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ACADEMIC STRESS AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT:

Stress has been an integral part of life because there are many things which act as a stress catalyzer. Stress has become part of students' academic life due to the various internal and external expectations placed upon their shoulders. Students facing different type of stress problems that affect their day-to-day life. This study examined the academic stress experienced by girls' and boys' students. The aim of the study is to identify the academic stress among college students and the use of techniques to cope with stress. The main objectives are to study demographic profile of college going students, causes of stress among students, effects of stress on students' performance. The present study was conducted in Nagpur City of Maharashtra. The sample size was 100 college students in which 50 were girls and 50 were boys' students and purposively sampling method was selected for study. Data was collected through survey method. For research work, Questionnaire -Cum- Interview method selected for survey.

Keywords: Stress, Academic stress, Students, Girls & Boys.

Introduction:

Stress refers to the physical, emotional, or psychological strain a person experiences when responding to change or pressure. It is the body's natural reaction to situations that require attention, decision-making, or adaptation. While stress is an unavoidable part of life—regardless of age or background—how individuals manage it significantly influences their well-being. Events like entering college, facing illness, changing jobs, or undergoing life transitions are common sources of stress. Though short-term stress can enhance focus and help meet deadlines, prolonged exposure can negatively impact mental and physical health.

What is Academic Stress?

Academic stress is one of the most prevalent forms of mental strain among students. It

typically arises from the fear of failure, overwhelming coursework, exam pressure, and uncertainty about future goals. For many students, particularly during critical stages of education, this pressure can be intense, as their academic performance directly influences future educational and career opportunities.

In today's competitive academic environment, students often struggle with issues like lack of motivation, difficulty in grasping subjects, and low interest in attending classes. These challenges, compounded by stressors from school, family, peers, and community, contribute to emotional exhaustion and mental fatigue. High levels of academic stress are associated with psychological disorders such as anxiety, depression, and panic attacks. These can impair not only academic performance but also social life and self-esteem. Studies show that excessive academic pressure can lead to long-term health issues and reduced quality.

Causes of academic stress:

Key Causes of Academic Stress Students often experience academic stress due to a variety of reasons, including:

1. Heavy workload
2. High expectations from self or others
3. Poor time management
4. Inadequate preparation
5. Examination pressure
6. Peer competition and social stress
7. Parental pressure
8. Declining physical or mental health

Each of these factors can contribute to increased emotional distress and reduced academic motivation

Impact of Academic Stress on Students -

The effects of academic stress are far-reaching. It can lower students' motivation levels, affect their academic achievements, and in severe cases, lead to school or college dropouts. Chronic stress may cause a range of mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, insomnia, and irritability. Additionally, it can impair concentration, memory, and decision-making skills—making it difficult for students to perform effectively in school.

In a populous country like India, which has the highest number of young people globally, the connection between academic stress and student success is especially significant. Although mild stress can sometimes be beneficial for learning, excessive stress can hinder physical and mental development. The World Health Organization describes stress as the imbalance between demands and a person's ability to cope. Managing this imbalance is crucial for students to succeed both academically and personally.

Effective Stress Management Strategies for Students

Fortunately, stress can be managed through intentional and consistent habits. Students can adopt the following strategies to reduce academic stress:

1. Time Management – Prioritize tasks and create realistic study schedules.
2. Healthy Study Habits – Focus on understanding rather than memorizing content.
3. Physical Activity – Regular exercise, even in short bursts, boosts mood and energy.
4. Balanced Diet – Eating nutritious meals supports physical and cognitive function.
5. Positive Thinking – Replacing negative self-talk with positive affirmations enhances confidence.
6. Sleep & Rest – Adequate rest improves memory and concentration.
7. Yoga and Meditation – Daily practice helps calm the mind and control anxiety.
8. Limiting Screen Time – Reduce time spent on social media to avoid distractions and comparisons.
9. Seeking Support – Talking to friends, teachers, family members, or a counsellor can ease emotional burden.
10. Engaging in Hobbies – Creative or enjoyable activities like music, art, or travel provide a mental break from academic routines.

Aim: To study identify the academic stress among college students.

Objectives:

1. To study the demographic profile of college going students.
2. To study academic stress among girls and boys students.
3. To study stress coping techniques used by students.

Formulation of Hypothesis:

- i) There is no significant difference in Academic stress between girls' and boys' Undergraduate students.
- ii) There is no significant difference between girls' and boys' in stress coping techniques.

Limitations:

1. Present study was in Nagpur city.
2. Only 100 undergraduate college students were selected as a sample.
3. The sample was selected as 50 girls' and 50 boy's students.

Methodology:

Descriptive survey method was used in the present study. The present study was conducted in Nagpur city of Maharashtra. The samples for the study consist of undergraduate college students. The sample size was 100 and there are 50 girl's and 50 boy's students, a purposive sampling method was selected for the study. Total three college's selected for study. Data was collected through questionnaire cum- interview method.

Results & Discussion:**Demographic Profile: Table 1**

| Sr. No | Age Group | Girl's | Boy's | Total |
|--------|----------------------|--------|-------|-------|
| 1 | 18-20 | 17% | 9% | 26% |
| 2 | 21-23 | 29% | 31% | 60% |
| 3 | 24-26 | 4% | 10% | 14% |
| | Total | 50% | 50% | 100% |
| | | | | |
| | Qualification | | | |
| 1 | 1 st year | 15% | 15% | 30 |
| 2 | 2 nd year | 15% | 15% | 30 |
| 3 | 3 rd year | 20% | 20% | 40 |
| | Total | 50% | 50% | 100% |

In the above table it shows that 17% of girls & 9% of boys students were between 18-20 years age group. And 29% of girls & 31% of boys students were between 21-23 years age group. 4% of girls & 10% of boys were between 24-26 years age group.

It was found that 15% of girls & boys students were in 1st years class. 15% of girls & boys were in 2nd years class. 20% of girls & boys were in 3rd years class.

Table 2- Academic stress on students

H₀ – There is no significant difference in academic stress between girls and boys.

Kruskal Walls Test

| H value | Critical Value | Degree of Freedom | Level of significance | Result |
|---------|----------------|-------------------|-----------------------|---|
| 1.04 | 3.841 | 1 | 0.05 | H < 3.841 1.04 < 3.841 Null Hypothesis Accepted |

The Kruskal walls test statistics (H) is 1.04, which is less than the critical value of 3.841 at the 0.05 significance level. This indicates that the observed differences in academic stress between girls and boys are not statistically significant.

Table: 3- Stress coping techniques used by students.

H₀- There is no significant difference between boys and girls in stress coping techniques.

Mann-Whitney U Test

| U statistics | Critical Value | Level of Significance | Result |
|--------------|----------------|-----------------------|---|
| 44 | 0.65 | Alpha-0.05 | $P = 0.65 > 0.05$ Null hypothesis accepted |

There is no statistically significant difference between boys and girls in how they overcome stress at 5% significant level. It is concluded that there is no significant difference between boys and girls in stress coping techniques.

Conclusion:

The study highlights that both male and female students commonly experience academic stress, which negatively affects their concentration, academic performance, and overall well-being. While stress is a universal part of life, its impact on students can be particularly severe, leading to challenges such as delayed assignment submissions, fear of failure, and emotional distress.

To manage and reduce stress, students should prioritize their mental and physical health. Engaging in regular physical activity, practicing yoga and meditation, and participating in enjoyable hobbies can significantly boost focus, confidence, and academic achievement. Additionally, students are encouraged to find joy in daily life through simple activities like spending time with friends, listening to music, travelling, or engaging in creative outlets that bring happiness and relaxation.

Educational institutions also play a critical role in supporting student well-being. Schools and colleges should implement strategies to reduce academic pressure, such as limiting lecture durations, and promoting extracurricular activities like social gatherings, sports, competitions, and cultural events. These initiatives not only create a more balanced academic environment but also help students cope with stress more effectively and enhance their overall academic stress.

Academic stress is a growing concern among students, and its impact on mental and physical health cannot be overlooked. With awareness and the right coping strategies, students can manage stress effectively and achieve their academic goals. Educational institutions should also play an active role by creating a supportive learning environment that fosters balance and well-being alongside academic excellence.

Suggestions:

1. To manage stress, students should engage in activities that help them relax, such as listening to music, dancing, exercising, or traveling.
2. Schools and colleges should include extracurricular activities like social gatherings, picnics, sports, exhibitions, and competitions to help students unwind and reduce stress.

3. When students feel overwhelmed, they should talk to someone they trust—like family members, teachers, or friends—to help ease their stress.
4. Teachers should adopt creative and effective teaching methods that make it easier for students to understand lessons, which in turn supports their mental well-being.
5. Educational institutions should create a positive and supportive environment to help minimize student stress.
6. Engaging in regular physical activity is also an effective way to manage and reduce stress.

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