

A STUDY OF ACADEMIC STRESS AMONG HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract: Academic stress is a main source of stress for many students. The study examines the level of academic stress among higher secondary school students. Descriptive research design was adopted and stratified random sampling was chosen for study. A total sample of 180 students participated in this study were obtained from 10 higher secondary schools at Bareilly district. The data were collected through self constructed Academic Stress Scale. Data were analyzed with the help of t-test and analysis of variance (ANOVA). The study revealed that there exists high significant difference between the academic stress of male and female participants of higher secondary school students, but no significant difference was found among academic stress of arts, science and commerce stream students. It was also found that there was no significant difference between academic stress of government aided & self finance school students and rural & urban area school students.

Keywords: Stress, Academic stress, Higher Secondary school students.

Introduction

Stress is viewed as a negative emotional, cognitive, behavioral and physiological process that occurs as a person tries to adjust to or deal with stressors (Bernstein, et al, 2008). According to Sindhu (2016), stress is considered as a state of individual that result from their interaction with the environment that is perceived as too demanding and a threat to their well-being. It means to say that the stressors are not only physical, but may also be cognitive and psychological. Stress was found to be a part of students' life and could give impact on how students cope with the demands of academic life. Jary and Jary (1985) defined stress as a state of tension produced by pressures or conflicting demands with which person cannot adequately cope.

Academic stress defined as a mental distress with respect to some anticipated frustration associated with academic failure or even unawareness to the possibility of such failure. Students have to face many academic demands, such as- school examination and tests, answering the questions in the class, showing progress in school subject. Understanding what a teacher is teaching, competing with other classmates, fulfilling teachers and parents academic expectations. Archer and Lamnin (1985) defined academic stress as a stress arising from important factors like writing term papers, text anxiety, poor study skills, excessive academic load and classroom environment, which in the turn forms a major part of general stress in adolescent students. According to Gupta and Khan (1987), academic stress essentially relates to mental distress associated with some anticipated frustration on account of academic failure or even a realization of the possibility of such a failure. Fireman (1992) defined academic stress is anything that imposes an extra demand on a person's ability to cope, often with something that a new and different in academic.

Bisht (1989) stated that academic stress reflects perception of students' academic frustration, academic conflict, academic pressure, and academic anxiety. Academic stress is an important factor accounting for variation in academic achievement. Academic stress is conceptualized as interaction between students' environment, stressors, cognitive appraisal and coping with physiological and psychological response to stress and stressors related to academics.

Causes of academic stress

The causes of academic stress can be classified mainly into seven categories i.e. the stress due to teachers, stress due to exams and test, stress due to peer, stress due to parental and social, stress due to time management and infrastructure, and stress due to self inflicted factors. These can arise from different school based sources of stress, such as school work, discipline and classroom management procedure, extra-curricular activities, and public performance.

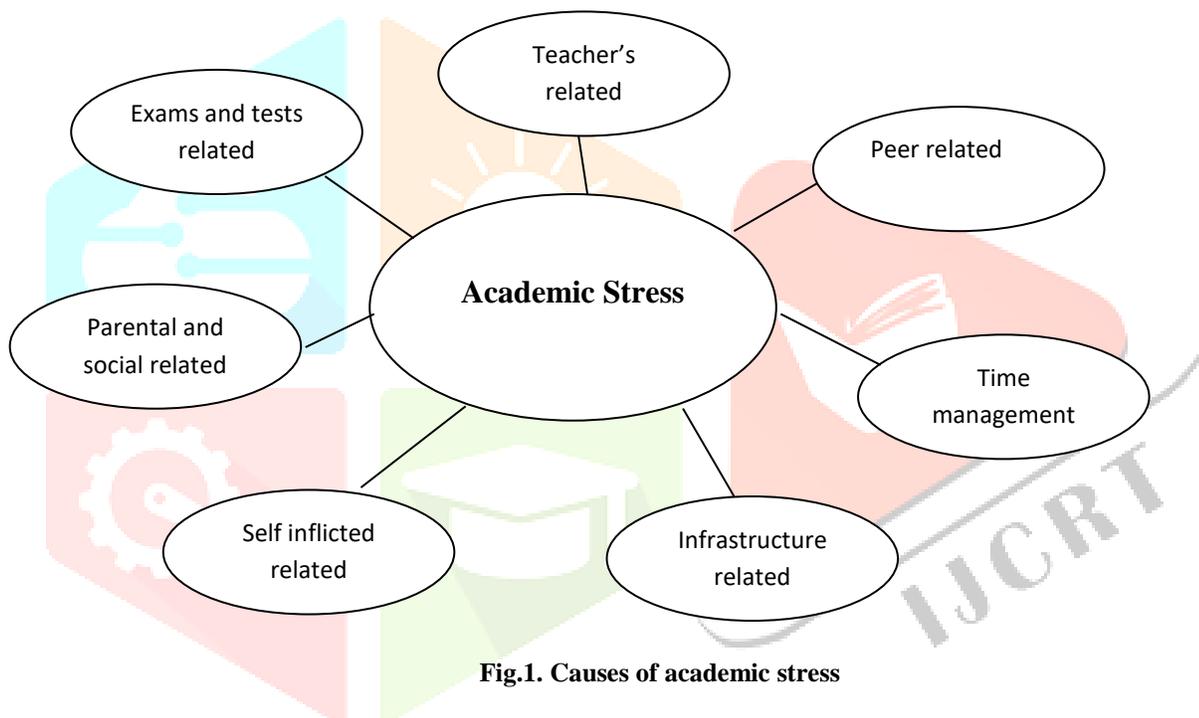


Fig.1. Causes of academic stress

Academic stress is an important factor accounting for variation in academic achievement. Ghosh (2016) observed that students in private schools have more academic stress than their counterparts in government schools (Prabhu,2015; Hussain, Kumar & Hussain,2008) and it was also found that male participants experienced less academic stress than female participants (Mathew,2006), but Prabhu (2015) found that academic stress of female participants is low than male participants. It was also found that urban participant's academic stress was higher than rural participants. Barthwal and raj (2014) investigated no significant difference between male and female adolescents with regard to academic stress (Busari, 2012). It was also found that rural and urban adolescents did not differ in their academic stress. Lal (2014) investigated that government and private secondary school students did not differ in academic stress.

Rationale of the study

Academic stress is a crucial problem of a student life in the present scenario. Our education system has loaded the students with a variety of pressures such as vast curriculum, examination fear; neck-to-neck competitions etc. peer and parental pressure add tons to their problem. The findings of doctors, psychotherapist and child psychologist reveal that students' especially secondary school students experience

anxiety, stress and depression due to academic pressure and excessive academic pressure is associated with deliberate self-harm and even suicides. Hence the researcher opted this study to find out better solutions, provide guidance and plan strategies for teachers, parents and students in order to help them cope with academic stress.

Statement of the problem

A study of academic stress among higher secondary school students.

Objectives of the study

The present study aims at accomplishing the following objectives:

1. To find out the level of academic stress of higher secondary school students.
2. To find out gender difference on academic stress of higher secondary school students.
3. To find out difference on academic stress of science, arts, and commerce stream students of higher secondary schools.
4. To find out difference on academic stress of government aided and self finance school students.
5. To find out difference on academic stress of rural and urban area school students.

Hypothesis

- H1. There is no significant difference between stress of male and female students.
 H2. There is no significant difference among academic stress of science, arts and commerce stream students.
 H3. There is no significant difference in academic stress of government aided and self finance school students.
 H4. There is no significant difference in academic stress of rural and urban area school students

Methodology

Descriptive survey method of research and stratified random sampling has been used. The higher secondary school students of Bareilly district constitute the population. The sample for the study consisted of 180 students from ten schools of Bareilly district affiliated to UP Board. Self constructed Academic Stress Scale (ASS) was used for collecting the data. T-test and Analysis of variance (ANOVA) have been used for analyzed the data. The study was delimited to higher secondary school students of Bareilly district affiliated to UP board only.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

Table-1: Comparison of academic stress between male and female students

Categories	N	Mean	S.D.	t-Ratio
Male	103	96.19	18.73	2.87**
Female	77	87.75	20.52	

The table -1 shows a highly significant difference between academic stress of male and female students ($t=2.87$) at 0.01 level of significance. So, the null hypothesis, "There is no significant difference between academic stress of male and female students" stands rejected. It was found that male students had more academic stress ($M= 96.19$) than counterparts female students ($M=87.75$). This may be due to the fact that male students are sensitive and sincere for their future, as in our patriarchal society, male members are

supposed to be the bread earner of the family. So they have to bear all the financial responsibility. Whereas female students are generally easy going, happy and not have academic stress because they are in not in compulsion to provide financial support to the family.

Table-2: Comparison of academic stress among science, arts and commerce stream students

Analysis of variance (One way ANOVA) for stream differences

Sources of variance	df	Sum of Square	Mean square	F
Between Groups	2	765.74	382.87	0.97
Within Group	177	70148.01	396.32	
Total	179	70913.75		

From table 2, when three groups were observed on academic stress, the F-ratio was found to be 0.97, which is not significant. Above results showed that science, arts and commerce stream students did not differ on their academic stress. Thus, the null hypothesis that ‘there is no significant difference among academic stress of science, arts and commerce stream students’ stands accepted.

Table-3: Comparison of academic stress between governments aided and self finance school students

Categories	N	Mean	S.D.	t-Ratio
Govt. Aided school	84	93.08	19.35	0.31
Self finance school	96	92.15	20.46	

From table-3, the mean score of academic stress of government aided school students and self finance school students did not significant. So the null hypothesis, “there is no significant difference in academic stress of government aided and self finance school students” was accepted. The mean score of academic stress of government aided school students (M=93.08) was found to be higher than the mean score of self finance school students (M=92.15). Self finance schools provided proper guidance and counseling for students and had a good infrastructure in schools, so the self finance school students had low academic stress than government aided school students.

Table-4: Comparison of academic stress between rural and urban area school students

Categories	N	Mean	S.D.	t-Ratio
Rural	60	89.97	21.28	-1.25
Urban	120	93.89	19.14	

Table-4, presents the value of t is -1.25 which is not significant. In this case the null hypothesis that “there is no significant difference in academic stress of rural and urban area school students” is accepted. It also indicated that mean score of academic stress of urban area school students (93.89) was higher than that of rural area school students (89.97) but this difference was not significant. Parents belonging to urban area had high expectations from their children so the urban area school students had higher academic stress than rural area school students.

Summary of findings

The following was the main findings of the present study-

1. Male students had more academic stress than female students.
2. Science, arts and commerce stream students did not differ on their academic stress.
3. Government aided and self finance higher secondary students did not differ on their academic stress.
4. Rural and urban area higher secondary school students did not differ on their academic stress.

Conclusion

Academic stress is a serious and prevalent problem in India. It can lead to mental problems and even suicides of adolescent students. Apart from time management, parental and social support and co-curricular activities are also necessary in helping students to avoid and to deal with academic stress. Male students had higher level of academic stress than female students.

Implications

Students are the wealth and future of a nation. It is clear from the findings that male participants have more academic stress than female participants. Their academic problem must be discussed by the teacher as well as parents. And they must be guided properly to choose a specific stream, not forced by parents. Parents should have expectations by their children according their capability. This study recommended that the teacher should arrange the necessary healthy environment to reduce the students’ academic stress. The teachers’ should focus on reducing the students’ academic stress by providing mentors classes, time scheduling activities, changing teaching method, and providing extracurricular activities.

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