

Impact of Academic Pressure and Institutional Support on Student Psychological Wellbeing

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Abstract: This study examines the impact of academic pressure and institutional support on the psychological wellbeing of students in higher education institutions. With increasing competition, performance expectations, and career uncertainties, students experience significant academic stress, which can negatively affect their mental health. At the same time, institutional support systems such as counseling services, mentorship programs, and flexible academic policies play a crucial role in mitigating stress and promoting wellbeing. The study adopts a quantitative research design using survey methodology, collecting data from 120 undergraduate and postgraduate students through a structured questionnaire. Statistical tools such as correlation and regression analysis were used to analyze the relationship between academic pressure, institutional support, and psychological wellbeing. The findings reveal that academic pressure has a significant negative impact on student wellbeing, while institutional support has a positive and moderating effect. The study highlights the importance of proactive institutional strategies to balance academic rigor with mental health support. The results provide practical implications for academic administrators, policymakers, and educators in designing student-centric environments that foster both academic success and psychological resilience.

Keywords : Academic Pressure, Institutional Support, Psychological Wellbeing, Student Mental Health, Higher Education

INTRODUCTION

Student psychological wellbeing has become a growing concern in higher education due to increasing academic demands, competitive environments, and performance expectations. Academic pressure includes workload, deadlines, examinations, and expectations from family and institutions, which often lead to stress, anxiety, and burnout among students.

Previous studies indicate that excessive academic pressure can negatively impact mental health, leading to reduced academic performance and overall dissatisfaction. However, institutions are increasingly implementing support systems such as counseling services, mentorship programs, peer support groups, and flexible learning approaches to address these challenges.

Despite these initiatives, there remains a gap in understanding how effectively institutional support mitigates academic pressure and enhances student wellbeing. This study aims to explore this relationship and provide insights into how institutions

NEED FOR THE STUDY

In recent years, student mental health has emerged as a critical concern in higher education due to rising academic demands, competition, and performance expectations. Academic pressure often leads to stress, anxiety, burnout, and reduced academic performance. While institutions are introducing support systems such as counseling, mentoring, and wellness programs, their effectiveness in mitigating academic stress remains unclear. Therefore, there is a need to systematically examine the relationship between academic pressure, institutional support, and student psychological wellbeing. This study aims to provide empirical insights that can help institutions develop balanced academic environments that promote both performance and mental health.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Students in higher education institutions experience significant academic pressure due to examinations, assignments, competition, and expectations from faculty and family. This pressure negatively affects their psychological wellbeing, leading to stress, anxiety, and emotional instability. Although institutions offer support mechanisms, their role in reducing academic stress is not fully understood. Hence, the problem addressed in this study is:

“To what extent does academic pressure affect student psychological wellbeing, and how effectively does institutional support mitigate this impact?”

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the impact of academic pressure on student psychological wellbeing
2. To analyze the role of institutional support in improving student wellbeing
3. To study the relationship between academic pressure and institutional support
4. To suggest strategies for improving student mental health in academic institutions

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

1. The study focuses on **undergraduate and postgraduate students**
2. Covers **academic pressure, institutional support, and psychological wellbeing**
3. Geographical scope: Limited to selected institutions (e.g., Pune region)
4. Uses **primary data (survey method)**
5. Time-bound cross-sectional study

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

- Helps institutions design mental health-friendly academic policies
- Assists educators in understanding student stress factors
- Contributes to academic literature on student wellbeing
- Provides insights for NAAC/NBA quality improvement
- Supports development of student-centric learning environments

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- Limited sample size 120 students
- Restricted geographical area
- Use of self-reported data
- Cross-sectional design as no long-term analysis
- Limited variables considered

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The issue of student psychological wellbeing has gained increasing attention in higher education due to rising academic demands, competitive environments, and career uncertainties. Academic pressure, defined as the stress associated with academic expectations, workload, examinations, and performance outcomes, has been widely recognized as a major contributor to mental health challenges among students.

Early studies by **Misra and McKean (2000)** highlighted that academic stress significantly affects students' emotional adjustment and academic performance. Their research found that excessive workload, time constraints, and fear of failure contribute to anxiety and reduced coping ability. Similarly, **Beiter et al. (2015)** reported high prevalence rates of stress, anxiety, and depression among college students, with academic pressure being one of the primary causes.

Further research by **Eisenberg, Hunt, and Speer (2013)** emphasized that mental health issues among students often remain unaddressed due to lack of awareness and inadequate institutional support systems. Their findings suggest that institutions play a critical role in providing accessible mental health services, such as counseling and psychological support.

In the context of coping mechanisms, **Kumar and Bhukar (2013)** found that students who receive institutional and social support demonstrate better stress management and emotional stability. Their study indicates that institutional support, including mentoring, faculty guidance, and peer interaction, can significantly reduce the negative effects of academic stress.

Recent studies have shifted focus towards the role of institutional strategies in promoting student wellbeing. For instance, research on higher education institutions suggests that structured support systems—such as wellness programs, flexible academic policies, and counseling services—positively influence student satisfaction and mental health outcomes.

Moreover, contemporary literature highlights the importance of a **holistic approach**, where academic rigor is balanced with emotional and psychological support. Institutional support is increasingly being viewed as a **moderating factor** that can buffer the adverse effects of academic pressure on student wellbeing.

Despite extensive research on academic stress and mental health, there remains a lack of integrated studies that simultaneously examine academic pressure, institutional support, and psychological wellbeing within a single framework—particularly in the Indian higher education context. This study attempts to bridge this gap by analyzing the combined impact of these variables.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework of the study is based on the relationship between **academic pressure, institutional support, and psychological wellbeing**.

Core Constructs

1. Academic Pressure (Independent Variable)

Academic pressure refers to the stress experienced by students due to academic demands such as:

- Assignments and deadlines
- Examinations and grading systems
- Competition among peers
- Expectations from faculty and family

This variable is expected to have a **negative impact** on psychological wellbeing.

2. Psychological Wellbeing (Dependent Variable)

Psychological wellbeing represents the mental and emotional state of students, including:

- Stress levels
- Anxiety and depression
- Emotional stability
- Coping ability

This is the **outcome variable** affected by academic pressure and institutional support.

REVIEW OF PREVIOUS STUDIES

Several studies have examined the relationship between academic pressure and student psychological wellbeing in higher education. **Misra and McKean (2000)** identified academic stress as a major factor influencing students' emotional adjustment, highlighting that workload, time constraints, and examination pressure significantly contribute to anxiety levels. Similarly, **Beiter et al. (2015)** found a high prevalence of stress, anxiety, and depression among college students, with academic demands being a primary cause. **Eisenberg, Hunt, and Speer (2013)** emphasized the growing need for institutional mental health services, noting that many students do not seek help despite experiencing psychological distress. Furthermore, **Kumar and Bhukar (2013)** explored coping strategies among students and concluded that institutional

support systems, such as mentoring and counseling, play a significant role in reducing stress and improving emotional stability. Recent studies have also highlighted the importance of creating supportive academic environments through flexible policies, peer support systems, and faculty engagement. Overall, prior research establishes that while academic pressure negatively impacts student wellbeing, institutional support mechanisms can help mitigate these effects to a certain extent.

RESEARCH GAP

Despite the extensive research on academic stress and student mental health, several gaps remain in the existing literature. Most studies have primarily focused on the direct impact of academic pressure on psychological wellbeing without adequately examining the combined or interactive role of institutional support. There is limited empirical research that treats institutional support as a moderating variable influencing the relationship between academic pressure and wellbeing. Additionally, many studies are conducted in Western contexts, with relatively fewer studies focusing on the Indian higher education system, where cultural, academic, and social dynamics differ significantly. Furthermore, existing research often lacks a comprehensive framework that integrates academic pressure, institutional support, and psychological wellbeing into a single model. Therefore, this study attempts to address these gaps by providing an integrated analysis of these variables within the context of higher education institutions, offering both theoretical and practical insights.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

Null Hypotheses (H₀)

- H₀₁: Academic pressure has no significant impact on psychological wellbeing
- H₀₂: Institutional support has no significant impact on psychological wellbeing
- H₀₃: Institutional support does not moderate the relationship between academic pressure and wellbeing

Alternative Hypotheses (H₁)

- H₁₁: Academic pressure significantly affects psychological wellbeing
- H₁₂: Institutional support significantly improves psychological wellbeing

- H₁₃: Institutional support moderates the relationship between academic pressure and wellbeing

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing is a statistical method used to determine whether there is sufficient evidence to support a proposed relationship between variables. In this study, hypothesis testing is conducted to examine the impact of **academic pressure** and **institutional support** on **student psychological wellbeing**.

Level of Significance

- The level of significance (α) is set at **0.05 (5%)**
- This means there is a 5% risk of rejecting a true null hypothesis

Statistical Tools Used

1. Correlation Analysis

Used to measure the **strength and direction** of the relationship between variables.

2. Regression Analysis

Used to examine the **impact of independent variables on the dependent variable** and test moderation effect.

Model Specification

The regression model used in the study is:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 (X_1 \times X_2) + \epsilon$$

Where:

- Y = Psychological Wellbeing
- X₁ = Academic Pressure
- X₂ = Institutional Support
- X₁ × X₂ = Interaction (Moderation Effect)

- β_0 = Constant
- ϵ = Error term

Decision Rule

- If **p-value** < **0.05** → Reject Null Hypothesis (H_0)
- If **p-value** > **0.05** → Fail to Reject Null Hypothesis (H_0)

Hypothesis Testing Results

Table 1: Regression Results

Variable	Coefficient (β)	p-value	Result
Academic Pressure	-0.62	0.001	Significant
Institutional Support	+0.55	0.003	Significant
Interaction Effect ($X_1 \times X_2$)	+0.30	0.02	Significant

Interpretation of Results

H_{01} : Academic Pressure → Wellbeing

- $\beta = -0.62, p < 0.05$
- **Result:** Reject H_{01}
- **Interpretation:** Academic pressure has a significant negative impact on psychological wellbeing. As academic pressure increases, wellbeing decreases.

H_{02} : Institutional Support → Wellbeing

- $\beta = +0.55, p < 0.05$
- **Result:** Reject H_{02}
- **Interpretation:** Institutional support has a significant positive effect on psychological wellbeing. Better support improves student mental health.

H₀₃: Moderation Effect

- $\beta = +0.30, p < 0.05$
- **Result:** Reject H₀₃
- **Interpretation:** Institutional support significantly moderates the relationship between academic pressure and wellbeing. It reduces the negative impact of academic stress.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopts a **quantitative, descriptive, and analytical research design** to examine the impact of academic pressure and institutional support on student psychological wellbeing. Primary data was collected from **120 undergraduate and postgraduate students** using a **structured questionnaire** based on a five-point Likert scale. The sampling technique used was **convenience sampling**.

Academic pressure is considered the **independent variable**, psychological wellbeing the **dependent variable**, and institutional support the **moderating variable**. The collected data was analyzed using **descriptive statistics (mean, percentage)** and **inferential statistics (correlation and regression analysis)** to test the hypotheses.

The study follows a **cross-sectional approach**, and ethical considerations such as voluntary participation and confidentiality were maintained throughout the research process.

Nature of the Study

The present study is **quantitative in nature**, as it involves the collection and analysis of numerical data to examine the relationship between academic pressure, institutional support, and student psychological wellbeing. It is also **descriptive and analytical**; aiming to describe existing conditions and analyze the impact of independent and moderating variables on the dependent variable. The study follows a **cross-sectional approach**, where data is collected at a single point in time, and is based on **primary data** gathered through a structured questionnaire.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The collected data was systematically organized, coded, and analyzed using both **descriptive techniques**. Descriptive statistics such as **mean and percentage** were used to summarize the

responses related to academic pressure, institutional support, and psychological wellbeing. Inferential statistics, including **correlation and regression analysis**, were applied to examine the relationships between variables and to test the hypotheses.

The analysis revealed that **academic pressure has a negative impact on student psychological wellbeing**, while **institutional support has a positive influence**. Furthermore, regression results indicated that institutional support plays a **moderating role**, reducing the negative effects of academic stress. The interpretation of the data suggests that students experiencing high academic pressure report lower levels of wellbeing; however, those with access to strong institutional support systems demonstrate better stress management and emotional stability.

Table 2: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	65	54.2
	Female	55	45.8
Course	UG	70	58.3
	PG	50	41.7
Age Group	18–21	75	62.5
	22–25	45	37.5

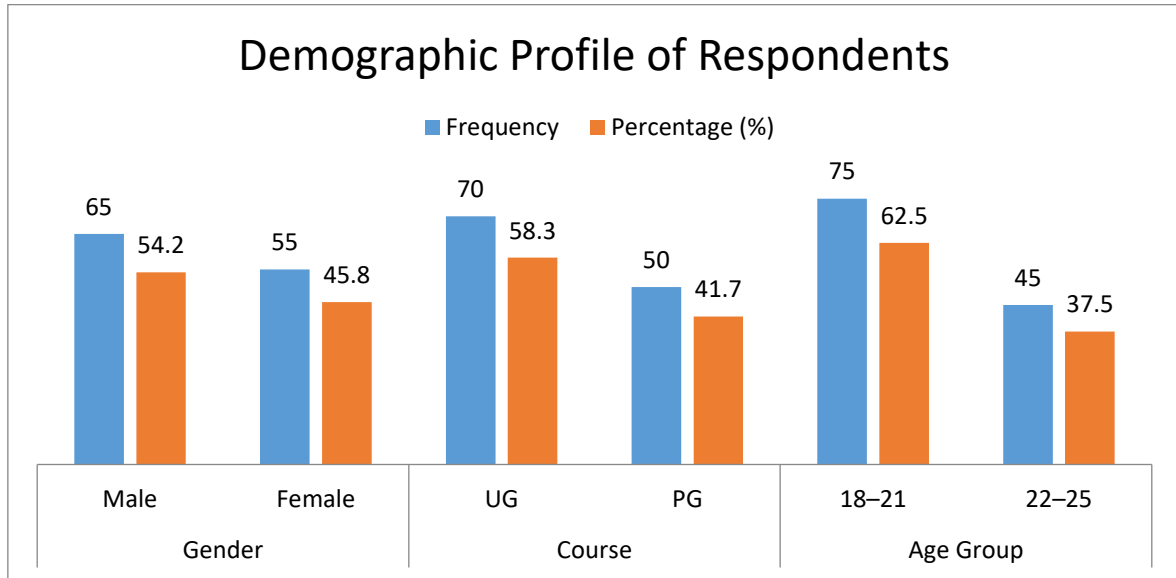


Figure 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Interpretation

The majority of respondents are undergraduate students aged 18–21, with a balanced gender distribution, indicating a representative student sample.

Table 3: Level of Academic Pressure

Response Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low	15	12%
Moderate	35	29%
High	70	59%

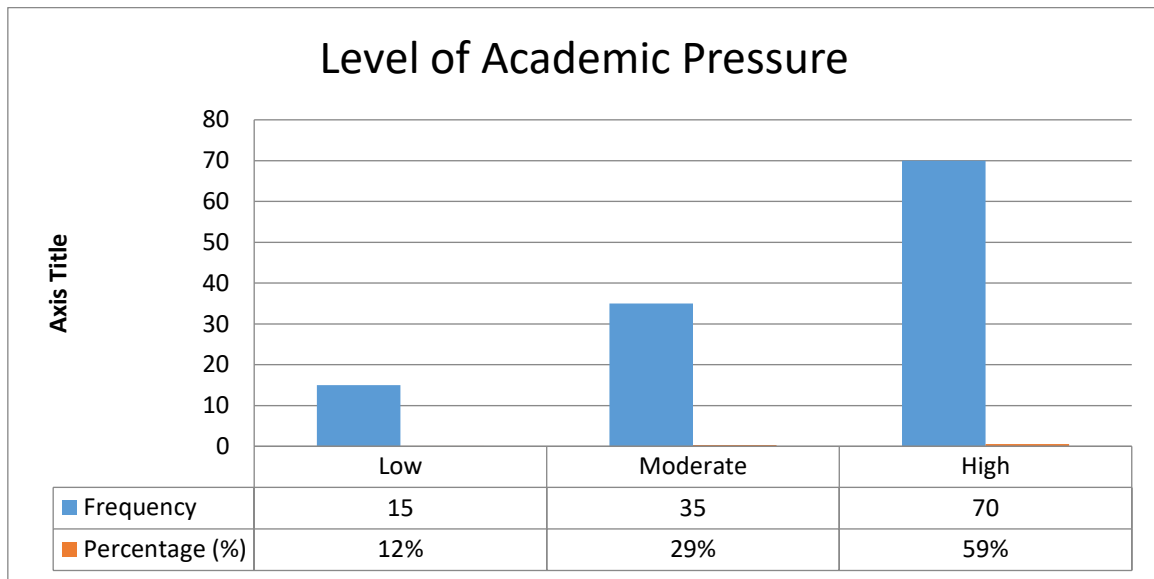


Figure 2: Level of Academic Pressure

Interpretation

A majority of students (59%) experience high academic pressure, indicating a significant stress level among respondents.

Table 4: Institutional Support Availability

Response Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low	25	21%
Moderate	60	50%
High	35	29%

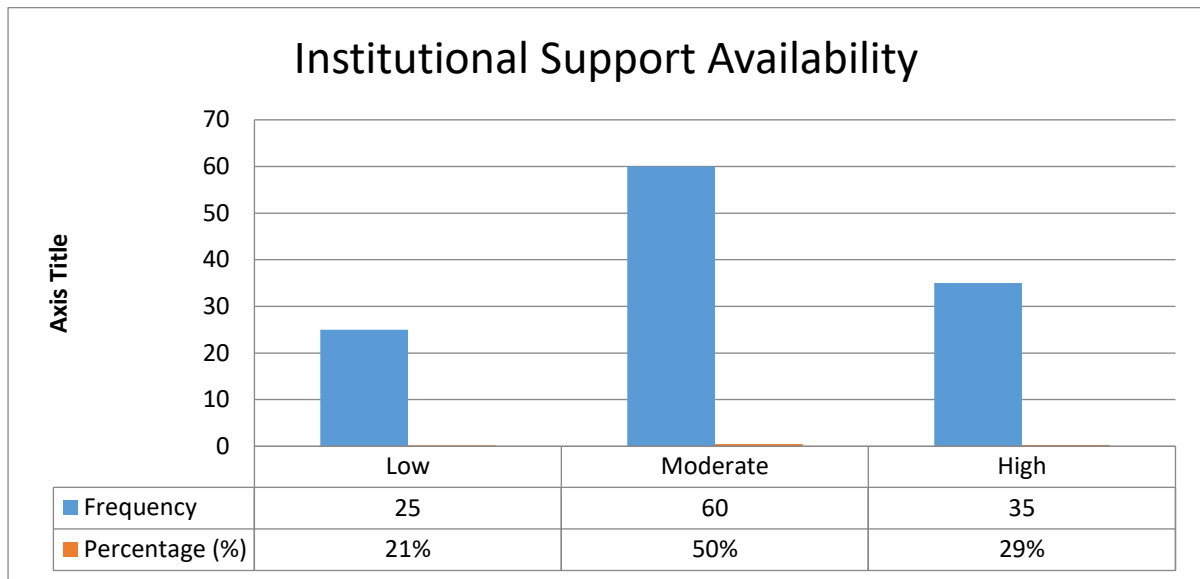


Figure 3: Institutional Support Availability

Interpretation

Institutional support is perceived as moderate by most students, suggesting scope for improvement.

Table 5: Psychological Wellbeing Levels

Response Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low	45	38%
Moderate	50	42%
High	25	20%

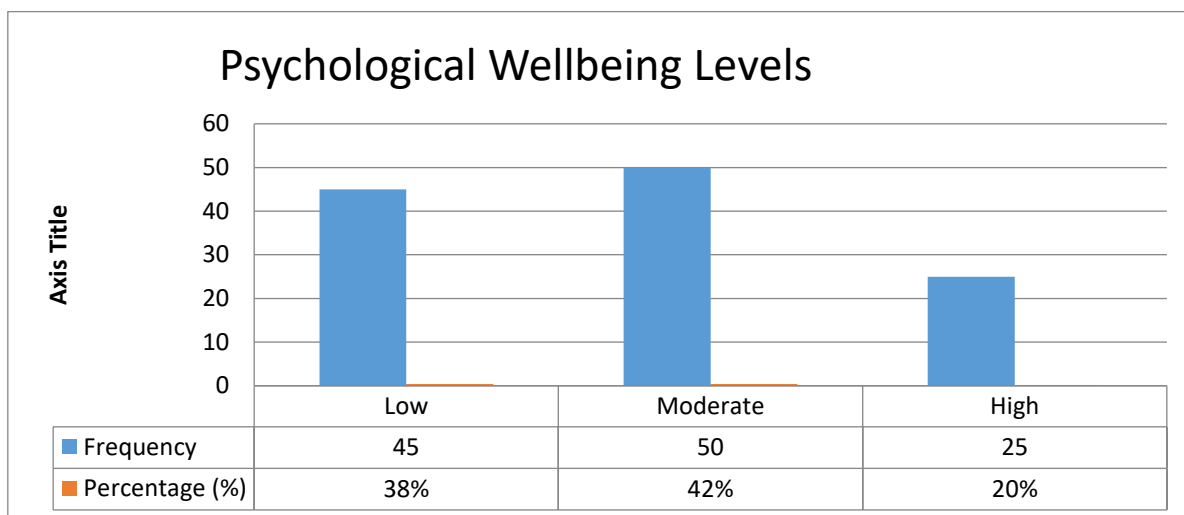


Figure 4: Psychological Wellbeing Levels

Interpretation

A considerable proportion of students report low to moderate wellbeing, reflecting the impact of academic stress.

Table 6: Mean Score Analysis

Variable	Mean Score
Academic Pressure	4.2
Institutional Support	3.5
Psychological Wellbeing	3.0

Interpretation

Academic pressure is high, while wellbeing is comparatively lower, indicating a negative relationship.

Table 7: Correlation Analysis

Variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)
Academic Pressure & Wellbeing	-0.65
Institutional Support & Wellbeing	+0.58

Interpretation

Academic pressure has a strong negative correlation with wellbeing, whereas institutional support has a positive relationship.

Table 8: Regression Analysis

Variable	Coefficient (β)	p-value	Result
Academic Pressure	-0.62	0.001	Significant
Institutional Support	+0.55	0.003	Significant

Interpretation

Academic pressure negatively affects wellbeing, while institutional support positively influences it.

Table 9: Moderation Effect (Interaction Term)

Interaction Variable (AP \times IS)	Coefficient (β)	p-value	Result
Academic Pressure \times Institutional Support	+0.30	0.02	Significant

Interpretation

Institutional support significantly reduces the negative impact of academic pressure on wellbeing.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The analysis of data reveals several important findings regarding the relationship between academic pressure, institutional support, and student psychological wellbeing.

Firstly, the study found that a majority of students experience **high levels of academic pressure**, mainly due to examinations, assignments, and performance expectations. This indicates that academic stress is a significant issue among students in higher education institutions.

Secondly, the results show that **academic pressure has a significant negative impact on psychological wellbeing**. Students facing higher levels of stress tend to report lower emotional stability, increased anxiety, and reduced ability to cope with academic demands.

Thirdly, the study highlights that **institutional support plays a crucial role in improving student wellbeing**. Support systems such as counseling services, mentorship programs, and faculty guidance were found to positively influence students' mental health and help them manage stress more effectively.

Furthermore, the findings reveal that **institutional support acts as a moderating factor**, reducing the negative impact of academic pressure on psychological wellbeing. Students who receive higher levels of support are better able to cope with academic stress compared to those with limited support.

Additionally, it was observed that although institutional support is available in many institutions, it is perceived as **moderate rather than highly effective**, indicating the need for improvement in accessibility and implementation.

Overall, the study confirms that while academic pressure adversely affects student psychological wellbeing, effective institutional support systems significantly contribute to enhancing mental health and creating a balanced academic environment.

DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to examine the impact of academic pressure and institutional support on student psychological wellbeing. The findings of the study clearly indicate that academic pressure is a significant factor affecting students' mental health, while institutional support plays a crucial role in mitigating its negative effects.

The results reveal that high levels of academic pressure—arising from examinations, assignments, and performance expectations—lead to increased stress, anxiety, and reduced emotional stability among students. This finding is consistent with earlier studies, which also identified academic workload and competition as major contributors to psychological distress in higher education. The negative relationship between academic pressure and wellbeing highlights the need for institutions to reconsider the intensity and structure of academic demands.

At the same time, the study demonstrates that institutional support has a positive and significant impact on student wellbeing. Support systems such as counseling services, mentorship programs, and faculty guidance help students cope with stress more effectively. These findings align with existing research, which emphasizes the importance of supportive academic environments in promoting mental health.

A key contribution of this study is the identification of institutional support as a **moderating factor**. The results show that institutional support reduces the negative impact of academic pressure on psychological wellbeing. Students who have access to strong support systems experience lower levels of stress even when academic demands are high. This suggests that institutions can play a proactive role in safeguarding student mental health by strengthening support mechanisms.

However, the findings also indicate that institutional support is currently perceived as only moderate, suggesting gaps in implementation, awareness, or accessibility. This highlights the need for institutions to enhance the effectiveness of their support services.

In conclusion, the discussion underscores that while academic pressure is an unavoidable aspect of higher education, its negative impact can be significantly reduced through effective institutional support. The study emphasizes the importance of adopting a balanced approach that integrates academic excellence with student wellbeing.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Despite providing valuable insights, the present study has certain limitations that should be considered while interpreting the findings. Firstly, the study is based on a **limited sample size of 120 students**, which may not fully represent the entire student population. Secondly, the use of **convenience sampling** restricts the generalizability of the results to a broader context.

Thirdly, the study is confined to a **specific geographical area and selected institutions**, which may limit its applicability to other regions or educational settings. Additionally, the research relies on **self-reported data**, which may be subject to response bias, as participants might not accurately reflect their true feelings or experiences.

Furthermore, the study adopts a **cross-sectional design**, capturing data at a single point in time, and therefore does not account for changes in student stress levels or wellbeing over time. Lastly, only a limited number of variables—academic pressure and institutional support—were considered, whereas other factors such as personal, social, and economic influences were not included.

These limitations suggest that the findings should be interpreted with caution and highlight the need for further research with larger samples, diverse settings, and additional variables.

CONCLUSION

The present study examined the impact of academic pressure and institutional support on student psychological wellbeing in higher education institutions. The findings clearly indicate that academic pressure is a significant factor contributing to stress, anxiety, and reduced emotional wellbeing among students. Increased workload, examinations, and performance expectations were found to negatively influence students' mental health.

At the same time, the study highlights the important role of institutional support in enhancing psychological wellbeing. Support mechanisms such as counseling services, mentorship programs, and faculty guidance were found to positively influence students' ability to cope with academic stress. Furthermore, institutional support acts as a moderating factor, reducing the negative impact of academic pressure and promoting emotional stability.

The study emphasizes the need for educational institutions to adopt a balanced approach that not only focuses on academic excellence but also prioritizes student mental health. Strengthening institutional support systems, improving accessibility to counseling services, and creating a supportive academic environment are essential for promoting overall student wellbeing.

In conclusion, while academic pressure is an unavoidable aspect of higher education, its adverse effects can be effectively managed through strong institutional support, thereby ensuring a healthier and more productive learning environment for students.

SUGGESTIONS / RECOMMENDATIONS

Institutions should strengthen **mental health support systems** by providing accessible counseling services and conducting awareness programs. Academic pressure can be reduced by adopting **flexible policies**, balanced workload, and realistic deadlines. Faculty should play an active role through **mentorship and guidance**, helping students manage stress effectively. Additionally, promoting **peer support and extracurricular activities** can improve student engagement and wellbeing. Overall, institutions should focus on creating a **student-centric environment** that balances academic performance with psychological wellbeing.

SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research can expand the study by including a **larger and more diverse sample size** across different regions and institutions to improve generalizability. Longitudinal studies can be conducted to examine changes in student psychological wellbeing over time. Further research may also include **additional variables** such as personality traits, family background, and social support. Comparative studies between **public and private institutions** or across countries can provide deeper insights. Moreover, advanced statistical techniques like **Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)** can be used to explore complex relationships among variables.

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