

Academic Stress Among 10th Class Students

Betty Koshy

Abstract

Context: Stress is a universal phenomenon that is experienced by the person in all ages and stages of life. Stress is personal that is each person react to stressors in a different way which is influenced by various factors. Academic stress is stress and anxiety that comes from schooling and education. Academic stress can be better termed as stress due to failure to fulfil academic expectations. **Aims:** The present study was done with the aim to assess the level of academic stress and to explore the possible factors leading to stress. **Settings and Design:** The study was conducted in tuition classes of 10th students. **Materials and Methods:** The sample size for the present study was 100 and samples were selected by convenient sampling technique. The research design selected for the present study Descriptive-Exploratory. **Statistical analysis used:** The investigator planned to analyze the data by using descriptive and inferential statistics. **Result:** The present study was conducted to assess the level of stress in the students of 10th standard in a selected coaching classes. The study proved that 45% had mild stress, 51% had moderate stress, 4% had severe stress and found the most common indicators of the stress level to be parent's expectations. Gender tends to be associated with stress level. **Conclusion:** Academic stress is a serious issue that needs to be addressed and dealt at primary level by implementing preventive strategies to improve the mental health of students.

Keywords: Academic stress; Affective indicators; Moderate stress.

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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).¹ Stress is a universal phenomenon and is personalized in nature that implies that each and every individual responds to stressors and stressful situations in a different way. There are many types of stress. Concept of academic

stress is known to everyone but often neglected by the teachers and parents as they play a major part in playing a causative role. Strict parenting styles, academic pressures by the schools, parental pressure are one of the most noticeable stressors that cause mental distress to students. 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.² 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.³

Anticipation of failure or fear of not able to fulfil expectations of teachers and parents is major stressors that have physiological and psychological impact on students. Excessive academic stress can lead to self-inflicted injury or deliberate attempt to harm oneself. Hence, the researcher felt the need to

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identify the source of stressors to find out better practical solutions and strategies that can help academicians and parents to help students in schools and home. This study was conducted with an intent to assess the level of stress, identify the source of academic stress and to determine the association of stress with socio-demographic variables.

Statement of the Problem

A Descriptive study to assess the level of academic stress among the students of 10th standard of a selected tuition classes, Vadodara, Gujarat.

Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the level of academic stress.
2. To find out association of level of stress with selected socio-demographic variable.
3. To find out source of academic stress.

Materials and Methods

The research design selected for the present study was Descriptive-Exploratory. The aim of the study was to assess the level of academic stress and to explore the possible causes of academic stress of 10th students. The study was conducted in Tuition class of Vadodara.

The sample size for the present study is 100 and are selected by convenient sampling technique which is a type of non-probability sampling approach, adopted for the study because of limited time frame and availability of all the students at the same time.

A self-report scale was used to identify the level of academic stress of 10th students. The tool was

selected based on the research problem, review of the related literature and with suggestions and guidance of experts. Tool was divided into 2 parts:

Part I: Consists of demographic characteristics of respondents seeking information such as age, gender, religion, % obtained in previous year, board of education, stream and hours spent in tuition classes.

Part II: There were 30 items in the Stress Assessment Scale. Each item has 2 responses yes/no.

Procedure for Data Collection

Before starting data collection formal permission taken from the concerned authorities. Investigator discussed the study with the proprietor of the coaching class. A written informed consent taken from all the participants before starting the study. Confidentiality and anonymity was ensured throughout the procedure.

Results

Findings related to baseline characteristics

As per the distribution of baseline characteristics, majority of students (58%) belong to 15-16 age group. 52% students were male and 48% students were female. 73% students spent 2-3 hours in tuition daily.

Findings related to level of stress

Stress level assessment when done indicated that 45% had mild stress, 51% had moderate stress, 4% had severe stress represented in Figure 1.

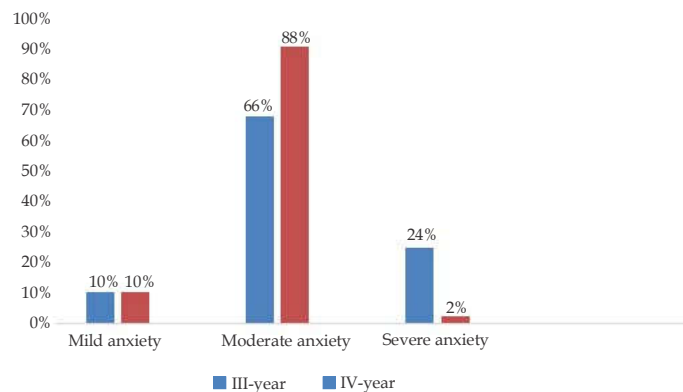


Fig. 1: Showing level of academic stress.

Findings related to source of stress

Possible source of stress in form of indicators identified are represented in Table 1.

- In cognitive indicators the most affective factor was “hesitation in asking” (Mean = 0.54)
- In affective indicator the most affective factor was “worry about parents expectation” (Mean = 0.84)
- In physical indicator the most affective

indicator was “getting nervous” (Mean = 0.66)

- In social or interpersonal indicator the most affective indicator was to “ like to stay away” (Mean = 0.49)
- While in motivational indicator the most affective indicator was “feeling sleepy” (Mean = 0.47)

Mean score of affective indicators with factor “worry about parents expectation” (mean = 0.84) is rated to be the highest cause for the academic stress of the students

Table 1: Representing Analysis and Interpretation of the Data Related to Source of Stress.

Indicators	Items	Mean	SD
1. Cognitive Indicators	1. Difficulty to concentrate	0.26	0.44
	3. forget easily	0.22	0.42
	22. day dream a lot	0.46	0.5
	24. difficulty in problem solving	0.18	0.39
	27. don't answer	0.21	0.54
	28. doubt myAbilities	0.42	0.49
	29. hesitate in asking	0.54	0.5
2. Affective Indicators	4,30 Feel inferior, Feel sad about	0.32	0.47
	7. lack confidence	0.49	0.5
	10. feel under pressure	0.53	0.5
	13. feel failure	0.21	0.41
	14. worry about parents expectation	0.84	0.37
3. Physical Indicators	2. get headache	0.25	0.43
	6. get nervous	0.66	0.48
	16. less desire to eat	0.45	0.5
	20. loss of sleep	0.6	0.49
	26. heart beats fast	0.54	0.5
4. Social/Interpersonal Indicators	12,17 nobody to help, not feel talking to	0.26	0.44
	15. get irritated with everyone	0.38	0.49
	18, 25 like to stay alone, nobody understands me	0.4	0.5
5. Motivational Factors	8. not enjoy extracurricular activities	0.37	0.49
	9,21 difficulty in completing lessons	0.32	0.47
	11. get bored easily	0.43	0.5
	19. feel to discontinue	0.25	0.44
	21. not feel like going to school	0.32	0.47
	23. feel sleepy	0.47	0.5

Findings related to association of level of stress with socio-demographic variables

Table 2 indicates association of level of stress with socio-demographic variables computed by chi-

square test.

In terms of association Gender was found to be statistically associated with level of stress ($\chi^2 = 556.8$, tab value = 0.99) at $p < 0.01$

Table 2: Representing Association of Level of Stress with Socio-demographic Variables

Demographic Variables	Mild	Moderate	Severe	Chi-square Value	Critical Value	D(F)	p-value
Age							
14-15 Years	18	22	1	1.738	13.28	4	$p > 0.01$
15-16 Years	26	29	3				

Demographic Variables	Mild	Moderate	Severe	Chi-square Value	Critical Value	D(F)	p-value
>16 Years	1	0	0				NS
Gender							
Male	27	23	2	55.68	0.99	1	$p < 0.01$
Female	18	18	2				Significant
Religion							
Hindu	37	43	3				
Muslim	3	4	0	1.56	13.28	4	$p > 0.01$
Others	5	4	1				NS
Board of Education							
State	45	51	4				
CBSE	0	0	0	0	13.28	4	$p > 0.01$
Others	0	0	0				NS
% Obtained in Previous Year							
50-60%	2	2	0				
60-70%	4	8	1	1.66	13.28	4	$p > 0.01$
>70%	39	41	3				NS
Time Spent in Tutition Classes							
1-2 hrs	8	6	0				
2-3 hrs	30	39	4	2.71	13.28	4	$p > 0.01$
>3 hrs	7	6	0				NS

NS=Non-significant

Discussion

Figure 1 indicated that 45% students had mild stress, 51% students had moderate stress and 4% students had severe stress. Similar findings can be seen in study conducted by Dr. P Suresh Prabu titled. "A study on Academic Stress Among Higher Secondary Students." The study was done 250 XI standard students studying in higher secondary students situated in Namakkal District of Tamil Nadu, India. The presents study revealed that majority of higher secondary students have moderate level of academic stress.⁴

Table 2 indicated that in affective factors "worry about parents expectation" (mean = 0.84) is rated to be the highest cause for the stress of the students.

Similar findings can be interpreted from research conducted by Deb Sibnath, Strodl Esben and Sun Jiandong investigating the academic stress and mental health of Indian high school students and the associations between various psychosocial factors and academic stress. A total of 190 students from grades 11 and 12 were surveyed in the study. About two-thirds (66%) of the students reported feeling pressure from their parents for better academic performance. In particular, children of fathers possessing a lower education level

(non-graduates) were found to be more likely to perceive pressure for better academic performance. Academic stress was positively correlated with parental pressure and psychiatric problems, while examination-related anxiety also was positively related to psychiatric problems.⁵

Level of stress was associated with socio-demographic variables and the results of the study indicated that gender was found to be statistically associated with level of stress ($\chi^2 = 556.8$, tab value = 0.99) at $p < 0.01$. Majority of students were male (52%) and female were (48%) by which it can be concluded that male students have more academic stress in compared to female students.

Similar findings can be seen in study conducted by Dr. Pratibha Sagar, Mr. Brijender Singh. The study reported that a highly significant difference between academic stress of male and female students ($t = 2.87$) at 0.01 level of significance. Male students had more academic stress ($m = 96.19$) than counterparts female students ($m = 87.75$).⁶

Conclusion

Academic stress is a serious issue which needs to be addressed. Preventive strategies should be implemented by the educational system by using

flexibility in curriculum, modern and practical approaches in teaching, changing styles of teaching catering to the needs of students, peer group learning, timely parental guidance, etc. In every school counsellors and school nurses should be appointed so that proper screening of student's mental health can be done and uneventful problems or issues can be detected at very early stage.

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