MENTAL STRESS AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY LEVEL STUDENTS: A GENDER-WISE CORRELATION STUDY

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Abstract

In modern life, mental stress has been inevitable. It certainly influences the academic life of students. A little stress is sometimes better, but more stress gives worse results. In the present study the investigator sought to study the correlation between the mental stress and academic performance of secondary level students gender-wise and interpret the same. The sample size was 299 students of both boy and girl groups. A self-constructed tool was used for the purpose, and academic performance data were collected from the office records. The study followed the quantitative method of data analysis.

Key Words: *Mental stress, classroom performance, correlation, gender, secondary level students.*

Introduction

Stress has been an indispensable part of our daily life. Stress is something that stimulates us to think and to react. Stress is associated with impairment of health and negative emotion experiences which is detrimental to quality of life and sense of well-being. Sometimes stress is harmful to humans and sometimes beneficial. When students appraise their education as a challenge, stress can bring them a sense of competence and an increased capacity to learn. It influences the academic performance of students. Academic performance is a successful accomplishment or performance in a class or courses which is typically summarized in various types as grades marks, score or descriptive commentary. Stress may be felt throughout the entire human body. As a result, stress affects the learning of students.

Related Studies

Gbettor et al. (2005) had examined a sample of business students in Ho- Polytechnic, Ghana. The major objective of this study was to assess stress and its effects on academic performance. The research method of descriptive research and the multistage sampling technique were followed. Through cluster sampling, a total of 275 business students were selected to participate. As per the findings of the study, there was no significant relationship between stress and academic performance.

Elias et al. (2011) had conducted a study on a sample of undergraduate students. The study wanted to investigate the stress and academic achievement of undergraduate students in a local university from different disciplines. Through cluster sampling, a total of 376 undergraduate students were selected to participate in this research. The research method was descriptive research with the random sampling technique. The undergraduate students experienced moderate levels of stress as per the findings of this study. Among the students the medical students showed the highest stress level. Moreover, findings showed that the first year students had low stress level. So it can be said that there was a significant but weak negative relationship between undergraduate students' stress level and their academic achievement.

Kumari and Harris (2012) had conducted a study on a sample of six senior secondary schools. The stressful life of students was studied and it was found that teaching would have a deleterious effect on the lives of students. The main objectives of this study were to investigate the relationship between stress and academic achievement of secondary level students and to differentiate between stress and academic achievement of girls and boys at secondary level. The research method of descriptive research and stratified random sampling technique were followed. A sample of 120 students was selected randomly from six senior secondary schools. As a result of the research, it turns out that higher and medium stressful students are better off with less stressed students.

Siraj (2014) had conducted a study of a sample of undergraduate Forth year medical students at university Kebangsaan – Malaysia. The main objective of this study was to explore the stress and stressors and also to determine the association between stress levels and the academic performances. The research method was descriptive research and the sampling was random sampling technique. A sample of 179 students was selected randomly from UKM undergraduate medical centre. The findings of this study showed insignificant relationship between stress and academic performance both in terms of gender and residency.

Veena and Shastri (2016) had conducted a study on a sample of pure science and applied science undergraduate students from Bangalore city. This was found from the study that it was the stressful life of the students that influences their academic performance in such a situation. The objective of this study was to identify the sources of stress among students of high and low academic performance. The research method was descriptive research. A sample of 656 students was selected randomly from undergraduate colleges. The findings of the study showed that majority of the students perceived education as more stressful. Both

pure and applied science course students and the high and low academic performing students differed significantly on sources of stress.

Essel and Owusu (2017) had examined the impacts of stress on students' academic performance and stress management among students of Seinajoki Aniversity of applied Sciences. The main objective of this study was to find out the reason for the stress of the students on academic success and its management at Seinajoki University of applied sciences. The population was both international and Pinnish students in Seinajoki University of Applied Sciences and the research method was of both survey & experimental. The findings showed that stress affected the overall school activities of students as well as their social well-being.

Significance of the Study

This study may benefit students and society as a whole because it includes people from many walks of life. Many students perform poorly in schools owing to a variety of difficulties, such as academic stress, mental health issues, physical health issues, time management issues, and parents' high expectations. These students may experience stress, anxiety, despair, low self-efficacy, and poor academic achievement as a result of this. It is very critical to identify these children and provide the appropriate solution to help them cope with their stress. Hence, it can be concluded that the current study will assist students in focusing on their current condition in order to have a better experience in class and to help students progress positively in all aspects of life.

Objectives of the Study

The following two objectives were based for the present study--------

    i)   To determine the correlation between mental stress and academic performance of secondary level students of both sexes.

    ii)   To check whether the correlation between the obtained scores in the variables is significant or not

Hypotheses of the Study

In order to fulfill the above objectives the following hypotheses were formulated--------

H0₁: There is no significant correlation between the scores obtained in the test of mental stress and academic performance of all the boy students of secondary level.

H0₂: There is no significant correlation between the scores obtained in the test of mental stress and academic performance of all the girl students of secondary level.

Population & Sample of the Study

The secondary level students of Malda district were the population, and the selected students of 8 schools formed the sample. A sample of 299 students was selected from two different localities.

Methodology of the Study

For conducting the present study, the investigator followed the descriptive survey method. And simple random sampling technique was adopted for data collection.

Tool of the Study

For measuring stress the investigator developed a scale consisting of 50 statements under nine dimensions. In preparation of the tool the researcher used different opinions of the experts and took help from the books for the tool construction.

Preparation of Scoring Key

The researcher used three point stress scale. The scoring system for positive items was 3-2-1; and for negative items the scoring system was 1 -2-3

Descriptive Statistics of the Data

Table No.1

Category	N	Variables	Mean	Median	Mode	S.D
All Boy Students	149	Mental Stress	104.29	102	101	9.82
		Academic Performance	79.40	80	82	7.70
All Girl Students	150	Mental Stress	99.85	101	103	8.33
		Academic Performance	79.56	80	75	7.83

The descriptive statistics show that the highest Mean score in mental stress belongs to the boys, while the lowest in the same belongs to the girls. On the other hand, in academic performance, the girls score a little more. In case of Median in the first variable, of both boys and girls, it is very nearer, and in the second variable, it is exactly same. Mode in both the variables shows some differences. The values of SD show some deviation of the individual score of the distribution.

Figure-1
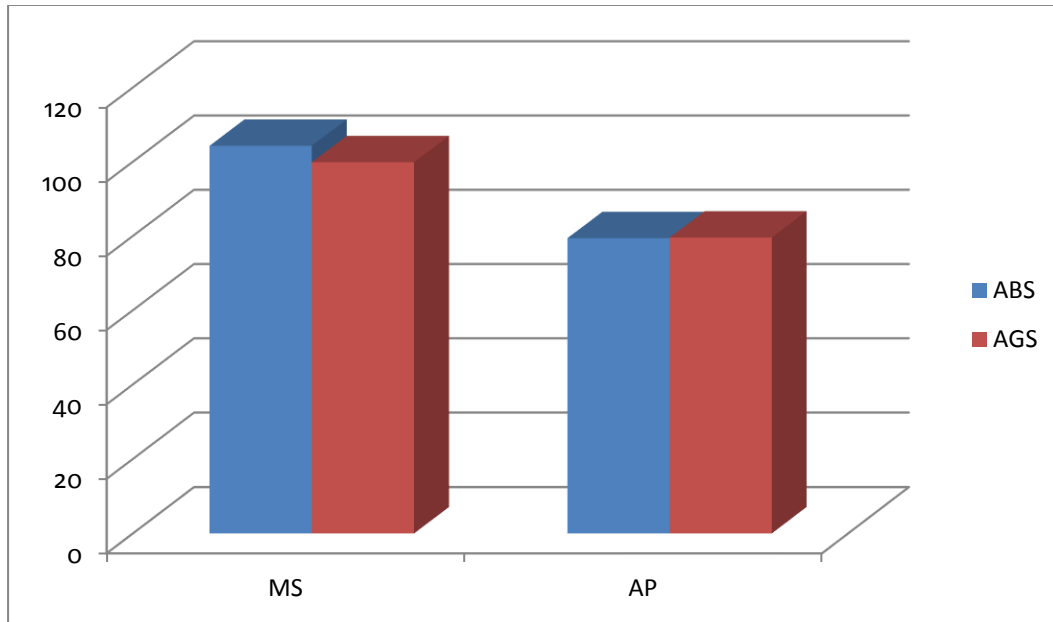
Comparison of Mean Scores of Mental Stress and Academic Performance

Testing of Null Hypotheses

H0₁: There is no significant correlation between the scores obtained in the test of mental stress and academic performance of all the boy students of secondary level.

Table No.2

Sample Group	N	Variables	df	r	Levels of Significance		Interpretation
All Boy Students	149	Mental Stress	147	0.309	0.05	0.01	Significant
		Academic Performance			0.159	0.208	

Here the computed value of 'r' is 0.309.and the df is 147. The table value at 0.05 is 0.159 and at 0.01 level is 0.208. The computed value is significant in both levels. So the null hypothesis is rejected.

H0₂: There is no significant correlation between the scores obtained in the test of mental stress and academic performance of all the girl students of secondary level.

Table No.3

Sample Group	N	Variables	df	r	Levels of Significance		Interpretation
All Girl Students	150	Mental Stress	148	0.063	0.05	0.01	Not Significant
		Academic Performance			0.159	0.208	

Here the computed value of 'r' is 0.063.and the df is 148. The table value at 0.05 is 0.159 and at 0.01 level is 0.208. The computed value is not significant in both levels. So the null hypothesis is not rejected.

Findings of the Study

After the testing of hypotheses the following were the findings of the study-----

- There is significant correlation between mental stress and academic performance of all the boy students of secondary level.

- There is no significant correlation between mental stress and academic performance of all the girl students of secondary level.

Conclusion

The most common stressors found in this study were of a general nature. A student can be stressed for a variety of reasons, including academic reasons, physical/mental health issues, environmental situational issues, time management issues, and a lack of close family members or friends, among others. The inquiry was conducted over a short period of time. Only government-aided schools were used in the research. However, the findings show the positive correlation between mental stress and academic performance of the boy students; but in case of the girls, the correlation between mental stress and academic performance is not significant.

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