

A Qualitative Study on the Impact of Sleep Deprivation on English Language Comprehension in Undergraduate Students

Abstract

The current qualitative research aims to explore how sleep deprivation affects the understanding of the English language in undergraduate students. In an exploratory study, eight sleep-deprived participants were purposely selected, screened using the Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI), and assessed at COMSATS University Islamabad, Lahore campus. The interviews were conducted to gain an understanding of aspects of their classroom experiences through semi-structured interviews. Thematic analysis disclosed a single dominant theme and two superordinate themes, which included (i) the factors that contribute to sleep deprivation, and (ii) behavioral and personal factors that lead to impaired language comprehension. The important findings suggested that academic workload, psychological stress, medical condition, and excessive use of electronic devices were some of the major causes of sleep deprivation. Students also attempted to cope with sleepiness in the classroom by using disengagement mechanisms, such as talking to peers or using their mobile phones. Unfortunately, these mechanisms undermined their understanding. Individual negligence, inability to concentrate, emotional imbalances, and language barriers were other personal variables that contributed to the decline in learning achievements. This research highlights the importance of sufficient sleep for mental well-being. It emphasizes the need for awareness and preventive measures, thereby enabling students to maintain good mental health and academic performance. The main implications of the findings are that they can be useful to teachers, learners, and health professionals in terms of academic achievement and psychological well-being.

Keywords: classroom behavior, English language, language comprehension, sleep deprivation