

A Comparative Study on Academic Stress among Government and Private Higher Secondary Students

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Abstract – The purpose of the present study was to measure the level of academic stress among high school students of Government, and Private schools and to compare the degree of stress among boys and girls. The sample consisted of 144 students each from Government, and Private school, purposive sampling technique was used to collect the data. The sample were administered Academic stress scale developed by Rajendran and Kaliappan .The descriptive statistics and ‘t’ test was used to verify the hypothesis. The findings reveal that nature of school emerged as a significant factor in the experience of stress. Students belonging to Government schools were experiencing more stress. Further, the study revealed that there is no gender difference in the experience of stress.

Key words: Government High school, Private High school, Gender, Higher secondary students, academic stress

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In today's world examination has become a crucial parameter to assess learning for the children. They have a significant role in promoting education and academic acceleration. There is a pressure to perform better from teachers and parents, this pressure can stimulate stress among students. The stress can have both positive and negative effect, at a moderate level the stress can enhance performance, and the same stress perceived negatively can result in academic failure consequently lead to various physiological and psychological problems.

Stress is defined in Webster dictionary as “a condition typically characterized by symptoms of mental and physical tension or strain, as depression or hypertension, which can result from a reaction to a situation in which a person feels threatened, pressured, etc.” An individual can be stressed in daily life in different ways, and stress can be viewed as the bodies' reaction both neurologically and physiologically to adapt to the new condition (Yakushko, Watson and Thompson, 2008). However (Bisht 1989) has defined academic stress as a demand related to academics that tax or exceed the available resources (internal or external) as cognitively appeared by the student involved. According to her, academic stress reflects perception of individual's academic frustration, academic conflict, academic pressure and academic anxiety. She has given the definition of four components of academic stress as follows: Academic

Frustration: Academic frustration is a state caused by harm of some academic goals. Academic Conflict: Academic Conflict is the result of two or more quality in compatible response tendencies to academic goals. Academic Pressure: When the student is under heavy demands of time and energy to meet academic goals. And Academic Anxiety: Apprehension of harm to some academic goals. Though academic Stress makes a significant contribution in predicting school performance but also act as a negative predictor of academic performance in school children, (Ender et al. 1994). With the help of following symptoms we can identify whether the student is in stress:

- Isolation from the family activities and peer relationship
- Complaint about headaches
- Poor appetite and low immunity
- Having unexplained fear and anxiety
- Irritability and lack of proper sleep
- Restlessness, sweating, increased blood pressure, etc.

- Use of drug and alcohol

A Study by Ashutosh Kumar and Abid Hussain (2008) in their finding show that the magnitude of academic stress among public school students was particularly high and academic stress and overall adjustment of students were contrariwise correlated to each other for both public school and private school students . On an everyday basis stressors from school were found to be tests, grades, homework, academic and achievement expectations (Crystal et al., 1994; de Anda et al. 2000; Ohman and Jarvis, 2000). Type of school related stresses include, interactions with teachers and balancing one's leisure time with school (True et al 2007) ,other studies on school- related stressor indicated nine types,- inadequate instructional methods, teacher—students relationships, heavy academic workload, poor physical classroom environments and disorganization surrounding academic assignments and schedules, examinations ,grades and feeling rushed (Burnett & Fanshawe, 1997) .

OBJECTIVES

1. To compare the academic stress between Government and Private Higher secondary students.
2. To compare the academic stress between male and female higher secondary students

HYPOTHESIS

1. There is no difference in the stress level among students studying in Government and Private Schools
2. There is no differences in the stress level among female and male students.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The present study is two X two group design

Sample

The sample consisted of 288 high school students belonging to Government and Private schools from Bangalore. i.e., Government and private secondary students. Purposive sample technique was used to collect the data. The participant's age range was between 13- 16 years, belonging to 8th, 9th and 10th standard.

Inclusion criteria

Students having knowledge and understanding of English language

Students studying in Government and Private school

Exclusion criteria

Students studying in rural area

Student not willing to participate.

Variables

Independent variables: Types of school and Gender

Dependent variable: Academic Stress

Measuring tool

An academic stress scale was used to measure stress level among higher secondary students. This scale was designed and developed by Kin (1970). The scale was adapted to Indian conditions by Rajendran and Kaliappan (1990). The items are classified into five areas namely Personal Inadequacy, Fear of Failure, Interpersonal difficulties with teachers, Teacher pupil relationship / Teaching methods, inadequate study facilities. Test-retest was found to be 0.82

Procedure

The study was conducted in class room group setting, and contacted personally in their respective schools for data collection, Prior consent was taken from the school management before administering the survey. The rapport was established with the students and instructions were given and the participants were asked to complete the scale. The entire procedure took approximately 10-15 Minutes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 .shows the mean scores and t value for academic stress between Private and Government high school

Factor	School	N	Mean	SD	t	Significant/not Significant
Personal Inadequacy	Private	144	8.96	5.80	6.40	Significant**
	Govt	144	13.02	4.92		
Fear of failure	Private	144	12.05	7.35	1.80	Not Significant
	Govt	144	13.41	5.23		
Interpersonal difficulties with teachers	Private	144	8.11	4.81	7.13	Significant**
	Govt	144	12.20	4.91		
Teacher-pupil relationship / Teaching methods	Private	144	9.92	6.32	4.57	Significant**
	Govt	144	13.08	5.33		
Inadequate study facilities	Private	144	8.08	5.48	6.85	Significant**
	Govt	144	12.65	5.84		

*p< .05, **p< .01

The primary objective of the study was to measure level of academic stress between Government and Private higher secondary students .To attain the objective and verify the hypothesis ,the data were analyzed using SPSS 20.0, Mean SD and t test were calculated . Table 1 indicates that students belonging to Government high school report a higher level of

academic stress in all the five factors namely: Personal inadequacy, Fear of failure, Interpersonal difficulties with teachers, teachings methods and inadequate study facilities. The obtained t ratio indicates that there is significant differences between private and Government school students on all the dimensions of academic stress, hence the null hypothesis that stress level of students do not differ significantly in terms of nature of schools is rejected. The result of the present study is in accordance with findings of earlier research conducted by (Kumar and Hussain 2008) in which they found that magnitude of academic stress among public school students was particularly high and academic stress, overall adjustment of students were correlated to each other for both public school and private school students. Inadequate instructional methods, teacher—student relationships, heavy academic workload, poor physical classroom environments and disorganization surrounding academic assignments and schedules were found to be common stressors among students (Burnett & Fanshawe, 1997). The causal factors for the differences in the stress level among the Government students might be due to negative attitude towards school and learning, uneven distribution of student teacher ratio, low socio-economic status, lack of parental involvement due to lower level of parental education when compared to private high school students. In addition, poor infrastructure, less supportive teachers towards academic attainment, monotonous teaching methods, poor interpersonal relationships with other students or teachers, also contributes in the increase level of stress.

Table 2. Shows the mean scores and t value for academic stress between Female and male

Factor	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	Significant/not Significant
Personal Inadequacy	Female	106	10.72	6.15	-.593	Not significant
	Male	182	16.14	5.49		
Fear of failure	Female	106	12.74	7.43	.032	Not Significant
	Male	182	12.71	5.75		
Interpersonal difficulties with teachers	Female	106	9.67	5.70	-1.17	Not significant
	Male	182	10.43	5.00		
Teacher-pupil relationship / Teaching methods	Female	106	11.24	6.90	-.54	Not significant
	Male	182	11.64	5.50		
Inadequate study facilities	Female	106	10.47	6.23	.22	Not Significant
	Male	182	10.43	6.03		

The secondary objective of the study was to compare gender differences in academic stress, with the reference to table 2 it shows that there is no significant gender differences in experience of stress hence the null hypothesis that stress level do not differ significantly in terms of gender is accepted. The findings from the present study is not in accordance with the several previous studies conducted by Chenet et al.(2013) which show that the female are more prone to suffer from higher levels of distress, they are more likely to endorse the fear of failure than

males(Ozer, Demir & Ferrari ,2009;Sharma & Kaur,2011). Lack of gender differences in the stress level found in the present study might be due to unequal sample size and female students from both the types of schools were combined.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of the study indicates that Government higher secondary students experience a higher level of academic stress when compared to private high school students Male and female students do not differ significantly in their academic stress scores.

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