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## PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND ACADEMIC STRESS AMONG HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN CHENNAI DISTRICT

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### Abstract

This study aimed to explore the relationship between academic stress and parental involvement among higher secondary school students. Academic stress is a condition characterized by demands that tax an individual's physical or mental resources. Stress can be triggered by various events, positive or negative. The source of stress can be environmental, physical, or emotional. Parental involvement fosters self-esteem and a sense of self-worth in students, reducing their risk of depression. Students and their parents (200 samples) were selected as sample by incidental cum purposive sampling method. The tools used were Academic stress Scale and Parent Involvement Scale. Three hypotheses were formulated: (1) there will be low stress level in higher secondary students having high parental involvement. (2) There will be more parental involvement in female children than boy's students. (3) Gender difference will be found in level of stress and parental involvement. The findings were that (1) Parents showed average involvement hence, higher secondary students had moderate level of academic stress (2) Parental involvement was same for both boys and girls and (3) Gender difference was not found between the level of stress and parental involvement. Both boys and girls had same level of academic stress and parental involvement.

### Key words:

Academic stress, Parental involvement, Higher secondary school students.

## Introduction

Academic stress refers to mental distress caused by anticipated academic challenges, failure, or even the mere awareness of the possibility of academic failure. It is a risk factor for psychopathology. Academic stress is an inevitable part of life. Various environmental factors can trigger stress. When stress levels fall within the comfort zone, it can have a motivating effect, helping individuals stay focused and energized. However, beyond the comfort zone, stress becomes harmful, causing damage to both the mind and body and increasing the risk of various diseases. The perception of stress is subjective, and what may be stressful for one individual may not be stressful for another. When discussing the signs and symptoms of stress, it is important to recognize that anything can be a manifestation of stress. Parental involvement plays a crucial role in a child's life, contributing to their physical, intellectual, social, mental, and emotional development. Children with adequate parental involvement often excel in academics and sports, demonstrate better social adjustment, and exhibit greater emotional and mental strength compared to those with inadequate parental involvement. Parental involvement fosters self-esteem and self-confidence, reducing the likelihood of school punishments due to ageappropriate behavior and discipline. These children are less likely to skip classes or engage in bullying behavior. The positive effects of parental involvement are not contingent on the family's background or economic status.

## Stress

Stress is a common human experience that occurs when a person perceives that the demands placed upon them exceed their ability to cope. This imbalance can manifest in physical, emotional, and mental symptoms, such as headaches, muscle tension, anxiety, and difficulty concentrating.

## Academic stress

Academic stress is the product of a combination of academic related demands that exceed the adaptive resources available to an individual. If a student is unable to cope effectively with academic stress, then serious psychosocial-emotional health consequences may result. (Arthur, 1998; MacGeorge, Samter, & Gillikan, 2005; Tennant, 2002). Academic stress is a risk factor that may lead social work students to negative health outcomes, particularly psychological distress.

## Parental Involvement

Parental involvement is defined as the participation of parents in every facet of children's education and development from birth to adulthood, recognizing that parents are the primary influence in children's lives. It also refers to the amount of participation a parent has when it comes to schooling and child's life. Some schools foster healthy parental involvement through events and volunteer opportunities. One can ensure that the child receives the benefits from parental involvements by staying up to date on what is happening in the classroom, helping the child with school opportunities and knowing correct safety procedure for the school. According to Vandergrift and

Greene (1992), “parent involvement has two independent components: parents as supporters and parents as active partners. Focusing on one of these components alone is not a sufficient approach to parent involvement. Parents can be active, yet not supportive of the education process.

## Objective

The study was taken with following objectives:

1. To see the relation between academic stress and parental involvement.
2. Extent of academic stress among students by parental involvement.
3. To find out gender difference in parental involvement.

## Hypotheses

1. There will be low level of academic stress in students having high parental involvement.
2. There will be more parental involvement in girl’s student than male children.
3. Gender difference will be found in level of academic stress and parental involvement.

## Need and Significance of the study

Education today is across roads and it is the responsibility of educationists to change or modify the approaches, to meet the ever changing and challenging situations in the educational sector. Education transforms an ordinary social being into a civilized person. The current home environment existing in our society has become mechanical. Parents are found to be mechanical as they spend much of their time for the economic growth of the family. Due to this, involvement of parents towards the educational aspects of the children is found to be lacking in today’s scenario. By keeping this view, the investigator determined to take research variables: Parental involvement and Academic stress.

## Method 2.1. Sample

The study was conducted on a group of 100 11th and 12th grade adolescent students from Eight schools namely, three government, two government-aided, and three, private school – in Tamil Nadu, following the multi-stage sampling technique. Twelve schools were officially approached. Four schools declined to give permission on account of examination and syllabus load. The sample included 51 boys and 49girls aged between 16 and 18 years.

## Tools Used

1. Parental Involvement Scale by Ming-Te Wang (2013)
2. Bisht’s Battery of Stress Scales (BBSS) by Abha Rani Bisht (2011).

## Procedure of Data Collection

Primary and secondary, both data were collected for the research work. The primary data was collected from two different schools using Stress Scale and Parental Involvement Scale. Confidentiality of their response was assured since the identities were not important. Participants were given questionnaire and after they filled up they were collected from them. Parents of the children were contacted during dispersal time. They were explained and got the questionnaires filled. The parents who could not be contacted, questionnaires were sent to them by their children. The secondary data was taken from internet and books.

The result interpretation has been done hypothesis wise both quantitatively and qualitatively. Statistical tools were used for quantitative analysis and manual of scale for qualitatively analysis.

**Hypothesis 1:** There will be low stress level in children having high parental involvement.

**Table number 1 N = 200 Table showing the mean of stress (children) and parental involvement (parents) and their category.**

Sample	N	Total	Mean of Stress and Involvement	Category of Parental Stress	of and Involvement
Children	100	1089	18.667	Moderate Stress	Academic
Parents	100	4893	79.967	Average	Involvement

The rationale behind the formulation of hypothesis was that the children who get sufficient attention from their parents feel more secure hence they have less stress. In table number 1 the total score of children is 1089 and score of parents is 4978. The mean score of children on stress level is 18.667 and that of parental involvement is 79.967.

To find out the level of Academic stress and parental involvement the help of manual was taken. On the basis of manual of Stress Scale the stress level of children is moderate. And on the basis of Parental Involvement Scale the level of parental involvement is average. The hypothesis number 1 was formulated with a view that when parents show high involvement in their children then their stress will be less and if less involvement then their Academic stress will be of high level.

The finding reveals that as parents have not shown high level of involvement, so instead of having low level of Academic stress their children were having moderate level of stress. Had it been high parental involvement or low parental involvement then level of stress also would have been low or high respectively. So it can be said that hypothesis number 1 that “There will be low stress level in children having high parental involvement” has been rejected.

**Hypothesis 2:** There will be more parental involvement in female children than male children.

**Table number 2 N = 200 Table showing mean and level of parental involvement of girls and boys students**

Sample	N	Mean of Parental Level of Parental Involvement	Involvement
Students	100	1089	18.667
Parents	100	4893	79.967

It is a general opinion that girl child is more vulnerable in society than boy child. Hence, parents are more involved in their security during their rearing practices. Besides this there is a general thought that they will go to other family after their marriage where new adjustment will be needed. Hence, their involvement is more in upbringing the female child in comparison to male child. Therefore, hypothesis number 2 was formulated that “there will be more parental involvement in female children than male children”. The findings are mentioned in table number 2. The mean of parental involvement of female is 78.906 and of male children, it is 78.607.

To find out the level of parental involvement the help of manual was taken. On the basis of manual for Parent Involvement Scale, the parental involvement level of both boys and girls children is average.

The hypothesis number 2 was formulated with a view that there will be more parental involvement in girl children than boy children as parents are more protective for their girl child. The finding does not support the hypothesis because parental involvement was same for both male and female. The obtained result is an indicative of rejection of traditional thinking of the parents. Secondly, it is also indicating that the life within the family has changed. Both parents are working. So, parents do not have much time to get involved in their children’s activities. Due to these reasons average level of parental involvement have been measured. Had it been high parental involvement in the case of female then stress in female children would have been low.

So, it can be said that the hypothesis number 2 that ‘There will be more parental involvement in female children than male children’ is not proved.

**Hypothesis 3:** Gender difference will be found in the level of Academic Stress and Parental Involvement.

Sample Parental	N Parental	Mean of	Level of	Mean of	Level of Stress	Stress	Involvement	Involvement
Girls	51	17.468	Moderate	78.906	Average			
Boys	49	16.178	Moderate	78.607	Average			

Hypothesis number 3 says that gender difference will be found in the level of stress and parental involvement. The hypothesis was formulated keeping in mind that girl children are protected more by their parents than boy children. Together they spend much time at home with parents than Boys. As their parents are more involved with them, so, they feel less stressed. It was also opined that sometimes much parental involvement may also lead to high academic stress.

To find out the level of academic stress and parental involvement, the help of manual was taken. In the manual of academic stress scale the score falling in the range of 14 to 24 (girls) and the range of score from 12 to 21 (boys) falls in the category of moderate level of stress. The mean of female is 17.468 and male is 16.178 which falls in the category of moderate level of stress. Hence, it can be concluded that both male and female children were having moderate level of stress.

In the manual of Parent Involvement Scale, the score falling in the range of 49 to 80 falls in the category of average level of parent involvement. The mean of parental involvement in case of girls is 78.906 and of boys are 78.607 which fall in the category of average level of parental involvement. Hence, it can be concluded that boys and girls children were having average level of parent involvement.

The hypothesis number 3 was formulated with a view that gender difference will be found in the level of stress and parental involvement. The finding does not support the hypothesis because the level of stress and the level of parental involvement was same for both male and female. As no gender difference has been found so, it can be said that hypothesis number 3 'Gender difference will be found in the level of Academic stress and Parental Involvement' is not proved.

## Findings

1. Parents showed average involvement hence higher secondary students had also moderate level of academic stress. So, hypothesis number 1 has not been confirmed.
2. Hypothesis number 2 has not been proved as parental involvement was same for both boys and girls.
3. Hypothesis number 3 "Gender difference will be found in the level of academic stress and parental involvement" has also not been proved as no gender difference was found. Both boys and girls were having the same level of academic stress as well as parental involvement.

## Conclusion

Parents and teachers can help children to express anger positively. Children have a right to feel angry or upset. Allow them the opportunity to express their feelings and stress is part of every one's life. Academic stress among students can create havoc in their life. Under Academic stress the performance gets hindered and students can take wrong decisions under the influence of stress. Parental support is considered as one of the most important way of coping with academic stress. In order to overcome deviant behaviors the parents play a constructive role in channelizing energies of the students. Proper care should to be taken in helping to take the right decisions which may affect their future. Hence, Students need to receive appropriate direction, nurturing, encouragement and guidance from their parents it will help the students to overcome the academic stress.

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