaxing, (iii) playing or listening to music, (iv) staying to oneself, and (v) partaking in hobbies. Of the major coping mechanisms implemented, females were more likely to play and listen to music whereas males were more likely to isolate and stay by themselves. The paper concludes by discussing ways in which the administration and staff of UWI can create strategies that will assist in reducing stress or at least aid in making students better equipped to handle the amount of stress experienced.

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INTRODUCTION

The steel pan is an instrument that originated in the twin Caribbean islands, Trinidad and Tobago. It made a debut during a Carnival celebration in the 1930s and has continued to have heavy connections to this annual celebration. The steel pan band is a collection of different types of steel pans that were invented over a period. The typical modern steel band consists of about eight different steel pans. These include, tenor pan, double tenor pan, double seconds, three-cello, four-cello, guitars and six-bass; some bands will also have a nine-bass. These are the most common ones found in a steel orchestra. However, there are steel orchestras that have their own unique steel pans as well.

There was a long tumultuous period in which the steelpan was shunned by upstanding members of society and considered a contributor to crime during that time. This was because in the early stages of steelpan, the instrument was associated with a lower socio-economic class of persons, most whom were of African descent. However, during the 1940s and 1950s the steelpan began to be accepted by the middle-class members of the society. This was in part due to the participation of the middle and upper class “college boys” during the 1950s. “College boys” was a term used to describe the youth who went to the more prestigious boys’ secondary schools in Trinidad. These schools included Queen’s Royal College (QRC), St. Mary’s College (CIC) and Fatima College (DeLamater 33). These students also tended to be students from the middle and upper economic classes and tended to be fairer in complexion, a characteristic at that time that influenced social standing.

As time has passed the steelpan has fully become accepted as the national instrument of Trinidad and Tobago and has even been incorporated into the educational system. With the introduction of Junior Panorama and steelpan bands found in schools, the steelpan is now

recognised as an instrument that applies to all ages and all backgrounds despite race, economic status and educational level. The steel pan is recognised in one of the leading tertiary institutions of Trinidad and Tobago, the University of the West Indies. The University has its own steel band orchestra and the involvement of the steelpan is prominent in the Music studies both at the Certificate and Bachelor's level.

Rationale

The selection of this topic for research was developed due to of observation and concern about the management strategies of students under stress. Annually, students participate in Panorama and during this period these students appear and express feelings of being stressed and overwhelmed. A number of them are also regularly absent from classes during this period. This research was developed with the concern and question of how the students coped with stress during this period and what could be done to assist students during this periodic activity.

Thesis Statement

It can therefore be argued that participation in Panorama, as a student, though an enjoyable experience can encourage negative mental and physical health during the Panorama season, due to stress. Students react in positive and negative ways to deal with this stress.

Parameters

This research will focus on persons who were studying Music as their major at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad. This will include persons who are in the Certificate level and the Bachelors level. This study only focused on persons who participated in the 2020 Panorama season.

Objectives

The objective of this study is to discover if and how stress affects music students who participate in Panorama. It also aims to look at how the effects of stress are manifested and the coping mechanisms students utilise to deal with this stress. This study aims to provide information that delves into issues that Music students have, as well as allow solutions and proactive measures to be developed to assist students during their time as university students and even after. This study can be utilised by students who participate in Panorama, counsellors within the University of the West Indies, as well as other universities in Trinidad and Tobago and throughout the Caribbean. Lecturers and teachers who have students who participate in Panorama can also use this study to understand this aspect of their students' lives.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study are the following:

RQ1: How did some lifestyle choices change when compared to the Panorama season and the off season?

RQ2: What are the most common symptoms of stress that Music students experience during the Panorama season?

RQ3: What are the main coping mechanisms that Music students use to deal with stress?

RQ4: To what extent do students use different coping mechanisms based on gender?

Methodology

The sample consisted of twenty-five students pursuing a degree in Music at the University of the West Indies, who were asked if they participated in Panorama 2020. The response rate was 96% (n=24). Though this sample size was small, this included the majority of students who did participate in the 2020 Panorama season. The sample comprised thirteen females and eleven males. These persons were chosen, as they were best suited to answer the questions asked in the questionnaire given.

A self-administered survey was used to collect the data. The questionnaire started with a focus on the demographics of the respondents which included gender, age, enrolment status, program level, level of study, if employed, employment type, relationship type and number of children. The next section of the questionnaire consists of questions related to participation in Panorama. These included if the respondents participated in Panorama, which category/categories the respondents participated in, the number of bands that respondents participated in and the average number of hours spent in rehearsals weekly.

The questionnaire then focused on some lifestyle choices during the Panorama season and did a comparison to these actions during the off season. The average number of hours daily spent sleeping during the Panorama season, the average number of classes attended during the average school week during the Panorama season, the average number of meals eaten daily during the Panorama season, the average number of balanced meals eaten weekly during the Panorama season- that is meals comprising of healthy carbohydrates, protein, fruits, veggies and fats, the average weekly amount of fast food eaten during the Panorama season, and the average

amount of water consumed daily during the Panorama season. Each of these questions was followed by a question that compared their behaviour during the off-season.

The next section focused on symptoms of stress and if students experienced any of these during the Panorama season. Respondents were asked to choose from the options of agree, neither agree nor disagree or disagree. The last section asked respondents to choose coping strategies that they use to deal with stress. Respondents were asked to choose from the options; I use this method regularly, I use this method sometimes or I do not use this method at all.

A literature review was used to find types of stressors and coping mechanisms used in studies that had a similar focus or had a focus on effects of stress and coping mechanisms to be used. The data was collected by choosing a day when most students who would participate in Panorama would be in school, that is, the day that students participate in the Intermediate Steelpan Orchestra, a course offered in the Music degree that is open to all students regardless of program level. Informed consent was taken and students were informed that there would be strict confidentiality with regards to the data obtained. After data was received, scoring and analysis were done.

Chapter Outline

This study consists of three chapters. Chapter One is the review of literature that focuses on what stress and the symptoms associated with stress as well as the measures people take to deal with and cope with stress. Chapter Two will be the results that were found when doing research and the final chapter, Chapter Three will be on the discussion of the findings. The paper ends with a conclusion.

CHAPTER ONE

LITERATURE REVIEW

Stress is a regularly used word that is associated with multiple definitions that range from the area of Physics to the areas of Life Sciences and Behavioural Sciences. For the purpose of this research, the definition of stress that will be used is the definition that is discussed in the Behavioural Sciences. However, first we need to discuss its origins in that of the Life Sciences. The word “stress” was first introduced by Walter B. Cannon as a word to describe an external force that disrupted homeostasis (another word he coined) or the stability of a living organism (quoted by Persson and Zakrisson 149). He also came up with the term “fight or flight” as a way to describe how animals reacted when faced with a threat due to the release of hormones. This response of fighting or fleeing was dubbed the acute stress response (Fink 5). This fight or flight theory was later reintroduced as the first step of a new theory put forth by Hans Selye. This theory was called the General Adaptation Syndrome, also known as GAS. He suggested that this response affected all vertebrates and other organisms (Fink 5).

Initially, stress was regarded as a biological phenomenon, however due to Selye’s research, stress began to include psychological concepts (Walinga). Hans Selye’s original definition for stress, first defined within the biological context, described it as “the non-specific response of the body to any demand placed upon it”. This was the definition that shaped his creation of the GAS model (Persson and Zakrisson 149). This definition, however, was deemed as too ambiguous and emphasized the difficulty that persons had with creating a standard definition for a word that is so commonly used. Richard Lazarus, a famous psychologist also realised the difficulty in providing an exact definition of stress stating, “In spite of consistent

confusion about the precise meaning of the term, stress is widely recognised as a central problem in human life.” (Fink 13). Another definition that grew to be greatly accepted was given by Richard Lazarus in suggesting that stress occurs when persons view a stimulus as something that can possibly harm or threaten them and is viewed as something that can exceed or affect a person’s adaptive capabilities (Shirom 668).

Selye in one of his writings made note that stress is a phenomena that affects daily life even though it is associated with many different situations and stressors. Even though these situations are all different, they are met with a similar response that aids the body to cope with the increased demand placed upon it in response to the stressors (Fink 149). He also noted that there were different responses to stress and different types of stress as stress is a response to an increased demand placed on it, whether physically, mentally, emotionally or otherwise. Eustress, the positive response to stress and dystress, the negative response to stress (Walinga). A report done by Kanner, Coyne, Schaeffer and Lazarus in 1981 found that minor daily stressors had a greater correlation to strain and poor mental health than major life events (Shirom 668).

With the growing increase in educational demands students are also dealing with stress, especially those who are studying at tertiary level. The word stress is a regularly used word in most if not all university students' vocabulary. A study done by Arie Shirom at Tel Aviv University in Israel identified the most relevant stressors perceived by undergraduate students in their university life (Shirom 667). The study included 108 students from different faculties of the university who were asked to suggest stressors that they themselves experienced as students. This was recorded and the top fifteen were identified before being identified by participating students as being a stressor or not. The fifteen stressors identified fell under the basic categories of examination-related stressors, meeting class assignments, teaching process and university-

work and university-family interface. Within the last heading, university-work and university-family interface, two of the stressors identified were coming to class after a tiring work day and having to complete university assignments while fulfilling familial obligations. A huge contributor to these stressors was time or the lack thereof, in that there was a time constraint for most or all of the perceived stressors in this study (Shirom 673).

Stress can be manifested in ways that affect the body physically. According to the American Psychological Association, stress can affect the musculoskeletal, respiratory, cardiovascular, endocrine, gastrointestinal, nervous and reproductive systems. As a reflex action to stress and stressors, the body can become tensed, which can cause tense muscles. Chronic stress can lead to an extended period in which the muscles are tensed, this in turn can lead to migraines. The pain from the tense muscles is usually located in the regions of the lower back, as well as the upper extremities such as the shoulders and neck. Other ways in which the body physically shows signs of stress are rapid breathing and shortness of breath. Acute stress can sometimes be a trigger for an asthma attack and can also cause panic attacks, when a person begins hyperventilating due to a stressful situation. Stress can also affect hormone production, though once the stressful period is over the hormone production will return to normal. The hormones, dubbed the “stress hormones” are called glucocorticoids and include the hormone cortisol. These hormones are necessary to regulate the immune system and chronic stress can impair the transmission of communication between the brain and the hormones. This can lead to changes in physical and mental health including chronic fatigue, diabetes, obesity, depression and immune disorders. Stress can also cause an increase or decrease in appetite and it has also been shown to evoke changes in gut bacteria which have a direct correlation to a person's mood.

Chronic stress can also cause a decline in libido in both men and women and can also affect fertility in both men and women.

Stress can negatively affect the body, both physically and mentally. Stress can be made manifest through symptoms exhibited that are physical or psychological symptoms (Agolla and Ongori 64). These symptoms include apathy or the lack of energy to complete tasks, increase in blood pressure, feelings of sadness or depression, anxiety and tension in the body (Agolla and Ongori 64). If there is prolonged exposure to stress, the effects can lead to death in extreme cases (Persson and Zakrisson 150). There are two recognised stress disorders that are recognised as mental disorders. Acute Stress Disorder and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder. These disorders are usually developed due to a huge negative life event or trauma (Fink 20).

In the case of students dealing with academic stress, stress can affect academic performance as well as mental health, learning and memory retention (Asfreen, Priya and Gayathri 1778). This being due to pressures of time constraints and deadlines that students experience regularly (Agolla and Ongori 64). Additionally, it was found that excessive academic stress could lead to absences from classes, a decline in academic performance, and in extreme cases dropping out from school or even suicide (Asfreen, Priya and Gayathri 1778). In a study done by Agolla and Ongari, students identified academic overload as their one major source of stress with 48.4% of respondents choosing this answer. Another research paper done at the University of the West Indies at its Cavehill campus (Persaud and Persaud 21), found that the volume of work in courses, the number of courses taken, studying and working full-time were major sources of stress for students.

Music students have been noted to face unique forms of stressors that differ from other undergraduate students, inclusive of performance anxiety, lack of respect and career concerns, in that students are unsure of what occupation they can achieve with a Music degree (Bernhard). A study done by Ozrel (43), showed that high stress levels were mostly caused by the immense amount of schoolwork both in and out of the students' musical studies. That is not only having to focus on schoolwork for their music courses but other courses that are needed to graduate but do not necessarily contribute to their music degree. Studies have also shown that musicians are more likely to experience high levels of stress that can lead to poor health (Roy, Radzevick and Getz 103).

“Coping is defined as the cognitive and behavioural efforts made to master, tolerate, or reduce external and internal demands and conflicts among them” (Folkman and Lazarus 223). Coping or the ability to cope is said to have several manifestations. The two main manifestations being problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping (Walinga). Problem-focused coping is finding a way to manage the source of stress that relates to a person's environment. Emotion-focused coping focuses on managing the stressful emotions associated with the stressor(s). These responses of coping are reactions to cognitive appraisal. This is when a person assesses if they have the ability to effectively respond to the challenges that the stressors present. If the person feels as if they are not able to effectively respond to the challenge, they will most likely respond in an emotion-focused coping response (Walinga). The website *Simply Psychology*, identifies some of the following as emotion-focused coping; distracting oneself, praying, meditation, drinking alcohol, using drugs, suppressing one's thoughts and emotions (usually negative). Emotion-focused coping also implements the use of avoidance strategies such as; sitting alone/isolation and crying (Raheel 961). If a person feels that he/she can manage the challenge,

he/are is more likely to respond in a problem-focused coping response (Walinga). Problem-focused coping aims in targeting the cause of the stress and looking at ways to tackle the problem and reduce the stress. Some of these responses are problem-solving, effective use of time management, actively discussing the issue with someone and having a good support system (McLeod; Raheel 961).

Stress management techniques can help reduce stress levels at least temporarily (Walinga) and can range from cognitive techniques, physical, environmental or other techniques. Cognitive stress management techniques include; therapy, hobbies, meditation, mindfulness, planning, reading, time management. Physical stress management techniques include; artistic expression, deep breathing, natural medicine, physical exercise, relaxation and yoga. Environmental stress management techniques include; use of music, nature, pets and spa visits. The other stress management techniques mentioned are; conflict resolution and prayer.

Coping strategies are measured and tested using scales such as the COPE inventory (Carver, Scheier and Weintraub 271-273) below:

- Positive reinterpretation and growth
- Mental disengagement
- Focus on and venting of emotions
- Use of instrumental social support
- Active coping
- Denial
- Religious coping
- Humour

- Behavioural disengagement
- Restraint
- Use of emotional social support
- Substance use
- Acceptance
- Suppression of competing activities
- Planning

CHAPTER TWO PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

The sample was comprised of 54% females and 46% males. The majority of students, 92% were twenty-five years and younger with 16-20, n=9 and 21-25, n=13. The remaining 8% were 31-35, n=1 and 35-40, n=1. 54% of the students were full-time students, with the remaining 46% being part-time students. With regards to program level, 62.5% of respondents were a part of the Bachelors program and the remaining 37.5% part of the Certificate program. The highest percentage of respondents were from the year/levels; Certificate Level 1, Bachelors Level 2 and Bachelors Level 3 each comprising 25%, (n=6). Bachelors Level 1 and Certificate Level 2 made up the remaining 25% with 12.5% each, (n=3).

75% of the respondents were not employed (n=18). Of the remaining 25% were employed (n=6), two-thirds worked full-time (n=4). With regards to relationship type the vast majority, 92% of respondents stated that they were single (n=22). With the remaining 8% (=2) in cohabiting relationships. Eight percent of respondents had children (n=2), 88% did not have any children (n=21), and 4% (n=1) did not answer the question.

100% of respondents participated in the 2020 Panorama season. In participating in the Panorama season many participated in more than one band category. 46% of respondents participated in the small band category of the competition, (n=11). 75%, (n=18), participated in the medium band category and 83%, (n=20), participated in the large band category.

Respondents were asked about the number of bands that they performed in during the 2020 Panorama season. 29%, (n=7) only participated in one band and this was the highest percentage of band participation. The remaining results in descending order based on percentage

were 25%, (n=6) participated in three bands, 12.5%, (n=3) participated in five bands, 8% (n=2) participated in two bands and another 8% participated in seven bands. One person or 4% participated in nine bands and another person, 4% who did not answer the question. The approximate average of bands that were participated in during the Panorama season were four bands.

Respondents also identified the average number of hours spent in rehearsals weekly. 50%, (n=12) of respondents spent 20+ hours in rehearsals weekly. The remaining results were 4 respondents reporting that they spent 16-17 hours on average at rehearsals. Two respondents spending 3-4 hours on average and one respondent for each of the following averages: 1-2 hours, 5-6 hours, 6-7 hours, 12-13 hours and 14-15 hours spent at rehearsals on average weekly. Additionally, there was one respondent who did not answer the question.

The first research question obtained comparisons of lifestyle habits of students during the Panorama season versus during the off-season. When comparing the average number of hours spent sleeping per night during the Panorama season, the majority obtained 3-4 hours and 5-6 hours each answer obtaining 42% each. Only 4% reported getting 8-9 hours of sleep and another 4% only received 1-2 hours of sleep on a nightly average. Eight percent of respondents did not identify an average for this question. In comparison, during the off-season two-thirds of respondents identified that this was less than the average number of hours they typically received when it was the off-season. 29% of respondents said they got around the same amount of hours of sleep on average and 4% said they got more hours of sleep during the Panorama season than the off-season.

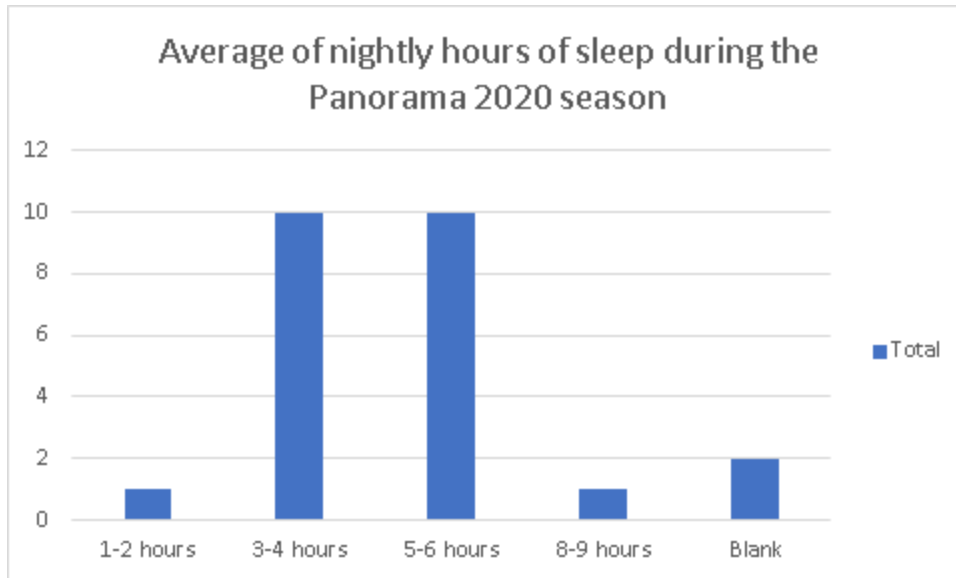


Figure 1. Column chart showing the average hours of sleep obtained nightly during the Panorama season.

Class attendance was then compared and the responses showed that less than half of the respondents, 37.5% attended all of their classes. In comparison, during the off-season the majority of students attended all of their classes with 92% stating this. During the Panorama season the majority of responses identified that they only attended 1-2 classes on average with 42%. Only 4% of respondents selected attended 1-2 classes during the off season. 4% of respondents did not attend any classes at all during the Panorama season. In comparison no students selected this for the off season option. The remaining category of students who attended 3-4 classes on average had 16% selecting this as their response for during the Panorama season. In comparison only 4% selected this option for the off-season.

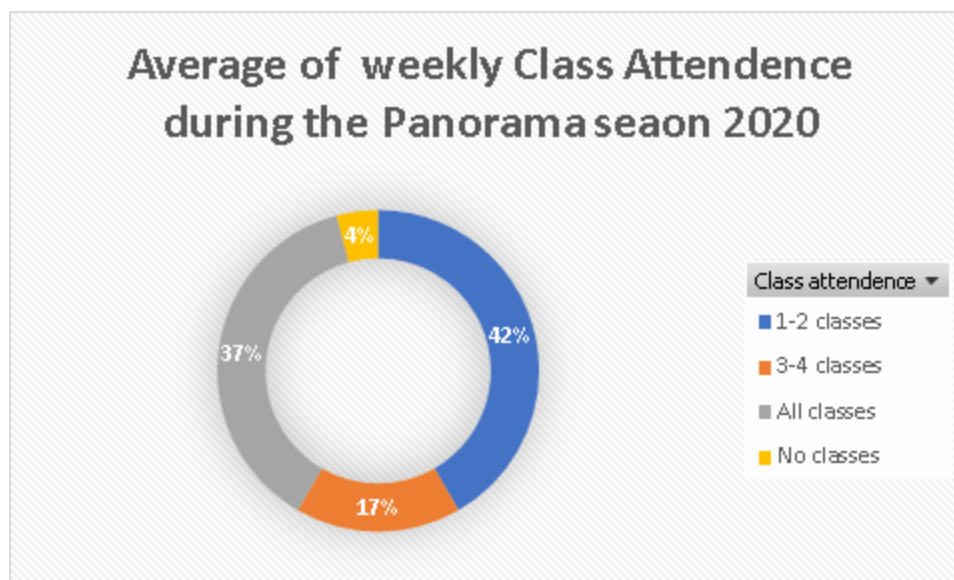


Figure 2. Pie chart showing the average number of classes attended weekly during the Panorama season.

Students were asked about their eating habits with regards to the number of meals eaten daily, number of balanced meals eaten and how often fast food was consumed. When asked the average amount of meals eaten daily 54% of responses were for the option of two meals daily. Three responses identified only one meal was eaten daily on average. Two responses each were identified for persons who consumed three meals on average and persons who ate 4+ meals daily. One respondent identified that they ate 1-2 meals on average daily, though this was not an option given and one respondent did not identify an answer. Half of respondents identified that their eating habits were the same during the off-season. A third of respondents said that they ate less during the Panorama season than during the off-season. Only three respondents stated that they ate more meals on average during the Panorama season. One respondent did not identify a response in this section.

The majority of respondents, 79% admitted to consuming a balanced meal only once per week. The remaining 21% identified that they only consumed a balanced meal 3-4 times per week. In comparison to the off-season, fifteen of the twenty-four respondents identified that this was less than the average number of balanced meals eaten during the off-season. A third of respondents (n=8) identified that the average number of balanced meals eaten during the Panorama season was the same as the amount consumed during the off-season. The remaining respondent stated that they consumed more balanced meals during the off-season.

The majority of respondents, 62.5% identified that they consumed fast food everyday with 3-4 times a week having the second highest percentage with 29%. 62.5% of respondents, (n=15) identified that this was more than they typically consumed fast food during the off-season. 25% of respondents stated that this was less than that of the average amount of fast food they consumed during the off-season and 12.5% saying that this was the same amount on average.

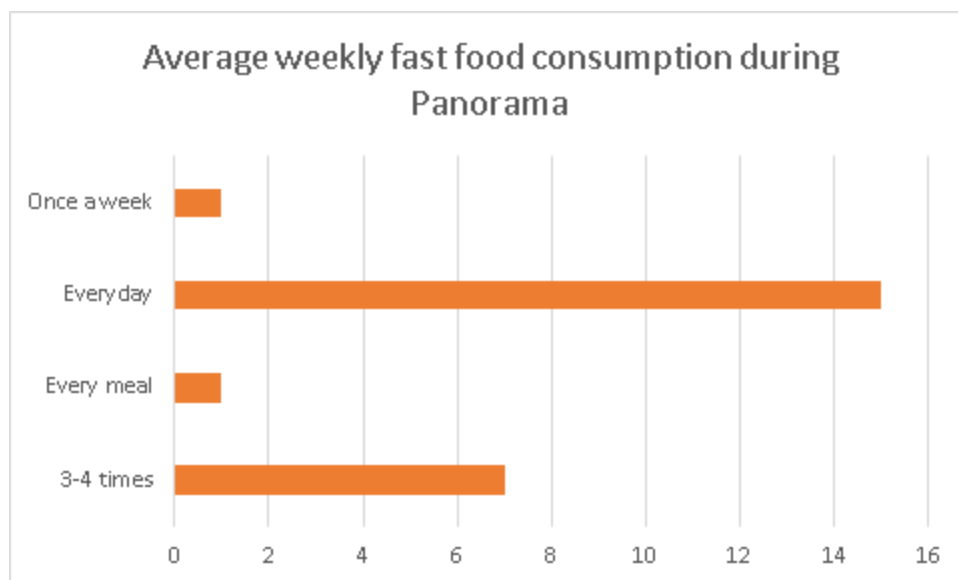


Figure 3. Bar Chart showing the average weekly fast food consumption during the Panorama season.

With regards to water intake, the majority, 50% identified that they drank 1-2 litres of water on average daily. 17% stated that they drank less than one litre on average daily and 33% drank 3-4 litres of water daily. When compared to the off-season, 37.5% stated that they drank the same amount of water during the off-season, this percentage also identified the amount that stated they drank the amount they drank during the Panorama season was less than the amount that they drank during the off season. The remaining 25% stated that the amount of water they drank during the Panorama season was more than they drank during the off-season.

With regards to RQ2, to identify which symptoms of stress Music students who participated in Panorama experienced, students were asked to identify the symptoms they experienced during the season from a given list. The top five symptoms that Music students experienced were:- (i) *Increase in fatigue* (83%), (ii) *Increase in alcohol consumption* (71%), (iii) *Tense muscles* (71%), (iv) *Headaches* (62.5%), (v) *Increase in caffeinated drinks* (46%).

Table 1. Symptoms of Stress experienced by music students during the Panorama season.

	n=24	Total %	Male %	Female %
Headaches	15	62.5	64	62
Increase in illness	7	29	36	23
Tense muscles	17	71	64	77
Increase in fatigue	20	83	73	92
Increase in worrying	9	37.5	36	38
Increase in negative thinking	0	0	0	0
Increase in feelings of panic or distress	5	21	9	31
Increase in feelings of depression	5	21	18	23
Increase in feelings of apathy	2	8	9	8
Avoidance of friends and family	9	37.5	36	38
Loss of appetite	9	37.5	27	46
Loss of sex drive	3	12.5	18	8
Increase in alcohol consumption	17	71	63	77
Insomnia	10	42	45	38
Increase in smoking habits	4	17	9	23
Increase in violent actions or thoughts	4	17	9	23
Increase in self-harm or thoughts of self-harm	1	4	0	8
Increase in caffeinated drinks	11	46	27	62

To answer RQ3 which asked which coping mechanisms Music students used to handle stress. Students were asked to identify which coping strategies they implemented when stressed, these were given in a list, and to select all that were applicable. Analysis of the responses indicated that the top five strategies used by Music students to cope with stress were:- (i) *Prayer* (96%), (ii) *Relaxing* (92%), (iii) *Playing or listening to music* (92%), (iv) *Staying to oneself* (92%), (v) *Partaking in hobbies* (87.5%).

Table 2: Coping Mechanisms for Dealing with Stress

	n=24	Total %	Male %	Female %
Talking to a counsellor or teacher	6	25	27	23
Talking to a family member or friend	18	75	63	85
Meditation	11	46	54	38
Partaking in hobbies	21	87.5	81	92
Reading	9	37.5	27	46
Time Management	7	29	36	23
Artistic activities	18	75	72	77
Deep breathing	14	58	64	54
Natural medicine	7	29	45	15
Exercising	10	42	54	31
Yoga	2	8	9	8
Relaxing	22	92	91	92
Playing or listening to music	22	92	82	100
Being in nature	15	62.592	54	69
Interacting with pets	11	46	54	38

Pampering oneself	16	67	64	69
Prayer	23	96	100	92
Mentally disengaging	14	58	64	54
Using humour	20	83	91	77
Substance use	9	37.5	45	31
Avoidance or negligence of competing activities	19	79	100	62
Staying to oneself	22	92	100	85

The relationship between gender differences and the types of stress symptoms. In relation to gender females experienced an increase in fatigue, more than men when stressed (M=73%, F=92%). Women were also more likely to experience a loss of appetite (M=27%, F=46%) as well as an increase in the use of caffeinated drinks (M=27%, F=62%).

RQ4 sought to discover the relationship between gender and the coping strategies they implemented when stressed. With regards to gender, females were more likely to talk to a family member or a friend (M=63%, F=85%), read (M=27%, F=46%), play or listen to music (M=82%, F=100%), than their male counterparts. Whereas, males were more likely to use natural medicine (M=45%, F=15%), exercise (M=54%, F=31%), interact with pets (M=54%, F=38%), avoid or neglect competing activities such as household chores and schoolwork (M=100%, F=62%), and stay to themselves (M=100%, F=85%), than their female counterparts.

CHAPTER THREE DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In recent years there has been an upsurge on studies done in relation to stress. These research articles have had a primary focus in relation to stress in the workplace. However, recently studies on academic stress have become more prevalent as this is an issue that is of a growing concern. Moreover, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, very limited research exists regarding stress experienced by music students and the coping mechanisms they implement to deal with stress. This is even more so for Music students and students on the whole who participate in external extracurricular activities, such as Panorama in the instance of this research.

The aim of this study was to test the following research questions: How did some lifestyle choices change when compared to the Panorama season and the off season? What are the most common symptoms of stress that Music students experienced during the Panorama season? What are the main coping mechanisms Music students use to deal with stress? To what extent do students use different coping mechanisms based on gender?

According to Help Guide, a website consisting of health experts who provide information on health, by increasing one's physical health an increase in resistance to stress will be achieved. A decrease in the hours of sleep, an unhealthy diet, an unhealthy lifestyle can make an individual more susceptible to stress and symptoms of stress. A student musician is encouraged to include hours of instrumental practice along with assignment obligations to be successful in the semester. With the addition of Panorama rehearsals students would have even more obligations, especially as most participated in multiple bands. The results of this study found that students had more

unhealthy lifestyles during the more stressful period of the semester when they participated in the Panorama season, thus making them more susceptible to stress.

The majority of respondents reported getting less than the recommended 7-8 hours of sleep per night. With the two highest averages for average number of sleep on a nightly basis being 3-4 hours or 5-6 hours. The majority of students reported that this was less than how much they slept on average during the off season. A little more than half of the respondents identified that they only ate about two meals daily, with 62.5% of respondents reporting that they consumed fast food on a daily basis. Students noted that this was more fast food than they regularly consumed during the off season. The majority of respondents consumed over one litre of water on average daily and reported that this was less than the amount they drank during the off-season. It was also found that less than half of the respondents attended all of their classes during the Panorama season. This can probably be attributed to reduction in sleeping hours and the feeling of being too tired to attend a particular class.

The top five symptoms of stress experienced by students were; increase in fatigue, increase in alcohol consumption, tense muscles, headaches and increase in caffeinated drinks. Increase in fatigue can be attributed to the large number of hours most students spend at rehearsals as well as the decrease in hours spent sleeping. Fatigue was noted to be a symptom that students exhibited when stressed and sometimes even can contribute to the development of stress (Tanaka et al 87).

Tense muscles, though a symptom of stress, can also be attributed to the very nature of being a musician. They can be a result of excessive stress on the muscles and tendons over a period of time (St. Olaf's College). As Music students there are a number of practical classes and regular practice is also encouraged. Additionally, rehearsals for Panorama are sometimes nightly

and the majority of students played with multiple bands, this could lead to the overuse of muscles during this period.

Increase in alcohol consumption is another symptom of stress and is supported by research done (Park, Armeli and Tennen 133), in which college students reported an increase in alcohol consumption on the days they experienced higher levels of stress. Alcohol consumption can also be viewed as a coping mechanism and is shown in research to be linked to avoidance coping (Park, Armeli and Tennen 133). Avoidance coping strategies are the intentional effort to mindfully evade situations that are potentially painful or uncomfortable. This increase in alcohol consumption can also be attributed to availability. There is not a lot of empirical data done on alcohol consumption in Trinidad and Tobago however, research has shown that alcohol plays an important social and cultural role, in which drinking alcohol is expected in most social activities where even among teenagers alcohol is the most common drug used. The Panorama season also occurs during the Carnival season in which alcohol is more easily available and consumption levels increase nationwide where drunkenness is more socially accepted (Reid, Malow and Rosenberg 68).

Research shows that students who sleep less, consume more caffeine than persons who sleep longer hours (Hicks et al. 25). Students reported a decrease in the average number of hours spent sleeping, this can have a direct correlation to the increase in the caffeine consumption. According to the Mayo Clinic and the American Psychological Association (APA), headaches caused by stress are usually identified as tension type headaches. These headaches usually are of mild to moderate pain level. Additionally, according to the APA muscle tension has a direct correlation to the presence of headaches. This can be an explanation to why a high number of respondents both experienced headaches and muscle tension as symptoms of stress. Studies also

showed that too much alcohol and coffee consumption both increased the risk factors for developing a headache (Milde-Busche et al 641). There may be a direct correlation between the increase of alcohol and caffeine consumption expressed by respondents and the headaches that they experienced. A study done on students in Delhi found that loud music can contribute to headaches (Gupta et al 256). Playing in a steelband, especially the larger the size of the band, is quite loud, as the sound can be heard almost throughout the community in which the steelband is situated. Regular practice surrounded by the continuous high level of noise can contribute to the headaches experienced.

The coping mechanisms most used by students to deal with the stressful period were prayer, relaxing, playing or listening to music, staying to oneself and partaking in hobbies. This supports other research done on coping mechanisms implemented by students to deal with stressful periods. Prayer was identified as the coping strategy implemented by the majority of students. Other research has shown that this is a coping strategy implemented by students in a study done at a university in Barbados (Persaud and Persaud 19).

Relaxing was also identified as a positive way for students to counteract the negative reactions that stress can induce. Relaxing is a period of low activity in which students can participate in activities that do not place additional demands on the body (Ragsdale et. al 172). Partaking in hobbies also aided in providing a positive outlet for feelings of stress (Persaud and Persaud 19; Ragsdale et. al 171). Music has been shown to aid in regaining a sense of calm and combat the effects of stress (Faus, Matas and Elosegui 9). As these students are musicians there would be a frequent interaction and participation with music. An unusual finding in my research was that music students stayed by themselves. This contradicts literature that says they should be more likely to spend time and talk with family members and friends to deal with stress (Ragsdale

et. al 171). This can be attributed to the fact that students would spend the majority of their time with others at school and at rehearsals, so when they are finally able to get free time, staying by themselves can be an effective coping strategy before having to interact with people once again. Research done on teenage girls in Saudi Arabia showed that teenagers and young adults responded to stress in a similar manner by staying to themselves to deal with stress (Raheel 961). This was identified as a form of emotion focused problem solving. Other research done on medical students showed that there was a correlation between avoidance-oriented coping practices, such as staying by one-self and severe fatigue in students (Tanaka et. al 90).

CONCLUSION

This research highlighted that UWI, St. Augustine music students experienced changes in lifestyle behaviours during the Panorama season that could be contributors to stress. The key symptoms of stress affecting Music students who participated in Panorama were: (i) increase in fatigue, (ii) increase in alcohol consumption, (iii) tense muscles, (iv) headaches, and (v) increase in caffeinated drink. Statistically significant results were observed between genders and stress symptoms (i) and (v).

The primary strategies used by Music students to cope with stress were: (i) prayer, (ii) relaxing, (iii) playing or listening to music, (iv) staying to oneself, and (v) partaking in hobbies. Statistically significant results were observed between genders and coping mechanisms (iii) and (iv). Females were more likely to play or listen to music to cope with stressors as well as talk to a family member or friend, and read, whereas males were more likely to stay to themselves, neglect competing activities, exercise, use natural medicine, and interact with pets.

A limitation in my research was the small sample size and the sample being focused on music students when there are other students of different faculties at the University of the West Indies who participate in Panorama. This can even be further extended to other tertiary students in Trinidad and Tobago who participate in Panorama.

This research indicates that there is cause for concern in Music students that participate in Panorama which is an annual event. The research shows that students greatly reduce class attendance and even stop going to school during that period is of grave concern, especially in the instances of a longer Carnival season which in turn indicates a longer Panorama season. Should lecturers be given a say in students' participation in Panorama? Should students be regulated to

the amount of bands that they are allowed to participate in during this period? At the least, students should be taught about proper stress management techniques, possibly compulsory, just before the Panorama season. Stress is part of a student's life and additional stress can lead to burnout in students. As this is a recurring issue there must be something done to assist students in being able to more easily navigate and handle the landscape of university.

Therefore, this paper aims to influence and inspire policy makers and the administration of the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, as well as other Caribbean tertiary institutions that have students that participate in annual events similar to Panorama, to assist in ways to mitigate stress. This is the ambitious hope of this research paper, to further the conversation on stress that students experience, the factors that can contribute to it and the solutions and strategies that can be created and presented.

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APPENDIX A

Survey on How Panorama Affects the Stress Levels of Music Students and the Coping Mechanisms they use at the University of the West Indies

Introduction

I am an undergraduate student of the University of West Indies currently pursuing a Bachelor of Music degree. I am conducting a survey as a requirement for one of my courses.

This questionnaire focuses on how Panorama affects your stress levels and the coping mechanisms used to deal with this. I will ask a few background questions, your habits during the Panorama season and during the off season, as well as your responses to stress and the way you cope with stress. This form will take about 10 minutes to complete.

As you fill out this form, please remember that:

- This questionnaire is anonymous and confidential. Please do not write your name on the survey.*
- Participation is voluntary. You are free to stop participating at any time.*
- This survey is not an exam. There are no right or wrong answers. Please respond to the response that best fits your situation.*

Please circle or underline the choice that best suits your situation.

1. What is your gender?

Male

Female

2. Which of the following contains your age?

16-20 21-25 26-30 31-35 35-40 40+

3. Enrolment Type

Full-time Part-time

4. Program Level

Certificate Bachelor's

5. Year/Level

Certificate Level 1

Certificate Level 2

Bachelor's Level 1

Bachelor's Level 2

Bachelor's Level 3

6. Are you employed? If yes, see question 7. If no, continue to question 8.

Yes No

7. Are you working full-time or part-time?

Full-time Part-time

8. Relationship status

Married Cohabiting Visiting Relationship Single

9. Do you have children? If yes, please answer question 10. If no, please continue to question 11.

Yes No

10. How many children do you have?

11. Did you participate in Panorama 2020? If yes, please answer question 12.

Yes No

12. In which band categories did you participate, for Panorama 2020? (Select all applicable)

Small band Medium band Large band

13. In how many bands did you participate during the Panorama season?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10+

14. What are the average weekly hours spent (total average of hours per week) spent in rehearsals during the 2020 Panorama season?

1-2 3-4 5-6 6-7 8-9 10-11 12-13 14-15 16-17 18-19 20+

15. On average how many hours of sleep per night did you get during the 2020 Panorama season?

1-2 3-4 5-6 6-7 8-9

16. How does this compare to the average hours of sleep per night during the off season?

More Less The Same

17. How often did you attend classes during the 2020 Panorama season?

No classes during the Panorama season

1-2 classes per week during the Panorama season

3-4 classes per week during the Panorama season

All my classes during the Panorama season

18. On average, how often do you attend classes during the off season?

No classes during the off season

1-2 classes per week during the off season

3-4 classes per week during the off season

All my classes during the off season

19. What is the average number of meals eaten per day during the Panorama season?

1 2 3 4+

20. How does this compare to the average number of meals consumed during the Panorama off-season?

More Less The Same

21. During the Panorama season how often did you consume balanced meals (foods comprising of healthy carbohydrates, protein, fruits and vegetables)?

Once a week

3-4 times a week

Everyday

Every meal

22. How does the above question, question 21, compare to how often you consume balanced meals during the off season?

More Less The Same

23. During the Panorama season how often did you consume fast food (e.g. doubles, chicken and fries, pizza, etc)?

Once a week

3-4 times a week

Everyday

Every meal

24. How does this compare to how often you consumed fast food during the off season?

More Less The Same

25. What was your average intake of water during the 2020 Panorama season?

Less than one litre

1-2 litres

3-4 litres

26. How does this compare to your average intake of water during the off season?

More

Less

The Same

27. Indicate below whether you experienced any of the following during the 2020

Panorama season. Please tick a response for each of the options.

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Headaches					
Increase in illness					
Tense muscle					
Increase in fatigue					
Increase in worrying					
Increase in negative thinking					
Increase in feelings of panic or distress					

Increase in feelings of depression					
Increase in feelings of apathy					
Avoidance of friends and family					
Loss of appetite					
Loss of sex drive					
Increase in alcohol consumption					
Insomnia					
Increase in smoking habits					
Increase in violent actions or thoughts					
Increase in self-harm or thoughts of self-harm					

Increase in caffeinated drinks					
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28. Tick the boxes that apply to strategies that you use to deal with stress. Please tick a response for each option.

	I use this method regularly	I use this method sometimes	I don't use this method at all
Talking to a counsellor or teacher			
Talking to a family member or friend			
Meditation			
Partaking in hobbies			
Reading			
Time management			
Artistic activities			
Deep breathing			
Natural medicine			

Exercising			
Yoga			
Relaxing			
Music (playing or listening)			
Being in nature			
Interacting with pets			
Pampering oneself			
Prayer			
Mentally disengaging			
Using humour			
Substance use			
Avoidance or negligence of competing activities (such as household chores and school work, etc.)			
Staying to oneself			

Thank You For Your Participation!

