

Academic Stress among Secondary School Students In Relation To Some Demographic Factors

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ABSTRACT

The present investigation is an attempt to find out the academic stress among secondary school students concerning some demographic factors. In this research, the descriptive survey research design was used and a study was conducted on a sample of 310 students studying in secondary schools from the Guntur district in the A.P. Academic Stress Scale developed and standardized by Sinha, U. K. was employed in this investigation. It consists of 30 statements. The items presented in this scale are designed to measure the five factors. They are cognitive, affective, physical, social/interpersonal, and motivational factors. There are two options for each item. 'Yes' should be scored as 1, but 'No' is equal to zero. Therefore, the range of scores in the entire scale ranges from a minimum of 0 to a maximum of 30. Test-retest reliability of SAAS is 0.88 and a split half-reliability is 0.75. Results of the study revealed that secondary school students differed significantly in their levels of academic stress. Gender, class studying, locality of living, and medium of instruction of secondary school students make no significant difference in their academic stress.

Keywords: Stress, Academic Stress, and Secondary school students

INTRODUCTION

Academic stress is the psychological distress associated with some of the expected frustrations associated with academic failure or not being aware of the possibility of such failure. Students will face many academic demands, for example, the school exam, answering classroom questions, and showing progress in school subjects. Understanding what the teacher is teaching, competing with other peers, and fulfilling the educational expectations of teachers and parents. These demands may or may not tax the resources available to students. Consequently, they are stressed because demand is related to the achievement of the educational goal. Therefore, it is academically related to achieving the academic goal.

Kouzma and Kennedy reported that school-related tests, grades, self-needs such as learning, and success, as well as those motivated by others - were major sources of stress for high school students. The impact of academic stress is also very high: high levels of academic stress have led to poor outcomes in the areas of exercise, nutrition, substance use, and self-care. Furthermore, academic stress is a risk factor for psychopathology. For example, fourth-, fifth- and sixth-grade girls with high levels of academic stress are more likely to be depressed.

Bisht (1989) defined academic stress as the demand for educators, taxing or exceeding the resources (internally or externally) available to the student who appears to be cognizant. According to her, academic stress reflects an individual's perception of academic depression, academic conflict, academic stress, and academic anxiety. She defines the four components of academic stress as follows: *Academic Frustration*: It is a condition caused by harm to certain academic goals. *Academic Conflict*: it arises as a result of two or more qualitative tendencies in response to academic goals. *Academic Pressure*: When the student is in huge demand of time and energy to reach academic goals. *Academic Anxiety*: Fear of harming certain educational goals.

Causes of Academic Stress Causes of stress on students include positive and negative stress, but here we will focus on the negative causes of stress on students.

Teachers:

"While many teachers do their part to provide a positive educational experience for students, some students are better suited to certain teaching styles and types of classrooms than others. Can create permanent negative feelings about one's abilities (e.g. pessimism about teachers and education, lack of ability to study). "

Examination system:

Thinking about the type of exams such as rigorous procrastination in detailed exams and exam sessions can lead to academic stress.

Environment:

The school environment itself causes stress on students. It is a challenge for students going into secondary education to constantly go to classes. Those who are matriculating for tertiary education have found it challenging to leave home and establish a new life in a new context. Both put stress on students.

Extra Co-curricular:

Colleges force high school students to participate in extracurricular activities such as choirs, clubs, sports, bands, or volunteer work. Having these in the student application can go a long way towards approval. Thus in college, extracurricular activities still put pressure on students, once even their presence in the job application is an asset.

Peers:

Like dating, peer relationships can be painful. When peers apply stress related to clothing, behaviour, choice of friends or illness, and many other areas of life, that stress can put pressure on students.

Parental Pressure:

Finally, students at both levels experience stress from parental pressure. Parents want their children to succeed in school. They want to see good grades, but they also want to succeed in other areas of life. In their efforts to guide their children, parents can become one of the main causes of stress on students. It is wise for parents and others working with students to take the time to recognize the stress that students face, and if they provide stress management practices, they will do much to alleviate and encourage their students.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Sarma and Bordoloi (2021) assessed the co-relational study on academic stress and self-esteem of students from higher secondary schools in Guwahati city. In the present study, the sample size was 250 higher secondary students in five higher secondary schools randomly selected. Findings revealed that age, gender, religion, education of parents, type of family, birth order, numbers of siblings, occupation of father, and occupation of mother didn't differ significantly in their levels of academic stress of higher secondary school students. *Neeta and Singh (2020)* conducted a critical study on academic stress among higher secondary school students. Samples of a total of 110 students participating in this study were obtained from 10 higher secondary schools in Gorakhpur District. The study found that there is a significant difference between the academic stress of male and female students in higher secondary schools. There is no significant difference between the academic stress of rural and urban higher secondary school students. *Sathiya Vathi and Malathi (2018)* conducted a study on academic stress among higher secondary school students in the Coimbatore district. A sample of 200 high secondary schools from 17 schools in and around the Coimbatore district in Tamil Nadu was considered for study using the general random sampling method. Research has shown that the locality of the school, gender, medium, type of family, and type of management of higher secondary school students didn't differ significantly in their academic stress.

Statement of the Problem:

The title of the present research is "*Academic Stress among Secondary School Students in relation to Some Demographic Factors*".

Objectives of the Current Research:

1. To study the levels of academic stress among secondary school students.
2. To study and compare the difference in the academic stress of secondary school students based on the following variables.
 - a) Gender
 - b) Class studying
 - c) Locality of living
 - d) Medium of instruction

Null Hypotheses of the Current Research:

1. Secondary school students don't differ in their levels of academic stress.
2. There is no significant difference in the academic stress of secondary school students based on the following variables.
 - a) Gender
 - b) Class studying
 - c) Locality of living
 - d) Medium of instruction

Limitations:

1. The geographical area of the investigation is limited to one district, i.e., Guntur in Andhra Pradesh.
2. The sample size is limited to 310 students studying in secondary school schools.
3. This study was restricted to 8th and 9th-grade students only.
4. The levels of significance considered in this research are 0.05 and 0.01.
5. The present investigation is confined to 5 secondary schools.
6. The present study is confined to one educational division i.e., Bapatla out of 5.

Research Design:

In this research, the descriptive survey research design was used and a study was conducted on a sample of 310 students studying in secondary schools from the Guntur district in A.P. This sample was selected using a proportional stratified random sampling method to confirm population representation.

a) Tool used:

The academic Stress Scale developed and standardized by Dr. Uday K. Sinha was employed in this investigation. It consists of 30 statements. The items presented in this scale are designed to measure the five factors. They are cognitive, affective, physical, social/interpersonal, and motivational factors. There are two options for each item. 'Yes' should be scored as 1, but 'No' is equal to zero. Therefore, the range of scores in the entire scale ranges from a minimum of 0 to a maximum of 30. Test-retest reliability of SAAS of 0.88 and a split half-reliability of 0.75 indicates sufficient reliability on a scale.

b) Statistical Techniques Used:

Mean, Standard deviation, Percentage, and Critical Ratio were employed for the analysis of the data in the present study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

H₁: Secondary school students don't differ in their levels of academic stress.

The computed values of the mean and standard deviation are 8 and 5 respectively. Further, the total sample was classified into 'high' (>M + 1SD), 'moderate' (between M - 1SD and M + 1SD), and 'low' (<M - 1SD) levels of academic stress based on computed mean and standard deviation.

The secondary school students whose scores are less than the value [M - 1SD = 8-5] 3 are considered as low levels of the academic stress group. Their number is 64 i.e., 21%. The secondary school students whose scores are greater than the value [M + 1SD = 8+5] 13 are considered as high levels of the academic stress group. Their number is 56, i.e. 18%, and the remaining 61% comes under moderate levels of academic stress group. It can be interpreted that secondary school students differed significantly in their levels of academic stress. The data for the above three categories, along with their verbal description, are displayed in table 1.

Table 1 *Classification of Total Sample on Academic Stress*

Range	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)	Classification
3 and below scores	064	21	Low
Between 4 and 12 scores	190	61	Moderate
13 and above scores	056	18	High

Table 1 reveals that nearly 21% (N=064) of the sample of secondary school students have low academic stress. Sixty-eight one (N=190) of the sample has moderate academic stress and the remaining 18% (N=56) of the sample has high academic stress.

H_{1,2}: Gender of secondary school students makes no significant difference in their academic stress.

Table 2 Data and Result of Test of Significant Difference in The Mean Score of Academic Stress in relation to Gender

Variable	N	Mean	SD	D	SED	C.R.	Remark
Male	149	7.03	4.74			1.04*	N.S.@ 0.05 level
Female	161	8.53	5.00	1.50	1.44		

It is evident from Table 2 that the calculated C. R. value (1.04) is less than the critical value of 1.96 at 0.05level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. Hence, it is found that the gender of secondary school students makes no significant difference in their academic stress. The average difference (1.50) was favourable for female secondary school students. It can be stated that female students have higher academic stress than their male counterparts, but it is not statistically significant.

H_{1,3}: Class studying of secondary school students makes no significant difference in their academic stress.

Table 3 Data and Result of Test of Significant Difference in The Mean Score of Academic Stress in relation to Class Studying

Variable	N	Mean	SD	D	SED	C.R.	Remark
8 th class	131	8.11	5.00	0.52	0.57	0.91*	N.S.@ 0.05 level
9 ^h class	179	7.59	4.85				

It is evident from Table 3 that the calculated C. R. value (0.91) is less than the critical value of 1.96 at 0.05level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. Hence, it is found that class studying of secondary school students makes no significant difference in their academic stress. The average difference (0.52) was favourable for 8th class students. It can be stated that 8th class students have higher academic stress than their counterparts, but it is not statistically significant.

H_{1,4}: Locality of living of secondary school students makes no significant difference in their academic stress.

Table 4 Data and Result of Test of Significant Difference in the Mean Score of Academic Stress in relation to Locality of living

Variable	N	Mean	SD	D	SED	C.R.	Remark
Rural	146	7.43	4.72			1.28*	N.S.@ 0.05 level
Urban	164	8.15	5.07	0.72	0.56		

It is evident from Table 4 that the calculated C. R. value (1.28) is less than the critical value of 1.96 at 0.05level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. Hence, it is found that the locality of living of secondary school students makes no significant difference in their academic stress. The average difference (0.72) was favourable for urban students. It can be stated that urban students have higher academic stress than their counterparts, but it is not statistically significant.

H_{1,5}: The medium of instruction for secondary school students makes no significant difference in their academic stress.

Table 5 Data and Result of Test of Significant Difference in The Mean Score of Academic Stress in relation to Medium of Instruction

Variable	N	Mean	SD	D	SED	C.R.	Remark
English	153	8.14	4.83	0.66	0.55	1.20*	N.S.@ 0.05 level
Telugu	157	7.48	4.98				

It is evident from Table 5 that the calculated C. R. value (1.20) is less than the critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. Hence, it is found that the medium of instruction for secondary school students makes no significant difference in their academic stress. The average difference (0.66) was favourable for English medium students. It can be stated that English medium students have higher academic stress than their counterparts, but it is not statistically significant.

Results of this investigation:

1. Secondary school students differed significantly in their levels of academic stress.
2. The gender of secondary school students makes no significant difference in their academic stress.
3. Class studying of secondary school students makes no significant difference in their academic stress.
4. The locality of living of secondary school students makes no significant difference in their academic stress.
5. The medium of instruction for secondary school students makes no significant difference in their academic stress.

Educational Implications:

Secondary school students vary in academic stress levels and therefore the study suggests personalized evaluation approaches to assess each student's stress level and take appropriate measures to enhance their stress tolerance. Furthermore, the magnitude of academic stress is not affected by gender, class study, area of residence, and medium of instruction, studies based on the above variables should cover students from all groups without exception to any specific subgroup. It was found that the gender, class study, area of residence, and medium of instruction of secondary school students did not make a significant difference in their academic stress. It is the right time for educational institutions to understand the consequences of stress and adjustment problems faced by students and to take remedial action to strengthen them mentally. Revealing to students the biographies of adventurous characters from epics, literature, and history, showing them ways and means to draw inspiration from examples and lead their lives. Life skills education must be an integral part of the school curriculum. Students must disclose the life skills adopted by successful individuals in the community through regular interviews, visits, field trips, and guest lectures.

CONCLUSION

It is something that needs to be managed rather than eliminating academic stress. While low levels of stress can lead to positive outcomes such as motivation and improved work performance, high levels of stress can also cause anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation. Most people have low or moderate academic stress during adolescence regardless of parent-adolescent relationships. Higher grade has relatively high academic stress. Adolescents with moderate and high academic stress should be identified in advance as interventions to reduce academic stress, as it is likely to affect an individual's mental health. Academic stress can be reduced through proper goal setting, effective study habits, study skills, assessment of academic stress, and time management with appropriate activities or programs for students and quality academic staff.

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