



## Mental Health Challenges Among Students: A Study of Well-Being, Academic Pressure and Coping Strategies

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**Abstract:** *Mental health issues among students have become a pressing concern in modern educational environments, largely due to rising academic demands, intense competition, and shifting social expectations. This study explores how academic pressure affects student well-being and the coping strategies they use to handle psychological stress. Adopting a cross-sectional research approach, data were gathered using standardized tools to measure stress levels, emotional health, and coping behaviours. The results indicate a strong link between increased academic pressure and higher levels of anxiety, stress, and emotional fatigue among students. In contrast, those who engaged in adaptive coping strategies—such as problem-solving, seeking social support, and practicing mindfulness—reported better psychological well-being and greater resilience. On the other hand, maladaptive strategies like avoidance and self-isolation were associated with worsening mental health outcomes. The study emphasizes the important role coping mechanisms play in reducing the negative impact of academic stress. It highlights the need for educational institutions to incorporate mental health services, stress management initiatives, and coping skills training into their systems. A comprehensive approach to student mental health can improve well-being, boost academic involvement, and lead to better overall educational outcomes.*

**Keywords:** *Student Mental Health, Academic Pressure, Psychological Well-Being, Coping Strategies.*

**Introduction:** In the realm of education, mental health has gained significant attention, particularly when it comes to students. Today's students must overcome several emotional and psychological obstacles in order to achieve both their personal and academic objectives. Students at all educational levels are increasingly experiencing mental health problems such as stress, anxiety, sadness, and emotional tiredness. These problems have an impact on kids' thoughts, behaviours, and academic performance in addition to how they feel. To establish encouraging learning environments that promote students' academic and personal development, it is essential to comprehend the mental health of students.

Changes in lifestyle, academic obligations, social interactions, and future uncertainty are common causes of mental health issues among students. It may be difficult to successfully manage time, adjust to new academic environments, and strike a balance between personal and academic obligations. Due to a lack of access to mental health resources or a fear of being judged, many students suffer in silence. Because of this, mental health issues could go undiagnosed until they start to significantly impact everyday functioning and academic achievement.

Academic progress is significantly influenced by the well-being of students. Students who are in good mental health are better able to focus, retain knowledge, engage in class activities, and overcome academic obstacles. Learning requires motivation, creativity, and problem-solving abilities, all of which are supported by mental health. Emotionally secure students are more likely to establish objectives, maintain attention, and successfully finish their coursework.

However, learning and academic success may be hampered by poor mental health. High levels of stress or anxiety might make it difficult for students to pay attention in class, study for tests, or finish homework on time. Fear of failing, lack of confidence, and poor self-esteem may all result from emotional anguish. Students may evade academic obligations, miss lessons, or even quit their schools as a result of these emotions. This demonstrates the strong correlation between students' mental and emotional health and academic achievement.

One of the main causes of mental health issues among students is academic pressure. Exams, grades, competitiveness, deadlines, and expectations from instructors and family all put pressure on students. Many students experience additional stress because they believe that in order to ensure a bright future, they must do particularly well. Students may experience dread and anxiety as a consequence of the continual pressure to do well academically, particularly if they believe they are unable to match these standards.

Growing academic pressure may have detrimental effects. Persistent stress may cause emotional tiredness, burnout, sleep issues, and a decline in academic interest. Long-term academic stress might cause depression or anxiety problems in some pupils. Physical health may also be impacted by pressure, leading to headaches, exhaustion, and compromised immunity. Students may resort to undesirable coping mechanisms like drug abuse or social disengagement in severe situations. These results emphasise how important it is to deal with academic pressure in a fair and encouraging manner. This research was motivated by the rising concern about student mental health and how it affects academic life. Academic achievement is a major priority of educational institutions, but students' emotional and psychological needs often get less attention. It is important to comprehend how academic pressure impacts students' wellbeing and how they deal with these difficulties. In order to provide insights that may assist educators, institutions, and legislators in better supporting kids, this research aims to investigate these concerns.

This study's importance stems from its capacity to increase public awareness of the difficulties students encounter in their mental health. The research may assist in pinpointing areas in which students need assistance by investigating the connection between coping mechanisms, academic pressure, and well-being. The results might help schools create counselling services, stress management programs, and mental health programs. Better academic results and a happier learning environment may result from supporting students' emotional health.

Examining students' mental health issues in connection to their academic pressure and general well-being is the primary goal of this study. The goal of the research is to comprehend how students' mental health is impacted by academic obligations and how they manage these pressures on a daily basis. The research aims to determine the prevalence of mental health problems among students, investigate the causes and intensity of academic pressure, and look at the coping mechanisms that students use to deal with stress. Understanding the connection between academic achievement and student well-being is another goal. By achieving these goals, the research hopes to further knowledge of student mental health and aid in the creation of successful solutions.

## Literature Review

**Student Mental Health and Well-Being:** Mental health is a crucial component of students' overall development, encompassing their emotional and psychological state as well as their ability to cope with daily

academic and social challenges. Well-being is often defined as a state in which individuals feel balanced, confident, and satisfied with their lives and educational experiences (World Health Organization, 2018). Recent studies indicate that a significant proportion of students experience mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and stress due to increasing academic and personal demands (Sarah-Jayne Blakemore, 2019).

Anxiety among students is commonly associated with fear of examinations, performance expectations, and uncertainty about future outcomes. Depression is often characterized by persistent sadness, low motivation, and a lack of interest in academic activities, while stress arises from excessive workloads and time constraints. These mental health challenges negatively affect students' concentration, academic engagement, and overall performance (Beiter et al., 2015; Eisenberg et al., 2009). Consequently, maintaining student well-being has become a major concern in educational research and policy discussions.

**Academic Pressure and Its Impact:** Academic pressure is widely recognized as a significant contributor to students' mental health problems. It originates from various sources, including examinations, heavy coursework, competitive environments, and high expectations from parents and educational institutions. Examination-related stress often leads to fear of failure and concerns about future career prospects, while continuous assignments and deadlines create chronic stress (Deb et al., 2015).

Moreover, intense competition among students can result in self-doubt, reduced self-esteem, and emotional exhaustion. Research shows that prolonged exposure to academic pressure is strongly associated with increased levels of anxiety, burnout, and decreased psychological well-being (Pascoe et al., 2020). In extreme cases, excessive academic stress can lead to serious mental health outcomes, highlighting the need for supportive academic environments that prioritize student well-being alongside performance.

**Coping Strategies Used by Students:** Students employ a variety of coping strategies to manage academic stress and maintain mental health. Coping mechanisms are generally categorized into problem-focused and emotion-focused strategies (Richard Lazarus & Susan Folkman, 1984). Problem-focused coping involves actively addressing the source of stress through techniques such as time management, planning, and seeking academic or social support. In contrast, emotion-focused coping aims to regulate emotional responses through relaxation, positive thinking, and expression of feelings.

Healthy coping strategies, including regular physical activity, social interaction, and self-care practices, have been found to significantly enhance students' resilience and psychological well-being (Stallman, 2010). On the other hand, maladaptive coping strategies such as avoidance, denial, or substance use can exacerbate stress and lead to poorer mental health outcomes. Support systems, including peers, family members, and institutional counselling services, play a vital role in helping students adopt effective coping mechanisms and manage stress more constructively.

**Research gap:** Many studies examine student mental health, academic pressure, or coping strategies separately. Limited research looks at how these factors interact together. There is a need for integrated studies that explore well-being, academic stress, and coping methods at the same time to better understand student mental health challenges.

**Research Objectives of the Study:** The primary objectives of this study are:

1. To examine the overall mental well-being of students across different educational levels.
2. To identify the major sources and intensity of academic pressure faced by students.
3. To analyze the relationship between academic stress and mental health outcomes such as anxiety, depression, and burnout.

4. To explore the coping strategies adopted by students to manage stress and maintain well-being.
5. To assess the effectiveness of various coping mechanisms in reducing mental health challenges.
6. To suggest recommendations for educational institutions to improve students' mental health support systems.

**Research Questions of the Study:** The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the current state of mental well-being among students?
2. What are the key factors contributing to academic pressure among students?
3. How does academic pressure impact students' mental health?
4. What coping strategies do students commonly use to deal with stress and mental health challenges?
5. Which coping strategies are most effective in promoting resilience and well-being?
6. What are the suggestive recommendations for educational institutions to improve students' mental health support systems?

**Methodology of the Study:** This study adopts a qualitative research design to explore in depth the mental health challenges faced by students, focusing on their lived experiences, perceptions of academic pressure, and coping strategies. The study follows a **phenomenological approach**, aiming to understand students' personal experiences of stress, well-being, and coping capacity in academic environments.

## Results

**1. To examine the overall mental well-being of students across different educational levels:** The overall mental well-being of students differs notably across educational levels due to changing academic demands, developmental stages, and life responsibilities, making it a complex and evolving issue; at the school level, students often face foundational stressors such as examination pressure, parental expectations, and peer comparison, combined with ongoing emotional and psychological development, which can lead to anxiety and low self-esteem, while at the college level, students experience a transition into greater independence alongside increased academic workload, competition, and uncertainty about future career paths, contributing to higher levels of stress, social adjustment challenges, and occasional feelings of isolation, though they may also begin to develop more effective coping strategies and support networks, whereas at the university or postgraduate level, mental well-being is further influenced by intense academic specialization, research pressures, financial concerns, and career-related anxieties, often resulting in burnout, chronic stress, and emotional fatigue, and across all these stages, factors such as social support, institutional environment, and individual coping mechanisms play a crucial role in shaping students' mental health outcomes, highlighting the importance of tailored interventions that address the specific needs of each educational level to promote resilience, emotional stability, and overall well-being.

**2. To identify the major sources and intensity of academic pressure faced by students:** Academic pressure among students arises from multiple interconnected sources, and its intensity varies depending on individual circumstances and educational contexts; one of the primary sources is the heavy academic workload, including frequent examinations, assignments, and tight deadlines, which often creates a constant sense of urgency and stress, while high expectations from parents and teachers further intensify this pressure by placing emphasis on academic achievement as a measure of success, leading students to fear failure and disappointment, in addition, competition among peers—especially in highly performance-driven environments—can heighten feelings of inadequacy and anxiety as students compare their performance with

others, and the growing importance of securing admission to prestigious institutions or obtaining desirable career opportunities adds another layer of stress, making students feel that their future depends entirely on their current academic performance, furthermore, external factors such as limited time for relaxation, lack of institutional support, and societal emphasis on grades rather than holistic development contribute to the overall burden, and the intensity of this pressure can manifest in various ways, including mental exhaustion, reduced motivation, sleep disturbances, and emotional distress, ultimately indicating that academic pressure is not only widespread but also deeply impactful, requiring careful attention from educators, families, and policymakers to create a more balanced and supportive learning environment.

**3. To analyze the relationship between academic stress and mental health outcomes such as anxiety, depression, and burnout:** The relationship between academic stress and mental health outcomes such as anxiety, depression, and burnout is both strong and multifaceted, as prolonged exposure to academic demands can significantly affect students' psychological well-being; when students experience continuous pressure from examinations, deadlines, and performance expectations, their stress levels often escalate into anxiety, characterized by excessive worry, restlessness, and difficulty concentrating, which can in turn impair academic performance and create a cycle of increased stress, while persistent academic strain without adequate coping mechanisms or support may also contribute to depressive symptoms, including feelings of hopelessness, low motivation, fatigue, and a loss of interest in previously enjoyable activities, further diminishing students' ability to engage effectively in their studies, and over time, chronic academic stress can lead to burnout—a state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion marked by reduced productivity, detachment from academic responsibilities, and a sense of inefficacy, particularly among students facing sustained high workloads and competitive environments, moreover, the impact of academic stress is often intensified by factors such as lack of social support, poor time management, and unrealistic expectations, suggesting that mental health outcomes are not solely the result of academic demands but also of how students perceive and manage these pressures, thereby highlighting the need for early identification of stress, supportive educational environments, and effective coping strategies to mitigate the negative consequences on students' mental health.

**4. To explore the coping strategies adopted by students to manage stress and maintain well-being:** Students adopt a wide range of coping strategies to manage academic stress and maintain their overall well-being, and these strategies can be broadly understood as both adaptive and maladaptive depending on their effectiveness and long-term impact; many students rely on problem-focused coping methods such as time management, goal setting, and organized study routines, which help them reduce academic pressure by improving control over their workload, while others use emotion-focused strategies like seeking social support from friends, family, or peers, engaging in recreational activities, or practicing relaxation techniques such as mindfulness and physical exercise to regulate stress and maintain emotional balance, additionally, some students turn to institutional resources such as counseling services or mentorship programs, which can play a crucial role in supporting mental health, however, not all coping strategies are beneficial, as some students may resort to avoidance behaviors, procrastination, excessive screen time, or unhealthy habits like irregular sleep patterns, which may provide temporary relief but often worsen stress and negatively affect well-being in the long run, and the choice of coping strategy is influenced by factors such as personality, social environment, awareness of mental health, and accessibility of support systems, indicating that while students actively attempt to manage stress in diverse ways, promoting adaptive coping mechanisms through education and support is essential for enhancing resilience and sustaining long-term mental well-being.

**5. To assess the effectiveness of various coping mechanisms in reducing mental health challenges:** Assessing the effectiveness of various coping mechanisms in reducing mental health challenges among students reveals that not all strategies yield the same outcomes, and their impact largely depends on how consistently and appropriately they are applied; adaptive coping mechanisms such as structured time management, problem-solving skills, regular physical activity, mindfulness practices, and seeking social or

professional support have been found to significantly reduce levels of stress, anxiety, and emotional distress by promoting a sense of control, emotional regulation, and resilience, while peer support and open communication can buffer the negative effects of academic pressure by providing reassurance and shared understanding, in contrast, maladaptive coping strategies such as avoidance, denial, procrastination, substance use, or excessive reliance on digital distractions may offer short-term relief but tend to exacerbate mental health issues over time by increasing stress, reducing productivity, and weakening emotional stability, moreover, the effectiveness of coping mechanisms is influenced by individual differences such as personality traits, self-awareness, and access to support systems, as well as institutional factors like the availability of counseling services and a supportive academic environment, suggesting that promoting awareness and training in healthy coping strategies is essential, as it not only helps students manage immediate stressors but also equips them with long-term skills to maintain psychological well-being and prevent more severe mental health challenges.

**6. To suggest recommendations for educational institutions to improve student mental health support systems:** To improve student mental health support systems, educational institutions need to adopt a comprehensive and proactive approach that integrates academic, emotional, and social support, beginning with the establishment of accessible and well-equipped counseling services that ensure confidentiality and encourage students to seek help without stigma, alongside incorporating mental health awareness programs, workshops, and curriculum-based interventions that educate students about stress management, emotional regulation, and resilience, while institutions should also reconsider academic structures by promoting flexible deadlines, balanced workloads, and continuous assessment methods to reduce excessive pressure, moreover, training teachers and staff to recognize early signs of mental distress and respond empathetically can create a more supportive learning environment, and fostering peer support systems, mentorship programs, and student-led initiatives can further enhance a sense of belonging and community, in addition, providing spaces for recreational activities, encouraging physical well-being, and integrating technology-based mental health resources such as online counseling or self-help platforms can make support more inclusive and accessible, and importantly, institutions must regularly assess student needs through feedback mechanisms and adapt their policies accordingly, ensuring that mental health support is not treated as an add-on but as a core component of the educational experience, ultimately contributing to healthier, more engaged, and academically successful students.

**Conclusion:** With an emphasis on well-being, academic pressure, and coping mechanisms, this research investigated mental health issues among students. The results demonstrate that a large number of kids encounter stress, anxiety, and emotional challenges while they are in school. One of the main causes of mental strain was discovered to be academic pressure, particularly from examinations, hard workloads, and high expectations. How students handled these demands and the coping mechanisms they used had a direct impact on their mental health. Better emotional balance and academic engagement were shown by those who engaged in healthy coping strategies and had institutional or social assistance.

Through the examination of coping mechanisms, academic pressure sources, and student experiences with mental health, the study's goals were achieved. The survey found that stress, anxiety, and depression are among the prevalent mental health conditions that students deal with. Additionally, it looked at the primary academic pressures that students face and how various coping mechanisms affected their wellbeing. It became evident how academic pressure and mental health are related, demonstrating that if pressure is not well handled, it often results in greater emotional suffering. For students to succeed academically and grow personally, it is critical to address their mental health. Ignoring mental health requirements may cause learning, motivation, and confidence issues for pupils. Attendance, academic achievement, and long-term job results may all be impacted by poor mental health. Encouraging students' mental health contributes to the development of a supportive learning environment where students feel appreciated, encouraged, and capable of achieving their objectives. Prioritising mental health also promotes better habits and emotional fortitude, which help students even after they graduate.

**Limitations of the study:** When evaluating the results, it is important to take into account the limitations of this research. The small sample size might have an impact on our overall comprehension of students' experiences with mental health. The research concentrated on a particular subset of pupils, which could not accurately reflect students from other educational environments or cultural backgrounds. There were some limitations related to methodology. The research used self-reported data, which might be impacted by individual opinions or a reluctance to divulge private information. The study's cross-sectional design made it difficult to track changes in mental health over time. In order to have a better understanding of student mental health, future research may overcome these constraints by using bigger samples, different demographics, and long-term study approaches.

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