



# SOURCES OF ACADEMIC STRESS AMONG ADOLESCENT STUDENTS: A REVIEW

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## Abstract

*The present study has attempted to throw light on the sources of academic stress among adolescent students. Adolescence is a period that marks the transition from childhood to adulthood and is characterized by significant changes in many aspects of one's life. Academic stress is defined as uncomfortable emotional circumstances that arise as a result of academic expectations from family members, teaching staff, and peer group, parental pressure for school performance, the modern education and examination system, and the strain of homework, among other factors. The study reviewed that the sources of academic stress are multiple in nature and each of the sources has its repercussions on the adolescent students. Every scenario or occurrence that threatens to disrupt people's daily functioning and requires them to make changes is defined as a source of stress. Numerous causes contribute to student stress, but school is one of the most prominent causes of academic stress in India. Too much homework, poor academic performance, exam preparation, a lack of enthusiasm in a specific subject, and teacher reprimand all contribute to stress. Great expectations of teachers, parents, and oneself are generally a source of stress for students in schools. One of the most effective ways to cope with academic stress is to seek social support. Parents play a significant role in transmitting the energies of adolescent students to overcome their deviant behaviors. Sufficient care shall be taken in guiding the adolescent students to make the right decisions that may influence their future.*

**Key words – Academic Stress, Students, Adolescents**

## I.Introduction:

Adolescence is a period that marks the transition from childhood to adulthood and is characterized by significant changes in many aspects of one's life. Children and adolescents can be subjected to a variety of life stresses, including devastating or traumatic experiences, ongoing strain, and daily frustrations. Many students find adolescence to be a stressful time as they adjust to new educational and social circumstances. Competitiveness among individuals has grown increasingly severe as a result of scientific advancements and the accelerated analysis of information. As a result, people have now become restless, and stress is a natural result and adolescents are no different from it. Academic stress is defined as unpleasant emotional situations that arise as a result of high academic achievement expectations from parents, educators, peer groups, and family members, parental pressure for academic performance, the modern education and examination system, and the strain of homework, among other factors. Stress in academic institutions can have both positive and negative consequences if not well managed (Stevenson & Harper, 2006). Educational institutions have varied workplace environments than non - academic institutions, hence one might presume disparities in stress symptoms, causes, and outcomes. Academic Stress is caused due to various factors, the sources of academic stress are multiple. "Stressors" are the causes of stress. Stressors are intrinsic or extrinsic demands that disrupt equilibrium, impacting bodily and psychological well-being and necessitating to re-establish balance (Lazarus & Cohen, 1977).

## II.Concepts:

### 1.Stress

The significant works of Selye (1956) considered stress as a response to threatful situations in the environment. He described that stress is an unavoidable part of our life that we cannot avoid. Holmes & Rahe (1967) categorized stress as external occurrences that required the individual to engage in appropriate adjustment and coping mechanisms. Stress is a unique difficulty in that nobody can forecast the amount or type of stress that might transform an otherwise normal, positive human condition into one featuring an unexpected, illogical response (Neil, 1994). Stress is a process by which we perceive and cope with environmental threats and challenges (Myers and Health, 2005). Baum (1990) defines stress as a 'negative emotional experience accompanied by predictable

biochemical, physiological, cognitive and behavioral changes that are directed either towards altering the stressful events or accommodating its effects’.

## 2. Academic Stress

Verma S and Gupta J (1990) said that academic stress refers to anxiety about upcoming academic challenges or failure, as well as an understanding of the likelihood of academic failure. Academic stress is discomfort and tension that emerges as a result of schooling and education. Academic stress is defined as uncomfortable emotional circumstances that arise as a result of academic expectations from family members, teaching staff, and peer group, parental pressure for school performance, the modern education and examination system, and the strain of homework, among other factors. Academic stress is mental distress concerning some anticipated frustration associated with academic failure or even an awareness of the possibility of such failure (Gupta and Khan, 1987).

## 3. Adolescence

Adolescence is the period of development and growth that occurs between childhood and adulthood. Any person between the ages of 10 and 19 is considered an adolescent by the World Health Organization (WHO). This age group falls under the WHO's definition of young people, which includes those aged between 10 to 24. Adolescence can be described biologically as the start of puberty and the end of physical growth; intellectually as advances in the capacity to understand conceptually and multi-dimensionally; or culturally as a period of development for adulthood.

### III. Sources of Academic Stress among Adolescent Students

Every scenario or occurrence that threatens to disrupt people's daily functioning and requires them to make changes is defined as a source of stress (Bernstein et al. 2008). These stressors are referred to as "Stressors". The following are some of the sources of academic stress: Numerous causes contribute to student stress, but school is one of the most prominent causes of academic stress in India. Too much homework, poor academic performance, exam preparation, a lack of enthusiasm in a specific subject, and teacher reprimand all contribute to stress. Great expectations of teachers, parents, and oneself are generally a source of stress for students in schools. Parents are typically concerned about their children's academic performance and ethical conduct. According to Clift and Thomas (1983), coursework assignments were a major source of stress, as they kept students under constant evaluation. The stressors included a lack of parental assistance, a pleasant examination method, living up to parental expectations, teacher attitude, and examination apprehension (Kohlon's, 1983). As per Berg and Keinan (1986), the most troublesome stressor related to academic stress is imposing excessively high self-expectations. Exam-related stress was discovered to be the leading cause of academic stress, followed by school classroom assignment pressure (Shirom, 1986). Students were reported to be under tremendous stress as a result of course overload and academic assessment techniques, but they appeared to be least bothered by personal and social reasons (Zeidner, 1992). Unreasonable norms of discipline, physical punishment, too much or inaccurate schoolwork, classroom practices, indecisive attitudes of teachers, increased emphasis on vulnerabilities rather than strengths, inappropriate school schedules, high student-teacher ratios, non-conducive physical environments in classrooms, lack of healthy teacher-student interaction are some of the major causes of academic stress (Masih & Gulrez, 2006). Additionally, the following were recognized to be associated with academic stress based on studies: academic workload, attending lectures (Agolla & Ongori, 2009), examinations, school curriculum (Shah, Hasan, Malik, & Sree Rama reddy, 2010), inadequate learning materials (Shah et al., 2010), subject-related projects (Conner, Pope, & Galloway, 2010). Family is another significant cause of academic stress, which involves the pressure placed on adolescents as a result of parents' expectations for their children to succeed academically (Deb et al. 2011). As a result, parents usually force their children to study for extended periods to achieve great grades or percentile in exams. According to Deb et al. (2011), the incidence of parental pressure varies considerably depending on the parents' educational levels, the mother's occupation, the presence of private tutors, and academic success. Fathers with a low level of education (non-graduates) were shown to be more inclined to put pressure on their children to achieve better academically. Academic stress is higher in Indian children from non-disrupted homes than in children from dysfunctional families. Children from disturbed homes are likely to receive less support and consideration from their parents in terms of educational matters than children from non-disrupted households. Surprisingly, this reduces their academic stress, indicating the harmful influence of parental surveillance and persuasion on their children's academic achievements (Ganesh and Magdalin, 2007). The social environment has a strong influence on the development of stress. Stress can emerge in a monotonous and stimulus-free workplace as well as in a complex and competitive one (Feng, 1992).

The results of the earlier researches reported numerous sources of academic stress among adolescent students e.g.: - personal reasons, such as financial management issues, changes in living conditions, and challenges in managing personal and educational life (Byron, Brun & Ivers, 2008; Chernomas & Shapiro, 2013; Goff, 2011; Jimenez, Navia Osorio & Diaz, 2010; Moscaritolo, 2009). Vastness of the curriculum, high parental expectations, lack of time and facilities for entertainment, exams, etc all contribute to adolescents' academic stress (Sreeramareddy et al., 2007). Furthermore, the influence of the academic environment is critical in influencing students' stress levels to rise. Inadequate resources and facilities (Awino & Agolla, 2008), a vast syllabus (Agrawal & Chahar, 2007; Sreeramareddy et al., 2007), exams (Saipanish, 2003), homework and work outside of school (Celis et al., 2001), making presentations, and competitiveness with others are some of the sources of academic stress.

Hancock (2001) and Hembree (1988) observed that negative exam cognitions, such as students' underestimation of their talents or overestimation of the consequences of failure, are frequently associated with academic stress. Furthermore, social class, family background, culture, and gender all play a role in predicting overall academic stress, with culture showing a stronger connection to stress than social class or gender.

#### IV. Conclusion

Everyone experiences stress at some point in their lives. Academic stress can have a negative impact on a student's life. Academic stress impairs performance, and adolescents under the impact of stress are more likely to make poor decisions. One of the most effective ways to cope with academic stress is to seek social support. Parents play a significant role in transmitting the energies of adolescent students to overcome their deviant behaviors. Sufficient care shall be taken in guiding the adolescent students to make the right decisions that may influence their future. As a result, for a smooth transition to adulthood, students require nurturing, appropriate direction, guidance, and encouragement from the adults. To get through an immediate conflict or crisis, students must develop and practice coping strategies. Coping strategies must emphasize personal responsibility in order to create healthy, non-destructive ways to cope.

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