A Reexamination of Factors Contributing to Apparel Majors' Stress and Abilities to Effectively Manage their Time

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This study is a replication of the time spent and stress study reported in 2006 (Kozar, Marcketti, & Gregoire). During spring semester 2011, undergraduate students majoring in the apparel disciplines reported their time spent in categories of class, studying, working, exercising, socializing, personal time, watching television, completing extracurricular tasks and hobbies, and sleeping. The factors perceived as most stressful to students were also identified using the 49 items of the Inventory of College Students' Recent Life Experiences scale (ICSRLE) (Woods, Sciarini, & Johanson, 2001). The purpose of this study was to provide an update to the original results, noting differences and similarities among students today vs. five years ago. The importance of this study is unmistakable as the findings contribute to an understanding of today's undergraduate students enrolled in the apparel disciplines. This awareness assists educators in helping students develop long-term habits of success, such as the ability to responsibly manage time and effectively control stress, and fosters students' overall professional development skills.

Data were gathered from undergraduate students enrolled in apparel programs. In total, 80 students participated in the current study. Analysis of the demographic data revealed that the largest majority of students were junior-academic standing (37.5%); the remaining sample included sophomores (21.4%), seniors (19.4%) and freshmen (13.3%). The majority of the students were between the ages of 18 and 22 (91.3%). Consistent with the prevalence of female undergraduate students enrolled in apparel programs in the U.S., nearly all participants were female (96.3%) and unmarried (97.5%).

Using information provided by students, the average and percent of time spent in each activity category were calculated for a two week period. Descriptive statistics were calculated on each item comprising the ICSRLE scale. To ensure consistency of the measure, the reliability of the scale was assessed using Cronbach's standardized alpha ($\alpha = .91$). To confirm the existence of the seven factors reported by Kohn, Lafreniere, and Gurevich (1990), confirmatory factor analysis was used with the chi-square test of overall goodness of fit confirming the model ($X^2 = 1003.2$, $df = 608$). The factors included: developmental challenges, time pressures, academic alienation, romantic problems, assorted annoyances, general social mistreatment, and friendship problems. Independent sample T-tests were used to test the mean differences of time spent data and stress data collected in 2011 and in 2006.

As part of the current study, analysis of the time data indicated that students spent the largest amounts of time on a typical weekday in the activities of sleeping ($M = 8.6$ hours), socializing (3.0), going to class (3.0), studying (2.9), and doing personal chores/activities (2.2). Time spent working, watching television, and using the Internet approximated one hour per day. Students

spent their time in a similar fashion on the weekends with significantly less time spent in class (.50) and more time spent sleeping (9.2) and socializing (6.0).

Compared to the time spent data collected in 2006, significant differences existed in the weekday activities of completing personal chores/activities ($t = 3.64$, $p < .0001$), working ($t = 2.92$, $p < .01$), watching TV ($t = 2.36$, $p < .05$), and exercising ($t = -2.20$, $p < .05$). Significant differences existed in the weekend activities of socializing ($t = -11.53$, $p < .0001$), going to class ($t = -39.18$, $p < .0001$), working ($t = 5.89$, $p < .0001$), watching TV ($t = 2.94$, $p < .01$), exercising ($t = -18.65$, $p < .0001$), and engaged in hobbies ($t = -21.18$, $p < .0001$). These differences indicated that today's students spend more time during the weekdays on activities of exercising, while less time completing personal chores/activities, working, and watching television. For weekend activities, today's students reported spending more time socializing, attending class, exercising, and engaged in hobbies, with less time spent working and watching TV.

Ratings of the individual stress items of the ICSRLE scale (1 = This experience has *not at all* been a part of my life over the past month to 4 = This experience has *very much* been a part of my life over the past month) revealed that important decisions about future career ($M = 2.95$), too many things to do at once ($M = 2.93$), and a lot of responsibilities ($M = 2.89$) had the highest mean ratings among the 49 items, showing that these three items were distinct issues causing stress in participants' lives. These three items were also the top three highest mean ratings among the 49 items in the study conducted in 2006. Compared to the stress factor data collected in 2006, there existed significant differences in stress factors of time pressure ($t = 2.37$, $p < .05$), developmental challenges ($t = 2.76$, $p < .01$), and academic problems ($t = 3.44$, $p < .01$). The scores for these three factors decreased since 2006, indicating that the today's students reportedly experience lower levels of stress on these three factors.

Results of this study indicated that the sample of students in 2011 may have been better at prioritizing their time than the sample in 2006, which could contribute to lower levels of stress. The 2011 sample spent more time engaged in activities such as exercise, socializing, and spending time on hobbies. Past researchers identified these activities with fostering the identity development process; critical during the college years (Munson & Widmer, 1997).

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