



## **Academic Stress among Higher Secondary Students**

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### **Abstract:**

*Working in a high-pressure environment, dealing with challenging tasks, or being yelled at can all cause stress. It might result from disputes, decision-making, or other situations that put your skills to the test, or it might be induced by other means are caused by a variety of social demands on our time. We have observed that emotional states tend not to persist for very long-lasting, whether the feelings are good, like joy, or bad, like fear. However, such emotions can sometimes be States can endure for extended periods of time, or they can become extremely elevated. The consequence is that the psychological and physiological manifestations of stress are often referred to as stress. Additionally, its manifestations, such as anxiety, depression, and burnout, have always been a prevalent issue among individuals working in various fields and jobs. Concern has already been raised in recent decades about the disparity between the skills needed for different occupations. The increasing number of organized research reports, novels, and well-known journals is the cause. Workshops designed to help individuals deal with this occurrence. The study's goal is to determine the among upper secondary school pupils, the amount of academic pressure. There are 252 students in class XI in the current research. pupils attending upper secondary schools in Tamil Nadu, India's Namakkal District. The sample consists of was chosen using a simple random sampling method. The current study demonstrates that the higher secondary Students are experiencing a moderate degree of academic stress, regardless of subgroups of the higher secondary school. Students are experiencing moderate levels of academic stress. The male student's academic stress is greater than that of the female. Compared to rural students, urban students experience greater academic stress. The government institution the academic stress experienced by students at private schools is lower than that of science students. Higher than an arts major. The level of academic stress experienced by students whose parents have a literacy education is higher than that of other students.*

**Keywords:** Social Demands, Psychology, Stress, Negative Emotions.

### **1. Introduction**

Stress is seen as a harmful emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and physical reaction that takes place. Stressors are defined as events that people attempt to cope with or adapt to (Bernstein, et al 2008)which interfere with, or pose a risk to, people's everyday activities and force them to adapt. Grambling & Auerbach (1998)define stress as an undesirable state of the physiological and emotional excitement that people feel in circumstances that they see as threatening or putting their safety in jeopardy.

Stress, however, can signify different things to different people and is interpreted differently. It is understood to be conditions or occurrences that make people feel tense, under pressure, or experiencing negative

emotions like wrath and anxiety. Furthermore, stress is defined by some as the reaction to current circumstances, which comprises behavioral, emotional, and physiological alterations (such as tense muscles and elevated heart rate) (Bernstein et al., 2008). Stress is always thought of as a psychological process that includes each person's unique interpretation and reaction to any potentially dangerous situation.

It is crucial to remember that stress can affect people in both positive and negative ways. It suggests that stress might be a typical, adaptive response to danger. Its function is to alert people and get them ready to defend themselves. For example, people are motivated to deal with items that pose genuine hazards because they are afraid of them or stay away from them. The majority of psychologists claim that while stress can impair performance on challenging activities, it also inspires people to strive for success and fosters innovation (Auerbach & Grambling 1998).

According to Auerbach and Grambling (1998), ineffective stress management can result in major issues. Furthermore, a person is more prone to suffer from mental illnesses like anxiety disorders as well as physical illnesses like heart disease when they are exposed to ongoing stress. The discipline of health psychology emphasizes, in part, how stress impacts physiological processes and how individuals can employ stress-reduction strategies to avoid or reduce illness (Grambling and Auerbach 1998).

Unusual physical conditions such as extreme heat or cold, disease, oxygen deprivation, or exposure to intense light can cause stress in a person. Long periods of standing still, climbing a mountain, or submersion in water can all put a lot of strain on an individual's ability to adapt.

## **2. Sources of Stress:**

Bernstein et al. (2008) define the sources of stress as every circumstance or event that threatens to disrupt people's daily functioning and causes them to make adjustments. These sources of stress are called "Stressors". According to Lazarus and Cohen (1977), stressors are demands from the internal or external environment that throw off equilibrium, impairing bodily and mental health and necessitating action to bring things back into balance. They vary, nevertheless, in terms of the intensity and length of stress; what is stressful for one person may not cause another person tension.

For instance, first-year undergraduate students may find it difficult to miss some classes, but depending on their level of expectations, other students may not find it unpleasant. Sitting in traffic during rush hour or taking his final test are not comparable to being attacked by a vengeful lion, where high arousal could promote battling or experiencing. The three main types of stressors that produce demands that people must adapt to are catastrophic occurrences, significant life upheavals, and everyday inconveniences. According to Auerbach and Gramling (1998), a catastrophe is an unforeseen, potentially fatal event that leaves people unprepared to handle it. For example, common disasters include earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, conflicts, fires, and sexual attacks. Significant life transitions (e.g., illness, divorce, losing a job, For any adult, the loss of a family member's spouse and incarceration might be considered distressing events. The majority of stress that people encounter in their daily lives is brought on by minor inconveniences.

A catastrophe is defined by Auerbach and Gramling (1998) as an unanticipated, potentially lethal event that leaves people unprepared to deal with it. For instance, earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, conflicts, fires, and sexual assaults are examples of frequent calamities. Major life changes (such as getting sick, getting divorced, losing a job, the death of a family member's spouse and incarceration may be regarded as upsetting experiences for any adult. Most of the tension that people experience on a daily basis is caused by small annoyances.

## **3. Effects of Stress:**

It has been suggested that stress may lead a person to experience worried thoughts, have trouble focusing, or forget things. Stress can also cause people to change their behavior, like clenching their teeth, chewing their

nails, wringing their hands, and heavy breathing. People who are under stress may experience icy hands and feet, stomach butterflies, and even elevated heart rate—all of which are thought to be typical physiological reactions to stress and are linked to feelings of anxiety (Auerbach & Gramling, 1998).

Stress-related physical and psychological reactions typically coexist, especially when stressors intensify. On the other hand, different stress reactions might be influenced by one another. For example, the psychological stress reaction of fearing a heart attack might be triggered by modest chest pain. Physically a person may react by breathing quickly, having their heart rate raise, perspiring, and even shivering a short while after escaping a horrific accident or other terrifying incident. The fight-or-flight syndrome is a broad pattern that includes these responses. According to Bernstein et al. (2008), psychological reactions to stress can manifest as modifications in feelings, ideas (cognition), and actions.

### **Coping with Stress**

Although stress affects people differently, it can cause poor experiences and sickness. Therefore, managing stress is crucial since it influences people's decisions to seek medical attention, seek out social support, and trust expert advice (Passer & Smith 2007). One method for assessing how people cope with stressful events is the transactional model of stress and coping (Lazarus & Cohen, 1977). Stressful circumstances are thought to as interactions between a person and their surroundings. Nonetheless, these transactions are significantly impacted by external pressures. These transactions are characterized by two significant forms of appraisal: the individual's assessment of the stressor and the assessment of the stressor in light of the social and cultural resources at their disposal.

The first appraisal known also as primary appraisal is resulting from a person examining or appraising the potential threat when facing a stressor. The primary appraisal is described as an individual evaluation of major effects of an event, as stressful, positive, controllable, and challenging or irrelevant. The second appraisal is the assessment of the available resources and options available to a person in order to copy with the actual stressor. It is an appropriate action taking by a person to find a solution (Cohen, 1984).

### **Academic Stress:**

Academic stress is defined as the worry and tension associated with education and learning. Pursuing a degree and one's education can often come with a lot of pressure. There are readings, quizzes, laboratories, tests, assignments, and studying. The strain of completing all the tasks, managing the time, and scheduling extracurricular activities. For schoolchildren who are frequently living away from home for the first time, academic stress is particularly difficult.

Stress and its symptoms, such as burnout, anxiety, and depression, have always been seen as a prevalent issue for individuals in a variety of jobs and industries. Over the last few decades, alarm has been raised about the problem. The increasing number of books, research papers, popular articles, and other media has already angered me of structured seminars, designed to educate people about how to deal with this occurrence (Keinan & Perlberg 1986).The sentiments of frustration, worry, and sadness are, according to Keinan and Perlberg (1986), among the most frequent. Possible repercussions of significant stress. According to McKean et al. (2000), stressors alone do not cause this. Generate anxiety, depression, or conflict. Rather, the relationship between stressors and the individual's perception. Environmental stress is brought on by environmental stimuli, and the responses to these stressors cause stressor requests that a person believes are beyond their capacity to handle (Shirom, 1986).Researchers have long studied the effects of academic stress on students and have identified too many tasks, rivalries with classmates, mistakes, and bad relationships with others are all stressors. Students or lecturers (Fairbrother & Warn, 2003). Academic pressures include how the student views the belief that there is not enough time to acquire the necessary vast knowledge base (Carveth et al, 1996).

Researchers have long studied academic stress in students, and they have found that excessive assignments, rivalry with other students, failures, and strained relationships with lecturers or other students are stressors (Fairbrother & Warn, 2003). Among the academic pressures is the student's view of the a large body of knowledge and the belief that there is not enough time to build it (Carveth et al, 1996).

Students report feeling academic stress at specific points throughout each semester, with the primary causes being test preparation, test completion, and grade. the fierce competition and the vast quantity of material to learn in a short period of time (Abouserrie, 1994). Students suffer physical and psychological harm when they view stress negatively or when it becomes overwhelming. Students can use strategies like good time management, social support, constructive reappraisal, and participation in leisure activities to lower stress levels (Murphy & Archer, 1996). The time allotted and the pressure to do well in the exam or test contribute to the academic environment's high level of stress (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2006). This is likely to have an impact on social interactions both inside and outside the institution, which has an impact on the individual's life in terms of dedication to reaching the objectives (Fairbrother & Warn, 2003).

#### 4. Review of Related Studies

**Sibnath Deb, Esben Strodl and Jiandong Sun (2012)** Academic-related stress among private secondary school students in India. The purpose of this study is to examine the prevalence of academic stress and exam anxiety among private secondary school students in India as well as the associations with socio-economic and study-related factors. Participants were 400 adolescent students (52 percent male) from five private secondary schools in Kolkata who were studying in grades 10 and 12. Participants were selected using a multi-stage sampling technique and were assessed using a study-specific questionnaire. Findings revealed that 35 and 37 percent reported high or very high levels of academic stress and exam anxiety respectively. All students reported high levels of academic stress, but those who had lower grades reported higher levels of stress than those with higher grades. Students who engaged in extra-curricular activities were more likely to report exam anxiety than those who did not engage in extra-curricular activities.

**Marwan Zaid Bataineh (2013)** Academic stress among undergraduate students: the case of education faculty at King Saud University. This study investigated the academic stressors experienced by the students at university. A total sample of 232 subjects participated in this study were obtained from faculty of education at KSU. Data were collected through self- administered questionnaire which was randomly distributed to the students during lecture time. Data obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation, and analysis of variance (ANOVA). The result showed that academic overloads, course awkward, inadequate time to study, workload every semester, exams awkward, low motivation, and high family expectations were drive moderately stress among students. It was also found that fear of failure is the major source of stress among undergraduate students. Moreover, the study found that there were positive correlation between religiosity sources and academic stress ( $r=.300^{**}$ ,  $p=.00$ ). Lastly, the study found that there were no significant differences in academic stress among students with different, level of study and specializations.

**Rajasekar (2013)** Impact of academic stress among the management students of AMET university – An analysis. The study examined the impact of academic stress among the management students. Stress management encompasses techniques to equip a person with effective coping mechanisms for dealing with psychological stress. Students have different expectations, goals and values that they want to fulfill, which is only possible if they are integrated with that of the institution. The objective of the study is to find out the present level of stress, sources of stress and stress management techniques that would be useful for management students. The study takes into account various criteria like physical, psychological, individual, demographical and environmental factors of stress among the management students. The sample comprises of 100 students of AMET Business School, AMET University in Chennai. Data was collected through structured questionnaire by using convenient sampling method.

## **Significance of the Study:**

Students encounter a variety of academic challenges in today's very competitive environment, such as test anxiety, disinterest in going to class and an inability to comprehend the material. The sensation of worry is known as academic stressor worry about one's academic performance. It may cause students to be unable to do their best in tests. The academic stress experienced at school stems from a desire for excellence, concern about parental demands, competition, athletics, a demanding curriculum, and grades. The panic attacks, nervous break downs, In several of the younger pupils, depression and burnouts are also evident. The same circumstance isn't always stressful because everyone experiences stress differently and not everyone has unpleasant ideas or sentiments during stressful situations. Students were seen as the potential pillars who will assume the duties of leading our nation to the future. The investigator chose to analyze the academic stress in order to ascertain whether they should be in a better position in the following phase among pupils in higher secondary school.

**Statement of the Problem**-The researcher has selected the problem as “Academic Stress Among Higher Secondary Students”.

## **Objectives of the Study:**

The investigator of the present study framed the following objectives:

1. To find out the level of academic stress among higher secondary students in Nadia District in West Bengal, India.
2. To find out whether there is significant difference between the following sub samples with categorical Variable to academic stress.
  - a) Gender [Male / Female]
  - b) Locality [Rural / Urban]
  - c) Subject [Science / Arts] and
  - d) Parents Education [Literate / Illiterate]

## **Hypotheses of the Study:**

The investigator of the present study framed the following hypotheses:

1. There is significant mean difference between male and female students with respect to academic stress.
2. There is significant mean difference between rural and urban area students with respect to academic stress.
3. There is significant mean difference guidance needs between science and arts subject students with respect to academic stress.
4. There is significant mean between the students whose parent's education as literate and illiterate level with respect to academic stress.

## **The Method**

The researcher has been used survey method for this study.

## Sample

The researcher has selected 252 students of XI standard in Nadia district in West Bengal, India. The sample was selected by using simple random sampling technique. The sample forms a representative sample of the entire population.

## Tool Used

The investigator of the present study selected and used the academic stress scale was constructed and standardized by Prof. A. C. Das, Department Of Education, University of Kalyani, Kalyani, Nadia

### Description of Academic Stress Scale

One of the important objectives of the present investigation is to find out the level of academic stress among higher secondary school students for this purpose the investigator used the academic stress scale constructed and standardized by Prof. A.C. Das. This scale consists of as many as 28 items and each item has five alternative responses i.e. "No Stress", "Slightly Stress", "Moderate Stress", "Highly Stress" and "Extremely High Stress".

So, the scoring to the response given by the students should be like the following Response Weightage No Stress 5, Slightly Stress 4, Moderate Stress 3, Highly Stress 2, Extremely High Stress 1

High scores are an indication of low stress and low scores on the scale are an indication of high stress.

## Statistical Techniques Used

For the analysis of the data, the following statistical techniques have been used

- A. Descriptive statistics (Mean & S.D)
- B. Inferential statistics (t- test)

## Testing of Hypotheses

### Table – 1

Showing the mean and standard deviation of academic stress scores of higher secondary students

Variable	Sample	N	Mean	S. D	t-value	Significant/Not significant
Gender	Male	138	97.01	31.21	0.61	Not Significant
	Female	114	94.63	29.98		
Locality	Rural	109	95.21	32.54	0.53	Not Significant
	Urban	143	97.52	33.05		
Subject	Science	127	98.36	31.56	0.89	Not Significant
	Arts	125	93.11	30.61		
Parents Education	Literate	104	96.06	32.21	0.34	Not Significant
	Illiterate	148	96.85	30.32		

## **Findings**

The following are the main findings of the present investigation.

1. The higher secondary students are having moderate level of academic stress and irrespective of sub samples of the higher secondary students are having moderate level of academic stress.
2. Male and female students do not differ significantly in their academic stress.
3. Rural and urban area students do not differ significantly in their academic stress.
4. Science and Arts students do not differ significantly in their academic stress.
5. The students whose parent's education as literate and illiterate level does not differ significantly in their academic stress.

## **Conclusion:**

The results of this study show that students in higher secondary have a moderate level of academic stress, regardless of their subsamples. Male students experience more academic stress than female students. The academic stress experienced by urban students is greater than students in rural areas. Students studying science experience more academic stress than those studying the arts. Students with more literate parents experience higher levels of academic stress than their peers.

## **Educational Implications:**

The study's findings indicate that, given the degree of academic stress experienced by upper secondary pupils, it makes sense to stay up to date on daily lectures. Make an effort to attend lectures on a regular basis and pay attention. Avoid studying at the last minute and keep in mind that the body needs seven hours of sleep every night to work effectively. The ideal time and location for studying should be determined by the person. Students are aware of the precise subjects that will be covered in the exams, and you should get a sense of the format of the tests from last year's question papers.

Regularly taking little breaks during work allows one to unwind and focus for extended periods of time. One should never allow negative thoughts to enter their head and should always set realistic goals in life. One should cease being anxious and maintain composure on exam day.

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