

**A STUDY ON ACADEMIC STRESS OF HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS**

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**Abstract**

*The purpose of the present study was to reduce the Academic Stress of higher secondary students and find out the differences if any in terms of Gender, Type of Family, Type of School Management, Family Income and Stream of Study. The samples for the study comprised of 250 higher secondary school students in Thiruvannamalai District. Survey method was adopted and simple random sampling technique was used to carry out the present research. The investigator has used descriptive and differential statistical methods for analyzing the collected data. It was found that there is significant difference in the Academic Stress of higher secondary students in relation to their Gender, Type of Family, Type of School Management and further there is no significant difference in the Academic Stress of higher secondary students in relation to their Family Income and Stream of Study. The findings could be useful for the students to know their level of stress and they can take up necessary and sufficient practices to reduce their Academic Stress.*

**Keywords:** Academic Stress, Sufficient Practices, Challenges.



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**Introduction**

Stress is a word derived from the Latin word *stringere*, meaning to draw tight, and was used in the seventeenth century to describe hardship and affliction. Stress is any situation that evokes negative thoughts and feelings in a person. The same situation is not evocative or

stressful for all people and all people do not experience the same negative thoughts and feelings when stressed. One model that is useful in understanding stress among students is Person - Environment Model (PEM). According to one variation of this model, stressful events can be appraised by an individual as "challenging" or "threatening" (Lazarus, 1996). When students appraise their education is seen as a threat, however, stress can elicit feelings of helplessness and a foreboding sense of loss. A critical issue concerning stress among students is its effect of learning. The postulates (Yerkes - Dodson Low, 1908; cited in Whitman, 1985) that individuals under low and high stress learn the least and laboratory tests support the notion that excessive stress is harmful to student's performance.

### **Sources of Stress**

(A) Psychological Sources: i. Adaptation, ii. Frustration, iii. Overload iv. Self - perception, v. Behavior, Anxiety, lack of control.

(B) Physiological Sources: i. Nutrition and vitamin deficiency, ii. Over-eating and under-eating, iii. Smoking, noise and techno stress.

**Types of Stress:** (a) Short term stress and (b) Long term stress. As adolescents are the vital part of country, they have a great responsibility. It is rightly said that youth can make or mar the future of the nation. Youth is the backbone of society. They are full of vigor and enthusiasm, but if they are not properly guided and educated, they can prove to be a disaster. I am "stressed out" is a phrase that has been echoed by teens down through the ages. Adolescence can be a stressful time for children, parents and adults who work with teens. Many also worry about moving from a middle or junior high school to secondary school level.

### **Operational Definitions**

#### **Stress**

Stress is a reaction to a change or a strain. The change or strain can be primarily physical, such as having an illness or an injury. It can also be primarily emotional, such as being worries, upset, anxious or depressed. Everyone has lots of small stress every day. Stress affects most people in some way.

#### **Academic stress**

Academic Stress is the anxiety and stress that comes from schooling and education. There is often a lot of pressure that comes along with pursuing a degree and one's education. There is

studying, homework, tests, labs, reading and quizzes. There is the stress of doing all of their work, balancing their time and finding time for their extracurricular activities. Academic stress is especially hard on college students who are often living away from home for the first time.

### **Review on Academic Stress**

Endler et. al, 1994, Chona, (1995) stated that, Stress makes a significant contribution to the prediction of subsequent performances and acts as a negative predictor of academic performance in school children. We react to our environment with different degrees of intensity; in 20th century with anxiety and in the present century with stress. In an academic situation, such as school, a student reacts in the form of mental distress to an anticipated frustration associated with failure in annual examination or even to the awareness of the possibility of such failure (Gupta & Khan, 1987). Academic Stress among students have long been researched on, and researchers have identified stressors as too many assignments, competitions with other students, failures and poor relationships with other students or lecturers (Fair brother & Warn, 2003). Academic stressors include the student's perception of the extensive knowledge base required and the perception of an inadequate time to develop it (Carveth et. al, 1996). Assessment is very important aspect of understanding and managing stress and its complications. Being a subjective experience, stress can be better assessed through self-report of the concerned individual. In his study an effort has been made to develop a self-administered scale for assessing academic stress and to standardize it on high school student population. Lazarus & Folkman, (1984), Stress is a consequence of a person's appraisal process i.e., whether personal resources are sufficient to meet the demands of the environment. So it is determined by Person - Environment Fit.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The present study is entitled as "A Study on Academic Stress among higher secondary School Students".

### **Objectives of the study**

To find out whether any significant difference exists in the Academic Stress among higher secondary school students with respect to their:

- (i) Gender, (ii) Stream of Study, (iii) Type of School Management, (iv) Type of Family and (v) Family Income.

**Hypotheses:** There is no significant difference in the Academic Stress with respect to the following background variables: i) Gender, (ii) Stream of Study, (iii) Type of School Management, (iv) Type of Family and (v) Family Income.

### **Method**

Survey method is adopted for this study.

### **Tools used in the study**

In the present study, the investigator has used the standardized tool namely 'Academic Stress' developed by the A.O. Busari (2011). It has five-point Likert scale with 40 statements.

### **Sample of the Study**

About 250 samples were collected from the selected population. Higher secondary students from different Government and Private Schools in and around Thiruvannamalai District were taken into consideration as the sample for the present study. Random Sampling technique was adopted to collect the data for the present study.

### **Statistical Techniques Used**

In the present study, following statistical techniques were used:

1. Descriptive Analysis (Mean, Standard Deviation)
2. Differential Analysis (t-values, F-ratio)

### **Analysis and Interpretation of the Data**

The data is analyzed using SPSS package. The collected data were subjected to statistical analysis. The mean and standard deviation for the variable academic stress scores were computed for the entire sample.

### **Testing of Hypotheses**

Hypothesis – 1: There is no significant difference in the Academic Stress of the higher secondary school students with regard to their Gender.

**TABLE: 1: Showing the Mean, S.D and 't' - Value of higher secondary school students Academic Stress with regard to Gender**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>'t' - value</b>	<b>Level of Significance</b>
Male	118	152.85	42.04	4.0333	Significant

Female                      132                      132.41                      38.09

It is inferred from the above table that there is significant difference in the Academic Stress of the higher secondary school students with regard to their Gender.

Hypothesis – 2: There is no significant difference in the Academic Stress of the higher secondary school students with regard to their Stream of Study.

**TABLE: 2: Showing the Mean, S.D and 't' - Value of higher secondary school students Academic Stress with regard to their Stream of Study**

Stream of Study	N	Mean	SD	't' value	Level of Significance
Arts group	129	141.18	49.27	0.4793	Not Significant
Science group	121	144.15	48.65		

It is inferred from the above table that there is no significant difference in the Academic Stress of the higher secondary school students with regard to their Stream of Study.

Hypothesis – 3: There is no significant difference in the Academic Stress of the higher secondary school students with regard to their Type of family.

**TABLE: 3: Showing the Mean, S.D and 't' - Value of higher secondary school students Academic Stress with regard to their Type of Family**

Type of Family	N	Mean	SD	't' value	Level of Significance
Nuclear family	163	137.25	52.66	2.3969	Significant
Joint family	87	152.67	39.27		

It is inferred from the above table that there is significant difference in the academic stress of the higher secondary school students with regard to their Type of family.

Hypothesis – 4: There is no significant difference in the Academic Stress of the higher secondary school students with regard to their Type of School.

**TABLE: 4: Showing the Mean, S.D and 't' Value of higher secondary school students Academic Stress with regard to their Type of School Management**

Type of School Management	N	Mean	SD	't' value	Level of Significance
Govt. School	127	151.6	42.04	2.1294	Significant
Private School	123	162.8	41.09		

It is inferred from the above table that there is significant difference in the Academic Stress of the higher secondary school students with regard to their Type of School.

Hypothesis – 1: There is no significant difference in the Academic Stress of the higher secondary school students with regard to their Family Income.

**TABLE: 5: Showing the group difference of higher secondary school student's Academic Stress with regard to their Family Income**

Sources of Variance	Sum of squares	df	Mean of squares	'F' Ratio	Level of Significance
Between Groups	1242.5742	2	621.2871	0.2583	Not Significant
Within Groups	594029.5875	247	2404.9781		
Total	595272.1617	249			

It is inferred from the above table that there is no significant difference in the Academic Stress of the higher secondary school students with regard to their Family Income.

**Major Findings**

1. There is significant difference in the Academic Stress of the higher secondary school students with regard to their Gender.
2. There is no significant difference in the Academic Stress of the higher secondary school students with regard to their Stream of Study.

3. There is significant difference in the Academic Stress of the higher secondary school students with regard to their Type of Family.
4. There is significant difference in the Academic Stress of the higher secondary school students with regard to their Type of School Management.
5. There is no significant difference in the Academic Stress of the higher secondary school students with regard to their Family Income.

#### **Suggestion for Further Research**

- The present study has focused only on the higher secondary students. Similar studies would be conducted with high school students as well as college students.
- The method of teaching plays an important role in Academic Stress, as the teaching method would reduce Academic Stress. The family and School Environment would also be studied.

#### **Educational Implications**

Academic Stress of students is found to be a considerable factor of Academic Achievement. The overall Academic Stress consists of learning difficulties, attitude towards school, time management, exam stress, peer group relation. The school should arrange the necessary environmental conditions to reduce the student's Academic Stress. The teachers should concentrate in reducing the Academic Stress by grabbing the individual attention of the students while handling the respective classes. The education given in the classroom should reflect the application of life skills which enables them to face this highly competitive world. It should not be conducted only in the view point of examinations.

#### **Conclusion**

Boys have less Academic Stress than girls. The students belonging to Private Schools have high Academic Stress than the Government Schools. Stress can be positive or negative. Stress can be positive when the situation offers an opportunity for a person who faces social, physical, organizational and emotional problems. This is a great challenge for present generation learners in education. Stress is positive when the person feels stimulated and able to manage the situation. This positive response prepares the body for action and activates the higher thinking centers of the brain. Academic Stress has a close association in the attainment Academic

Achievement. Therefore, every attempt should be made to create a stress free environment at the institutional level among the students.

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