

A STUDY ON ACADEMIC STRESS OF SECONDARY LEVEL STUDENTS OF MALDA DISTRICT IN RELATION TO THEIR LOCALITY

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Abstract

Modern education strives to bring about all-round development of students to make them fit for the emerging society. Different institutions have been established to help in the process. But there are some hurdles in the way of achieving such goal. The main factors are --- extremely high expectations of some students, and parents' pressurization for achieving their own unfulfilled desires through their children. As a result, the incident like committing suicide by few takes place. Keeping this fact in view the researcher decides to study the urban and rural students' perceptions of academic stress due to their parents and their academic achievement. Two null hypotheses had been formulated to achieve the objectives. A self-constructed tool was used for the purpose. No significant difference was found between rural and urban students strata-wise, in respect of their academic stress.

Key Words: Academic Stress, Secondary, Students, Rural, Urban, Parents, Education.



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Introduction

The main aim of modern education is to bring about all-round development of school children which will help them enjoy their childhood, and at the same time, ensure that they become worthy citizens in their adulthood. Educational institutions are there to achieve the goal. But sometimes it is seen that low academic achievement becomes a cause of depression for some students. In some cases, it leads them towards committing suicide. Self-expectation of some students is so high that it becomes the cause of their stress. But the crucial factor is the parents' expectation. They want to fulfil their own unfulfilled desires through their children. Ignoring the capability and aptitudes of their children, they pressurize them to do well in the field of their choice. Thus, they push their children in a competition with the children of their friends, relatives and neighbours. As a result, bonding of love between parents and children becomes spoiled. Not only that, at times, it spoils their career and in rare cases, incites them to commit suicide "Academic stress is a mental distress with respect to some anticipated frustration associated with academic failure or even an awareness of the

possibility of such failure” (Gupta & Khan, 1987). “In the context of school, academic stress means a pervasive sense of urgency to learn all the things which are related to or prescribed by the school” (Shan, 1988). “Academic stress is the product of a combination of academic related demands that exceed the adaptive resources available to an individual” (Wilks, 2008). Sources of academic stress are -- parents or home, teacher, society, peer, own self, school, extra-curricular activities, time management, etc. These sources of academic achievement influence students’ academic achievement.

Related Studies

Kadapatti & Vijaylaxmi, (2012) took up a descriptive study to identify stressors that lead to academic stress among pre-university students. The findings of the study were in line with the studies reported by Cranelech et al (1984). They found that sources of stress were decidedly high self-expectation. Rao’s (1954) reports revealed that feeling of success and failure was causative factors of stress. High aspiration, poor study habits, study problems, low socio-economic conditions are the stressors/factors that influence academic stress. So the students should have the aspiration/expectation about their study, not beyond their capacities and abilities; and they need proper counselling while selecting their courses at intermediate level. Finally, in order to help the students reach their goal in life, an encouraging atmosphere is essential.

Deb, et al. (2012) studied academic-related stress among private secondary school students in India. The study examined the commonness 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 per cent male) from five private secondary schools in Kolkata who were studying in grades 10 and 12. The sample was selected through a multi-stage sampling technique, and data were collected through a study-specific questionnaire. Findings revealed that 35 and 37 per cent reported high or very high levels of academic stress and exam anxiety, respectively. High levels of academic stress was found among the sample group, and students having 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.

Bataineh (2013) studied 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. Data were collected from a sample of 232 subjects of KSU through a questionnaire applying random sampling technique. Data obtained were analysed using descriptive statistics, correlation, and analysis of variance (ANOVA). The results showed that academic overloads, course awkward, inadequate time to study, workload every semester, exams awkward, low motivation, and high family expectations drove moderate stress among students. It was also found that fear of failure was the major source of stress among undergraduate students. Moreover, positive correlation was found 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.

Rationale of the study

The cases of academic stress are increasing day by day as per the reports of different newspapers and electronic channels. As a result, students are suffering from many problems which are frustration, anxiety, depression, etc. We know that when the academic stress is increased, academic achievement is decreased. Not only that, there may be the upsurge of different academic stress related complexities among the students. Moreover, the reviews on academic stress also show the serious concern about stress. To see the matter of academic stress among the secondary level students of a backward district like Malda is very much essential to avoid any kind of complexity among them in future life, for the welfare of the people of the district.

Objectives of the Study

The following were the objectives of the present study-----

1. To know the difference between the rural students and the urban students at secondary level in respect of their academic stress.
2. To know the difference between the rural boy-students and the urban boy-students at secondary level in respect of their academic stress.
3. To know the difference between the rural girl-students and the urban girl-students at secondary level in respect of their academic stress.

Assumptions of the Study

- (1) The measurement of academic stress of secondary level of student is possible.
- (3) A tool to measure the Academic stress may be constructed.
- (5) The students may differ strata-wise in academic stress.

Null Hypotheses of the Study

The following null hypotheses were formulated for achieving the objectives of the study.....

⁰H₁: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of the rural students and the urban students in respect of their test of academic stress.

⁰H₂: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of the rural boy-students and the urban boy-students in respect of their test of academic stress.

⁰H₃: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of the rural girl-students and the urban girl-students in respect of their test of academic stress.

Population and sample:

All the secondary level students of Malda district were the population of the study. The researcher selected 8 secondary level schools of Malda district from where data were collected from 300 secondary level students.

Variables:

The present study consisted of the following variables-----

- Dependent Variable:
 - Academic Stress.
- Demographic Variable
 - Locality—Rural & Urban

Method of the study:

The investigator followed the descriptive method of research for the present study.

Tool of the study

The researcher constructed an academic stress scale. It is a 5-point scale. In the scale, there are 52 statements in two forms i.e. positive and negative. It was standardized in consultation with an expert. The method of pilot test was split-half. The co-efficient of reliability was determined by this method and the result of co-efficient correlation was $r=0.78$. The result is high correlation, and so, the result was accepted. Expertise opinion was adopted for the validity of the test.

Data collection procedure

At first, the investigator took permission from the headmaster for the data collection. Then the Academic Stress Scale was applied on some secondary level rural and urban school

students to gather the required data. The response sheets were scored as per the prepared scoring key prepared beforehand.

Analysis and Interpretation

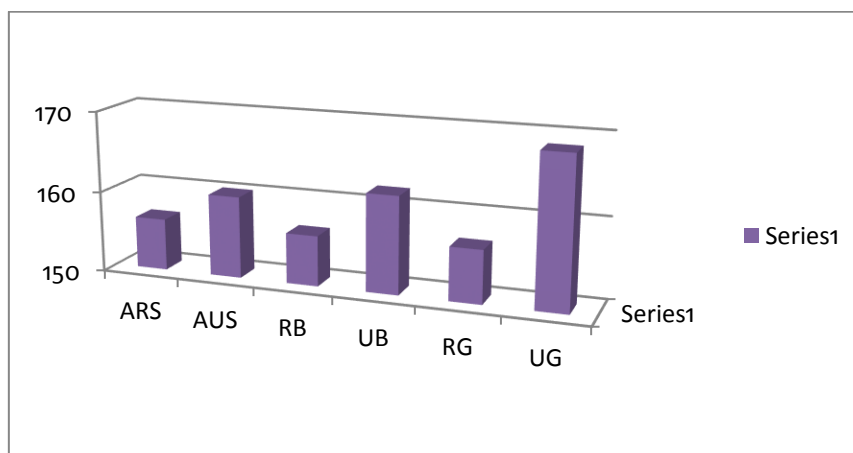
For measuring academic stress and academic achievement the researchers applied descriptive statistics (mean, median, mode, S.D) and inferential statistics (t-test).

(A) Descriptive Statistics

Table-1: M, Mdn, Md & SD of Rural & Urban Students’ Academic Stress Score

Sample Group	N	Mean	Median	Mode	SD
All Rural Students	150	156.41	157.00	151.00	14.92
All Urban Students	150	160.12	161.00	174.00	16.80
Rural Boys	75	156.2267	159.00	151.00	15.75451
Urban Boys	75	162.04	162.00	161.00	14.27192
Rural Girls	75	156.5867	154.00	154.00	14.13649
Urban Girls	75	168.60	160.00	174.00	18.9066

Figure-1 : Column gram Representing Mean Scores of the Variable



(B) Testing of the hypotheses

⁰H₁: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of the rural students and the urban students in respect of their test of academic stress.

Table No. 2: Testing of Hypothesis No.1

Sample Group	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Levels of Significance		Interpretation
						0.05	0.01	
Rural Students	150	156.41	14.918	0.053	298	0.05	0.01	Not Significant
Urban Students	150	160.12	16.805			1.97	2.59	

Here the computed value of 't' is 0.053 with 298 degrees of freedom at 5% level of significance where the table value is 1.97 and at 1% level of significance where the table value is 2.59. Here the computed value of 't' is smaller than the table value. It is not significant in both levels. So the null hypothesis is not rejected.

⁰H₂: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of the rural boy students and the urban boy students in respect of their test of academic stress.

Table No. 3: Testing of Hypothesis No.2

Sample Group	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Levels of Significance		Interpretation
						0.05	0.01	
Rural Students	75	156.227	15.755	0.0234	148	0.05	0.01	Not Significant
Urban Students	75	162.04	14.272			1.98	2.61	

Here the computed value of 't' is 0.0234 with 148 degrees of freedom at 5% level of significance where the table value is 1.98 and at 1% level of significance where the table value is 2.61. Here the computed value of 't' is smaller than table value. It is not significant in both levels. So the null hypothesis is not rejected.

⁰H₃: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of the rural girl students and the urban girl students in respect of their test of academic stress.

Table No. 4: Testing of Hypothesis No.3

Sample Group	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Levels of Significance		Interpretation
						0.05	0.01	
Rural Girls	75	156.587	14.136	0.575	148	0.05	0.01	Not Significant
Urban Girls	75	168.600	18.907			1.98	2.61	

Here the computed value of the t is 0.0575 with 148 degrees of freedom at 5% level of significance where the table value is 1.98 and 1% level of significance where the table value is 2.61. Here the computed value of 't' is smaller than table value. It is not significant in both levels. So the null hypothesis is not rejected.

Main findings of the study

After analysing the data statistically, the researcher has found the following results in present study.....

- There exists no significant difference between the mean scores of the rural students and the urban students in their test of academic stress.

- There exists no significant difference between the mean scores of the rural boy-students and the urban boy-students in their test of academic stress.

- There exists no significant difference between the mean scores of the rural girl-students and the urban girl-students in their test of academic stress.

Educational implication

The findings of this study will help parents, teachers, schools, and society understand that academic stress is frequent among students in secondary schools. The study's goal is to raise parental awareness of the issue of academic stress and quality care. The study sheds light on the topic of corporal punishment in the family, which requires both policy-makers and society's attention. This study's main takeaway for parents and teachers is that academic stress is more likely caused by perceived pressure and tension than by objective burdens like study-hours.

Conclusion

In India, academic stress is a severe and widespread issue. It has the potential to cause mental health issues. Aside from time management, parental and social supports, as well as extracurricular activities, are all important in assisting students in avoiding and dealing with academic stress. The study objectively shows that though there is no significant difference between the rural and the urban students strata-wise, the mean scores of both establish that the urban students are under more pressure than their rural counterparts. So, this is a clear indication of the root cause of academic failure of some secondary level students of the

district. If the matter is taken into consideration, the problems related to the academic stress and academic achievement may be checked.

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