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Impact of Academic Stress among Adolescents in Relation to Gender, Class and Type of School Organization

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Abstract

Academic stress is one of the important stresses among adolescents and is a cause for great concern for the educationists worldwide. The objective of present study was to find out the impact of academic stress among adolescents with regards to gender, class and type of school organization. The study was delimited to students of class 11th and 12th of CBSE and BSEB affiliated two senior secondary schools of Samastipur (Bihar, India) viz. Holy Mission Senior Secondary School, Samastipur and Modal Senior Secondary School, Samastipur. A sample of 160 students was selected by simple random sampling method and Academic Stress questionnaire developed by Md. Akram, Ilias Khan and Sabiha Baby was used as a tool for data collection. The finding revealed that no significant difference exists in the academic stress of students in relation to gender, while significant differences exist with regards to class and type of school organization. Students of class 12th of both CBSE and BSEB affiliated schools have more academic stress than that of 11th. Students studying in CBSE affiliated school have more academic stress than that of BSEB affiliated school. It was concluded that academic stress hasn't any impact upon gender while has significant impact upon class and type of school organization.

Keywords: Academic Stress, Adolescents, Class, Gender, CBSE, BSEB.

Introduction

Stress is associated with physical, psychological and behavioural experiences of life. Out of a number of stresses faced by adolescents and young adults, academic stress emerges as a significant source of stress in recent years that affects their academic performance, psychological adjustment along with their overall emotional and physical wellbeing. Academic stress is becoming increasingly common and widespread among adolescents (Garcia, 1986 and Gupta 1989) [4, 5]. Adolescents face a life full of stress in the competitive world of today. They usually have high academic burden, low satisfaction regarding their academic performance, and high expectations and thus they may suffer from more academic stress. Academic stress is a significant source of stress for many students (Hashim, 2003) [6]. If a student is unable to cope effectively with academic stress, then serious psycho-social-emotional health consequences may result (Scott, 2008) [14]. The education system in India is highly competitive due to inadequate number of good institutions to educate the ever-expanding population of children. As a result children begin to face pressure of competition from the entry level of pre-primary education, and thereafter at the end of every year, in the form of examinations that determine their promotion to the next grade. They also have to struggle for taking admission in the good institution after +2 level because in these institutions students are selected on the basis of their grades or marks obtained in the qualifying examination. Therefore grades become very important for the students than acquiring knowledge. In such a grade oriented system of education, in order to obtain high grades or marks students are over burdened with academic workload that causes a lot of academic stress among them.

Stress is a normal part of life and most people experience stress every day. It is an individual's physical and mental reaction to environmental demands. Stress is defined as the

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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. Therefore, Schuler (1980) ^[13] considered that stress pointed out an important opportunities, limitations or needs faced by individuals, and when the results of these situations are uncertain, individuals develop a type of insecurity inside. White (1987) ^[16] considered that a continuous poor performance in school causes a child to lose his or her self-esteem, feel hopeless and consider him or herself to be of no value. Even though there are the negative aspects of stress on people, it also has positive influences. Selye (1983) ^[15] considered that the absence of stress in life is not good and that it also has an active function. Stress can be divided into four major categories- Overstress, Under-stress, Good stress and Distress. A balance between under stress and over stress must be emphasized and good stress must be realized to reduce distress.

Students have to face many academic demands, for example, school examination, answering questions in the class, showing progress in school subjects, competing with other class mates, fulfilling teacher's and parent's academic expectations. These demands may tax or exceed available resources of the students. As a consequence, they can be under stress, since the demand is related to achievement of an academic goal so it causes academic stress among them. Academic stress is mental and emotional pressure, tension, or stress that occurs due to the demands of school or college life. Some academic stress is normal for all school or college students, like- being exposed to new educational concepts, adjusting to new social settings, and taking on the larger workload. There are many situations in educational field which are stressful to the child like negative consequences of failures, worry about future life, too much homework, cut throat competition, teacher and parental expectation etc. all these factors have an impact on the mind of students. Bisht (1989) ^[2] 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.

Review of Literature

Banerjee (2001) ^[1] studied the impact of examination stress on youth. It was found that every year about 25,000 students in the age group of 18 to 20 years commit suicide during the examination month i.e. from March to June. This was substantiated with District Central Records Bureau of Dharwad that every year at least 4-5 students committed suicide. Parental pressure is one of the important sources of stress among students. According to Mukherjee (2003) ^[10] some mental health experts believe that parents need to be counseled as much as children do. Many parents respond to high stress situations (such as board examinations) with extreme nervousness, which is then transferred to their child. When all means of recreation are blocked in favour of a constant routine of studying for examinations, and children's time to play and talk with friends is minimized, the result is that children's ability to effectively cope with examination stress is compromised. The school environment is another most important source of stress among students. A study was conducted on "Self-reported sources of stress in senior high

school students" and it was observed that school-related situations such as tests, grades, studying, self-imposed need to succeed, as well as that induced by others are the main sources of stress for high school students (Kouzma and Kennedy, 2004) ^[9]. The family also plays most important role in academic stress. In a study it was found that Indian children from non-disrupted families have higher academic stress than children from disrupted families. It is likely that the children from disrupted families get less attention and guidance from their parents regarding academic matters than do their counterparts in non-disrupted families. This, paradoxically, reduces their academic stress; thus highlighting the negative impact of the parental vigilance and persuasion on the academic lives of their children (Ganesh and Magdalin, 2007) ^[3]. A study was conducted on relationship between college student's academic stress and course grade by Paul (2007) ^[7]. The purpose of this study was to examine the extent to which college students adopt academic stress coping style and motivation mediate. The result showed that the relationship between college students academic stress and course grade was influenced by problem focused coping and motivation but not emotion-focused coping. It was found that students who engaged in problem focused coping were more likely to be motivated and perform better than students who engaged in emotion focused coping (John L. Paul 2007) ^[7]. In a study it was reported that no significant gender difference was observed on depression. Boys and girls significantly differed only on academic frustration dimension except all other dimensions and total academic stress. It was also supported by another study conducted on depression among adolescents in relation to their academic stress. The result revealed that girls exhibited higher level of academic frustration than boys (Kaur and Sharma 2014) ^[8]. In a study on relationship between academic stress and achievement motivation among higher secondary students, Nazim and Kumar (2014) ^[11] found that academic stress is negatively correlated with achievement motivation. This study was conducted on school students of U.P board and CBSE board of Meerut district and the researchers found that academic stress of higher secondary students of U.P board as well as CBSE board were negatively correlated with achievement motivation. A study was conducted on "Academic Stress of Adolescents in Government and Private Schools". Sample consisted of 216 adolescents from secondary schools. Findings revealed that significant difference exists in the academic stress of adolescents in relation to gender. Female adolescents have higher academic stress than male adolescents. Adolescents studying in Government and Private schools differ in their level of academic stress. Adolescents of private schools have more academic stress than their counterparts in government schools. Significant difference was also observed in the academic stress of male and female adolescents in Government schools but not observed in the case of Private schools (B. Raziya 2016) ^[12].

Significance of the study

The importance of students in the education process is unquestionable because only through them the ultimate process of education takes place as they are one of the important stakeholders in the teaching learning process, but today they are facing with new challenges in education calling for greater effort from them. In addition heavy demands are imposed upon them by the society too, to

perform various roles, many of which are undefined, inconsistent and unachievable in the present socio-cultural and economic contexts of our society, causing heavy stress on students mainly senior secondary school students. Among different sources of stress academic stress affects the personality of adolescents the most. The stress can have some negative and sometimes worse consequences, which may adversely affect the quality of life and sense of well being, of young adults and sometimes they commit suicide too. The study was undertaken by keeping in mind the growing problem of academic stress among senior secondary school students. In the present work attempts have been made to study the impact of academic stress upon gender, class and type of school organization.

Objectives

1. To find the impact of academic stress on boys and girls studying in senior secondary school.
2. To find the impact of academic stress on students of class 11th and 12th studying in senior secondary school.
3. To find the impact of academic stress on students studying in senior secondary schools affiliated by Central Board of Secondary Education, (CBSE), New Delhi and Bihar School Examination Board (BSEB), Patna.

Hypothesis

1. There is no significant difference exists between academic stress of boys and girls studying in senior secondary school.
2. There is no significant difference exists between academic stress of students studying in class 11th and 12th.
3. There is no significant difference exists between academic stress of students studying in CBSE affiliated Senior Secondary School and BSEB affiliated Senior Secondary School.

Methodology

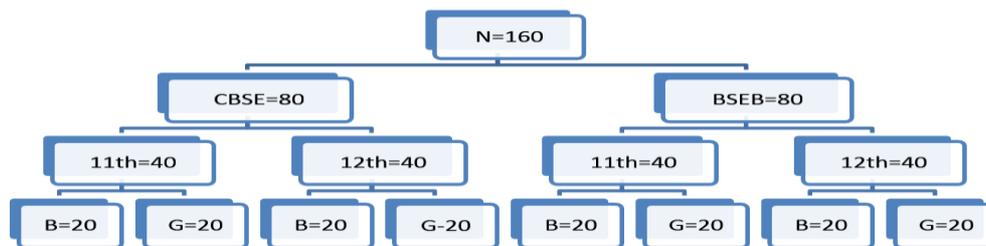
As the investigation was descriptive hence survey method was followed for the study and simple random sampling method was adopted for the data collection.

Participants

The participants were of 160 students studying in two senior secondary schools of Samastipur having age group between 15-18, namely- Holy Mission Senior Secondary School and Model Senior Secondary School of Samastipur.

Research design

Total 160 students were randomly selected from two different senior secondary schools of Samastipur affiliated to CBSE and BSEB. Research design was as follows-



Research tool

Academic Stress Questionnaire (ASQ) developed by Md. Akram, Md. Ilyas Khan and Sabiha Baby was used for the study. It is a 36 items questionnaire used to assess the academic stress of senior secondary school students. The ASQ has items related to five dimensions namely inadequate academic environment in college/university, lack of adjustment, apprehensive about future, poor administration and worries. Cronbach's alpha for all five dimensions were found to be .68, .60, .55, .53, and .57 respectively. The construct validity of ASQ ranges from 0.41 to 0.88.

Procedure

The questionnaire was distributed among the 160 students studying in senior secondary school during their class hours to obtain the data. All the required suggestions were given to them. It was explained in a congenial atmosphere that the researchers did not intend to test their capabilities and their filling up of questionnaire had nothing to do with school

grades. No response is right or wrong. They were also assured that their responses will be kept confidential and only the researcher would have access to their data.

Statistical analysis

Mean, standard deviation and students 't' test were used for the analysis of data, interpretation of the result and drawing conclusion.

Results & Discussion

Table-1 shows data on difference of academic stress in relation to gender. The mean value of academic stress of boys is 78.4 while that of girls is 83.97. Students 't' test was applied for evaluating whether any significant difference exist or not, between the two groups at p< 0.05 level. The result revealed that no significant difference exists in the Academic stress of adolescents in relation to their gender hence hypothesis one was accepted.

Table 1: Showing difference between academic stress of Boys and Girls.

GROUP	N	Mean	SD	't' value	p- value	Level of significance
Boys	80	78.4	27.65	-1.42441	.078149	Not Significant at p<.05
Girls	80	83.97	21.46			

Table-2 and Fig.1 shows percentage of level of academic stress among boys and girls. No stress (NS) was found in the 5% of boys and 2.5% of girls. Slight stress (SS) was found in 37.5% of boys and 20% of girls. Moderate stress (MS) was

found in 45% of boys and 67.5% of girls, while High stress (HS) was found in 12.5% of boys and 10% of girls. More boys were identified with no stress, slight stress and high

stress than girls and more girls were identified with moderate stress than boys.

Table 2: Showing percentage of level of academic stress among boys and girls.

Level of Stress	BOYS (N=80)	%	GIRLS (N=80)	%
NS	4	5%	2	2.5%
SS	30	37.5%	16	20%
MS	36	45%	54	67.5%
HS	10	12.5%	8	10%
Total	80	100%	80	100%

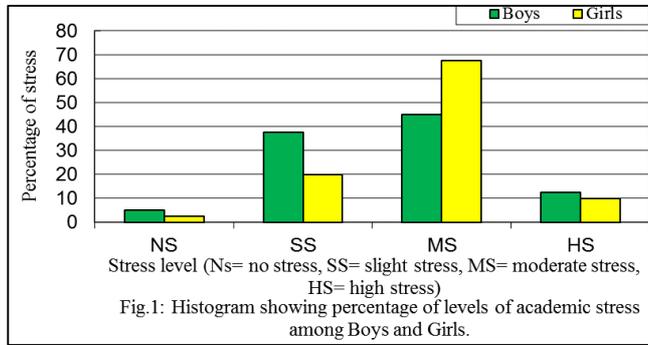


Table-3 represents data on difference of academic stress between students studying in class 11th and class 12th. The mean value of academic stress of the students studying in class 11th is 70.38 while that of 12th is 91.98. The significance of difference between the means of the two groups was evaluated by Students t-test at $p < 0.05$ level. It was found that there is a significant difference exists between the students of class 11th and the students of class 12th with regard to their academic stress. More academic stress was found in the students studying in class 12th than that of class 11th hence the hypothesis two was rejected.

Table 3: Showing difference between academic stress of students of class 11th and 12th

Group	N	Mean	SD	't' value	p-value	Level of significance
11 th	80	70.38	22.57	-6.09423	.00001	Significant at $p < .05$
12 th	80	91.98	22.25			

Table-4 and Fig.-2 shows percentage of level of academic stress among the students of class 11th and 12th. No stress was found in 6.25% students studying in class 11th and 1.25% students studying in class 12th. Slight stress was found in 43.75% students studying in class 11th and 13.75%

students studying in class 12th. Moderate stress was found in 46.25% students studying in class 11th and 66.25% students studying in class 12th, while High stress was found in 3.75% students studying in class 11th and 18.75% students studying in class 12th.

Table 4: Showing percentage of level of academic stress among the students of class 11th and 12th

Level of Stress	11 th (N=80)	%	12 th (N=80)	%
NS	5	6.25%	1	1.25%
SS	35	43.75%	11	13.75%
MS	37	46.25%	53	66.25%
HS	3	3.75%	15	18.75%
Total	80	100%	80	100%

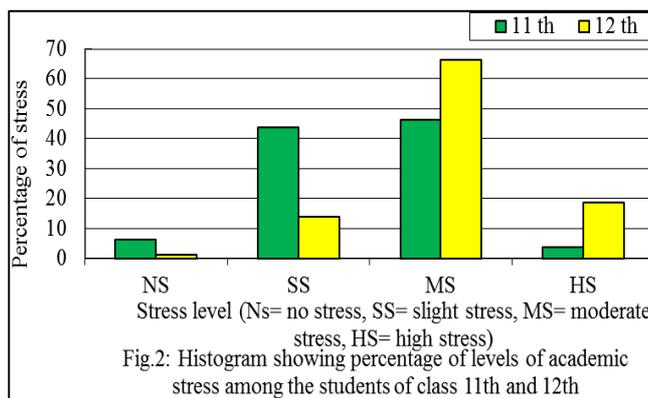


Table-5 shows data on difference of academic stress between the students studying in CBSE and BSEB affiliated school. The mean value of academic stress among the students studying in CBSE affiliated school is 86 while that of the students studying in BSEB affiliated school is 76.37. The result revealed that there is a significant difference ($p < 0.05$) exists between the students studying in CBSE affiliated school and students studying in BSEB affiliated school. More academic stress was found among the students studying in CBSE affiliated school than that of the BSEB affiliated school hence hypothesis three was rejected.

Table 5: Showing difference between academic stresses of students of CBSE affiliated school and BSEB affiliated school.

Group	N	Mean	SD	't' value	p- value	Level of significance
CBSE	80	86.00	25.20	2.49107	.006885	Significant at $p < .05$
BSEB	80	76.37	23.64			

Table-6 and Fig.-3 shows percentage of level of academic stress among the students studying in CBSE affiliated school and BSEB affiliated school. No stress was found in 3.75% students of the both types of school. Slight stress was found

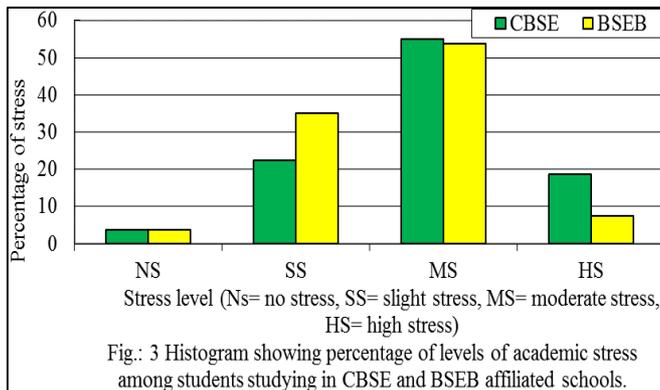
in 22.5% students studying in CBSE affiliated school and 35% students studying in BSEB affiliated school. Moderate stress was found in 55% students studying in CBSE affiliated school and 53.75% students studying in BSEB affiliated

school, while High stress was found in 18.75% students studying in CBSE affiliated school and 7.5% students

studying in BSEB affiliated school.

Table 6: Showing percentage of level of academic stress among the students studying in CBSE affiliated school BSEB affiliated school.

Level of Stress	CBSE (N=80)	%	BSEB (N=80)	%
NS	3	3.75%	3	3.75%
SS	18	22.5%	28	35%
MS	44	55%	43	53.75%
HS	15	18.75%	6	7.5%
Total	80	100%	80	100%



Conclusion

From the above findings it is concluded that academic stress does not have any impact among adolescents in relation to gender while have significant impact in relation to class and type of school organization. Boys and girls of both type of schools (CBSE and BSEB affiliated schools) and both classes (11th and 12th) exhibit no significant difference in their academic stress. Students of class 11th and 12th of both type of schools and both gender (boys and girls) show significant difference in their academic stress. Similarly students studying in CBSE affiliated school and BSEB affiliated school of both classes (11th and 12th) and both gender show significant difference in their academic stress.

Suggestions

The adolescent have to face high academic stress so the parents, teacher and school organization should work hand in hand to minimize their academic stress. The parents should have an idea about the abilities of their children and they should never impose undue expectation on their children, they should be given opportunities to plan their future according to their own choice, Interest, aptitude and attitude. The teacher should take steps to minimize academic stress among them through providing more cooperative and friendly environment. They should understand the problems of their students. The school organization should organize regular guidance and counselling programme to provide proper direction to the students. It should maintain hygienic environment in the school and there should have adequate infrastructures. All these steps will help students to deal effectively with their academic stress.

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