A STUDY ON ACADEMIC STRESS AMONG ADOLESCENCE IN DINDIGUL DISTRICT

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Abstract

Stress has become part of students’ academic life due to the various internal and external expectations placed upon their shoulders. Adolescents are particularly vulnerable to the problems associated with academic stress as transitions occur at an individual and social level. It therefore, becomes imperative to understand the sources and impact of academic stress in order to derive adequate and efficient intervention strategies. The study employed a quantitative research design where participants were screened using Academic Stress Scale (Rajendran & Kaliappan, 1991) from four streams namely, commerce, management, humanities, and basic sciences. This study aims at investigating the academic stress among adolescence. 260 respondents of adolescence studying in colleges of arts and science around Dindigul district were participated for the purpose of this study. Data collected was analyzed with descriptive statics using SPSS version 22. The results found that there is no significant difference in their academic stress of adolescence irrespective of gender, Locality of College, Type of Management, Course Studied, Year of study and UG Studied.

Introduction

Adolescents were also reported to be indulging in various risky behaviours such as increased consumption of alcohol and drugs, unprotected sexual activities, physical inactivity, poor eating and sleeping patterns (American College Health Association, 2009). The stress response elicited by every individual is identical regardless of the trigger causing. For example, marital stress, exam anxiety, work stress, etc. would elicit identical physiological responses from the body.

While the stress response may be identical, the sources of stress reported by individuals vary. These differences would be seen in the causes, sources and consequences of stressors. Some of the common stressors reported in an academic
setting include excessive assignments, poor time management and social skills, peer competition, etc. (Fairbrother & Warn, 2003).

The educational system also plays an enabling role subsequently leading to increased stress levels experienced by students. Some of the sources include overcrowded lecture halls, semester grading system, inadequate resources and facilities (Awing & Agolla, 2008). Thus, as the sources of stress vary despite identical stress responses elicited by the body, understanding the former will help develop tailor made interventions targeted to reduce stress levels of students, which will in turn contribute towards holistic well-being of the individual.

**Review of literature**

Deb et al. (2014), studied on 400 male students from five private secondary schools in Kolkata who were studying in grades 10 and 12. 35 percent students were found to have high academic stress and 37 percent were found to have high anxiety levels. Students with marginal grades were said to have higher level of stress as compared to students with better grades. Also, students involved with extra-curricular activities were noted to be more stressed as related to those students who were not involved with it.

Subramani and Kadhiravan (2017) revealed the link between academic stress and mental health among students. He endorsed that academic stress and mental health are correlated and that students are cramped with the academic structure. Parents and schools pressurize the students way too much for the higher grades that disheartens the students, further to add on there is not enough support from the parents and school in terms of guidance. The students are mentally healthy when they perform constructively in the academic forums. They also propounded that students from private schools are more pressurized as compared to students from government schools due to the excess of homework and other academic related assignments. Significant difference in mental health of students from private and government schools was found. He asserted that students from private schools have a different nurturing and vast exposure as compared to government school students who belong to poor socio economic background and lack of exposure. This is one of the reasons for the escalation of stress.
The purpose of the study

My purpose for conducting this study was to explore the adolescence of undergraduate students’ perception of major sources of academic stress. I wanted to know how students perceive academic stress and how they cope with it on daily basis, as they are struggling to reduce and control the negative effects on their health and their academic performance. In my opinion, it is very important for undergraduate students to learn how to manage the academic stress, even if it cannot be eliminated.

Objectives of the Study

1) To find out the significance difference between the academic stress of adolescence belonging to the following sub-samples are
   - Gender : Male/ Female
   - Locality of College : Rural / Urban
   - Type of Management : Government / Private / Aided
   - Course Studied : Arts / Science
   - Year of study : First / Second / Third
   - UG Studied : BSc / BCom / BA

Hypotheses of the Study

1. There is no significance difference between the academic stress of adolescence belonging to the following sub-samples are
   - Gender : Male/ Female
   - Locality of College : Rural / Urban
   - Type of Management : Government / Private / Aided
   - Course Studied : Arts / Science
   - Year of study : First / Second / Third
   - UG Studied : BSc / BCom / BA

Sample of the Study

The main objective of the study was to find if there exists academic stress among students. It was hypothesized that there exists significant differences in stream wise differences in academic stress. It was also hypothesized that the sources of stress will also significantly vary among the different streams. Participants for the
study were selected from a general pool of students using random sampling technique where the classes were chosen based on names picked out from a fish bowl. Informed consent form and demographic profile sheet were given to all the participants and the objectives of the study were explained.

A sample is a small portion of a selected for observation and analysis of the data. By the process of sampling a relatively small number of individuals, objects or events are selected or analysed in order to find out something about the entire population or universe from which it was selected. For the present study the investigator select 260 adolescence studying in under graduate students belongs to BSc with BA and BCom in Dindigul District by the method of Random Sampling.

**Tool Used in the Present Study**

According to Lazarus (1961) stress is the internal response of the individual to pressure - when the pressure experienced is greater than normal, ability. In the college situation, this pressure may be accountable for individual’s success and failures. Hence the kind of stress (Academic Stress) is an important factor accounting for variation in academic success. This is a 40 item rating scale that has been developed to identify the sources of academic stress among students. This scale was originally developed by Kin (1970).This scale was adopted to Indian conditions by Rajendran and Kaliappan (1990). It is a five-point rating scale varying from the response of ‘No Stress’ to ‘Extreme Stress’ with regard to the degree of stress. The rating scale is scored as 1-2-3-4-5. Therefore 200 (5 x 40) is the maximum score.

**Differential Analysis towards Academic stress**

**Gender and Academic stress**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>‘t’ TEST AMONG GENDER WITH RESPECT TO ACADEMIC STRESS</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENDER</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th>S.D</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>L.S</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>129.51</td>
<td>26.99</td>
<td>1.039</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>132.92</td>
<td>25.08</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the table 1 we may infer that the calculated ‘t’ value is 1.039 which is less than the table (1.97) at 0.05 level. Hence there exists no significant difference between male and female adolescence with regard to their academic stress.

**Locality of college and academic stress.**

Table 2

‘t’ TEST AMONG LOCALITY OF COLLEGE WITH RESPECT TO ACADEMIC STRESS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCALITY OF COLLEGE</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th>S.D</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>L.S</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>132.53</td>
<td>26.18</td>
<td>0.872</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>129.69</td>
<td>26.21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the table 2 we may infer that the calculated’ value is 0.872 which is less than the table (1.97) at 0.05 level. Hence there exists no significant difference between rural and urban locality of college of adolescence with regard to their academic stress.

**Type of management and academic stress.**

Table 3

‘F’ TEST AMONG THE SUB SAMPLE OF TYPE MANAGEMENT WITH RESPECT TO EMOTIONAL MATURITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF MANAGEMENT</th>
<th>SUM OF SQUARES</th>
<th>MEAN SQUARE</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>F VALUE</th>
<th>LS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between the groups</td>
<td>262.228</td>
<td>131.114</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.190</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within groups</td>
<td>177372.768</td>
<td>690.166</td>
<td>257</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>177634.996</td>
<td>259</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is evident from the table 3 the calculated ‘F’ value is 0.190 which is not significant at 0.05 level. Hence the framed null hypothesis was accepted. It is inferred
that there is no significant difference among the sub-sample of type of management with respect to academic stress of adolescence.

Course studied and academic stress.

Table 4
‘t’ TEST AMONG COURSE STUDIED WITH RESPECT TO ACADEMIC STRESS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COURSE STUDIED</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th>S.D</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>L.S</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>128.17</td>
<td>24.99</td>
<td>1.397</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>132.81</td>
<td>26.85</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the table 4 we may infer that the calculated ‘t’ value is 1.397 which is less than the table (1.97) at 0.05 level. Hence there is no significant difference between arts and science of course studied of adolescence with regard to their academic stress.

Year of study and academic stress

Table 5
‘F’ TEST AMONG THE SUB SAMPLE OF YEAR OF STUDY WITH RESPECT TO ACADEMIC STRESS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR OF STUDY</th>
<th>SUM OF SQUARES</th>
<th>MEAN SQUARE</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>F VALUE</th>
<th>LS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between the groups</td>
<td>64.371</td>
<td>32.185</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.047</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within groups</td>
<td>177570.626</td>
<td>690.936</td>
<td>257</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>177634.996</td>
<td>259</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is evident from the table 5 the calculated ‘F’ value is 0.047 which is not significant at 0.05 level. Hence the framed null hypothesis was accepted. It is inferred
that there is no significant difference among the sub-sample of year of study with respect to academic stress of adolescence.

**UG Studied and academic stress**

**Table 6**

‘F’ TEST AMONG THE SUB SAMPLE OF UG STUDIED WITH RESPECT TO ACADEMIC STRESS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UG STUDIED</th>
<th>SUM OF SQUARES</th>
<th>MEAN SQUARE</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>F VALUE</th>
<th>LS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between the groups</td>
<td>2016.561</td>
<td>1008.281</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.476</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within groups</td>
<td>175618.435</td>
<td>683.340</td>
<td>257</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>177634.996</td>
<td></td>
<td>259</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is evident from the table 6 the calculated ‘F’ value is 1.476 which is not significant at 0.05 level. Hence the framed null hypothesis was accepted. It is inferred that there is no significant difference among the sub-sample of UG studied with respect to academic stress of adolescence.

**Major Findings of the Study**

- There exists no significant difference between male and female adolescence with regard to their academic stress.
- There exists no significant difference between rural and urban locality of college of adolescence with regard to their academic stress.
- There is no significant difference among the sub-sample of type of management with respect to academic stress of adolescence.
- There is no significant difference between arts and science of course studied of adolescence with regard to their academic stress.
- There is no significant difference among the sub-sample of year of study with respect to academic stress of adolescence.
- There is no significant difference among the sub-sample of UG studied with respect to academic stress of adolescence.
Conclusion

The main source of stress for the students is the inadequacy of right support. There is a standard evaluation procedure which does not give enough scope to the students to experiment and push the boundaries to excel. There are many personal and social factors that lead to stress among students. Academic stress has become a pervasive problem across countries, cultures, and ethnic groups (Wong, Wong & Scott, 2006). The pressure of the studies in terms of academics, extra-curricular activities, assignments etc. has increased beyond comparison. Parents expect their children to be a part of rat race and outshine their competitors, to enhance their own social status in the society. Management of the condition thus becomes fundamental at every level namely, personal, social and institutional. Techniques like biofeedback, yoga, life-skills training, mindfulness meditation, psychotherapy have been found to be effective in reducing stress among students. Understanding the source from the different spheres will enable professionals in the field to tailor-make intervention for students combining the most effective strategies.

References