

A Study of Academic Stress in Relation to Gender and Types of Schools

***Prof (Dr).Aruna Anchal,**

Head Of Education Department Baba Mastnath University, Asthal Bohar,Rohtak

***Mrs.Karishma,**

Research Scholar, Baba Mastnath University, Asthal Bohar ,Rohtak

Abstract

This study investigates academic stress among senior secondary school students, focusing on gender differences and the types of schools attended. The problem was framed as: "A Study of Academic Stress in Relation to Gender and Types of Schools." The objectives were to examine the levels of academic stress among male and female students and to analyze stress levels between students in government and private schools. The hypotheses stated that there is no significant difference in academic stress between male and female students and no significant difference between students in government and private schools. A descriptive survey method was employed to collect data from 600 students across three districts in Haryana—Bhiwani, Charkhi Dadri, and Rohtak. The tool used was the "Scale for Assessing Academic Stress" by Udai Kumar Sinha, and statistical techniques such as mean, standard deviation, and the 't' test were applied. Findings revealed that male students experience higher levels of academic stress than female students. Government school students also reported significantly greater academic stress compared to private school students. These results suggest the need for gender-sensitive interventions and enhanced resources in government schools to reduce academic stress and promote a supportive learning environment.

Keywords: Academic Stress, Gender Differences, School Types, Stress Management, Secondary Education.

Introduction

Academic stress refers to the mental distress related to anticipated academic challenges or the overwhelming pressure to perform well in educational settings. It is a phenomenon affecting students across diverse age groups and educational systems worldwide. Stress manifests when students perceive a gap between the academic demands placed upon them and their ability to meet these demands effectively. This imbalance is characterized by psychological, physiological, and behavioral responses, which can adversely affect academic performance and mental health (JayasankaraReddy, Keshu, Thomas, & Dey, 2016).

Stress arises from several factors, such as stringent academic goals, time management issues, and social pressures, leading to emotional instability and cognitive impairments (Prasad & Vaidya, 2017). Academic environments, particularly those emphasizing grades over holistic learning, often exacerbate this stress, a trend observed in the Indian education system (Kant, Jain, Yadav, & Tomar, 2023).

Academic stress has been defined in multiple contexts. According to Tripathi and Sharma (2013), it is a psychological imbalance caused by the disparity between academic demands and students' perceived capabilities. Stress can also emerge from cultural and language barriers, as experienced by international students (Brown, 2008). Mohammad and Ospanova (2020) describe academic stress as a physiological reaction to excessive educational demands, resulting in exhaustion and reduced motivation.

Academic stress is not limited to specific regions or educational systems but is a universal issue. While Indian students frequently experience stress due to an education system centered on competition (Negi & Kaur, 2018), international students often face acculturative stress when adapting to new academic and social environments (Desa, Yusooff, & Kadir, 2012).

The concept also extends to psychosocial factors. Srinivasa (2022) highlighted the differences in stress perception among domestic and international students, noting cultural influences as significant determinants of stress responses. For Indian

adolescents, stress is often driven by societal expectations and the pressure to achieve academic excellence (Singh & Kumar, 2021).

Globally, academic stress has been widely researched, with studies emphasizing its multifaceted nature. In Hong Kong, for instance, students face stress from academic overload and social networks, negatively affecting their mental health (Ng, 2016). Similar trends are observed among students in Northern India, where socio-economic factors like family income and parental education significantly impact perceived stress levels (Negi & Kaur, 2018).

Management strategies such as counseling and supportive educational practices have been recommended to mitigate academic stress. These interventions are critical for fostering resilience and promoting well-being among students (Barseli & Ifdil, 2017). Academic stress is a complex and widespread phenomenon influenced by cultural, social, and individual factors. Recognizing its multidimensional nature and implementing effective strategies can help mitigate its adverse effects, thereby improving students' overall academic experiences and mental health.

Review of Literature

Brown (2008) explored academic stress among international students during the initial stages of their master's programs. The study highlighted that language barriers and academic cultural differences were major contributors to stress, which gradually decreased as students adapted to the workload. The findings emphasize the importance of cultural orientation programs for international students.

Desa, Yusooft, and Kadir (2012) explored acculturative stress among postgraduate students in Malaysia, identifying environmental and attitudinal barriers as key sources of stress. They emphasized the impact of acculturative stress on academic performance and motivation, calling for inclusive and supportive academic policies.

Tripathi and Sharma (2013) examined the causes of academic stress among college students, defining it as a psychological imbalance between academic demands and students' perceived capabilities. The study identified poor time management and high expectations as critical factors, recommending counseling interventions for stress management.

Ng (2016) reviewed academic stress among undergraduate students in Hong Kong, identifying academic overload and peer pressure as major stressors. The study underlined the detrimental effects of these factors on students' mental health and academic performance, advocating for institutional support systems.

JayasankaraReddy, Keshu, Thomas, and Dey (2016) reviewed cognitive and cultural aspects of academic stress, emphasizing the competitive nature of education systems, particularly in India. The authors identified stress-related cognitive impairments as a significant issue, urging for strategies that address both educational demands and cultural expectations.

Barseli and Ifdil (2017) discussed academic stress in the Indonesian context, defining it as a subjective reaction to academic demands. The study advocated for the implementation of counseling services to help students manage their stress effectively and improve their educational experiences.

Negi and Kaur (2018) analyzed socio-personal and academic factors affecting stress among undergraduate students in India. Their findings revealed that family income and parental education played a significant role in perceived stress levels, suggesting targeted interventions for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Mohammad and Ospanova (2020) studied stress resistance among Kazakh and international students in medical universities. They found that excessive academic demands impaired students' cognitive and motivational capacities, suggesting the integration of stress management training in medical education.

Srinivasa (2022) compared academic stress between international and American students. The study revealed that domestic students reported higher levels of stress due to academic competitiveness, whereas cultural adaptation challenges significantly influenced international students. The author recommended culturally sensitive mental health services.

Kant, Jain, Yadav, and Tomar (2023) conducted a cross-sectional study on academic stress among Indian adolescents attending coaching institutes. They found that nearly 50% of students experienced moderate to severe stress levels,

largely attributed to societal pressure for academic success. The authors emphasized the need for mental health programs in coaching centers.

Significance of the Study

The study on academic stress in relation to gender and types of schools holds significant value in understanding the challenges faced by senior secondary school students. Academic stress is a critical factor influencing students' mental health, academic performance, and overall well-being. By exploring the differences in stress levels between male and female students, the study provides insights into gender-specific stressors, which can guide educators and policymakers in developing targeted interventions. Additionally, analyzing the academic stress experienced in government and private schools sheds light on the impact of institutional factors, such as resources, teaching methodologies, and peer environments, on students' stress levels. The findings of this study can contribute to the design of supportive educational practices, fostering a balanced and conducive learning environment. Ultimately, the study aims to enhance the academic experience of students, ensuring their holistic development and preparing them for future challenges.

Statement of the Problem

A Study of Academic Stress in relation to Gender and Types of Schools

Objectives

1. To study the level of academic stress of male and female senior secondary school students
2. To study the level of academic stress of government and private senior secondary school students

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference between academic stress of male and female senior secondary school students
2. There is no significant difference between the academic stress of government and private senior secondary school students .

Methodology

Keeping in view the nature and objectives of the study, Descriptive Survey Method was used.

Population

The study focused on the population of senior secondary school students in Haryana state, specifically targeting students from three districts: Bhiwani, Charkhi Dadri, and Rohtak. Both government and private senior secondary schools within these districts were included in the study.

Sample

A sample of 600 senior secondary school students was collected for the study. These students were selected from the government and private senior secondary schools within the identified districts.

Tool Used

Scale for Assessing Academic Stress by Udai Kumar Sinha.

Statistical Techniques Used

Mean, SD and 't' test were used to analyze the data.

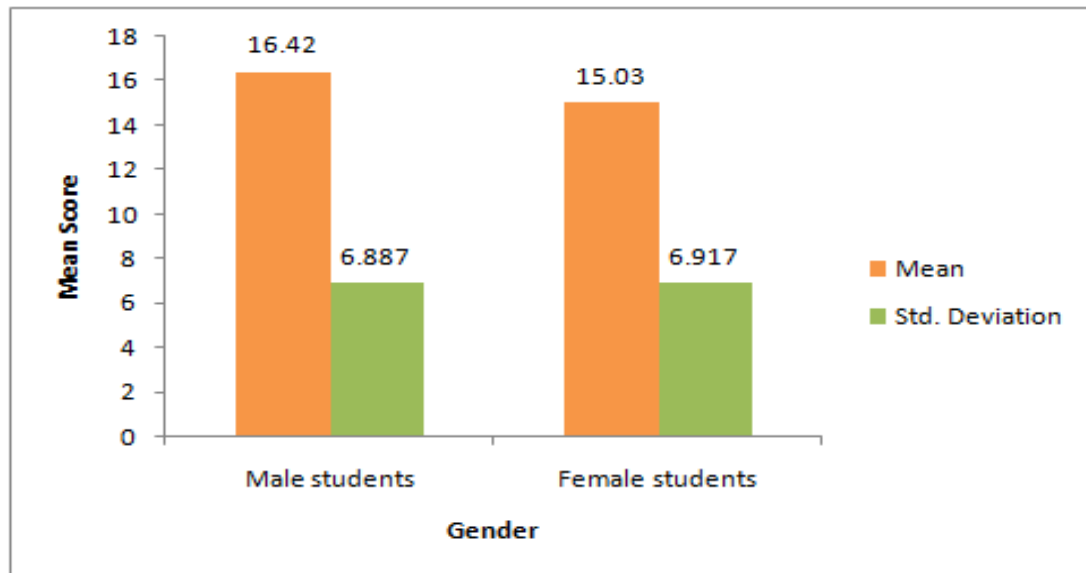
Data Analysis

The first objective of the study is to study the level of academic stress of male and female senior secondary school students. To achieve this objective, mean, standard deviation and 't' test was used to analyze the data presented in table 1:

Table 1: Comparison of Academic Stress in relation to gender

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	't' value
Academic Stress	Male students	250	16.42	6.887	2.261*
	Female students	250	15.03	6.917	

*Significant at 0.05 level

**Fig. 1: Mean and SD Scores of Academic Stress in relation to Gender**

The data presented in Table 1 compares academic stress between male and female students based on mean scores and standard deviations. The analysis is based on a sample of 250 male students and 250 female students, yielding equal group sizes for comparison. The results indicate that male students reported a higher mean academic stress score ($M = 16.42$, $SD = 6.887$) compared to female students ($M = 15.03$, $SD = 6.917$). The difference between the two groups is statistically significant, as evidenced by the calculated t value of 2.261, which is significant at the 0.05 level. Hence, the hypothesis, "There is no significant difference between academic stress of male and female senior secondary school students" is rejected. This suggests that male students experience significantly greater academic stress compared to their female counterparts in the sampled population.

The second objective of the study is to study the level of academic stress of government and private senior secondary school students. To achieve this objective, mean, standard deviation and 't' test was used to analyze the data presented in table 2:

Table 2: Comparison of Academic Stress in relation to types of school

Variable	Types of School	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	't' value
Academic 'Stress	Government school students	250	17.62	6.988	6.347**
	Private school students	250	13.83	6.341	

**Significant at 0.01 level

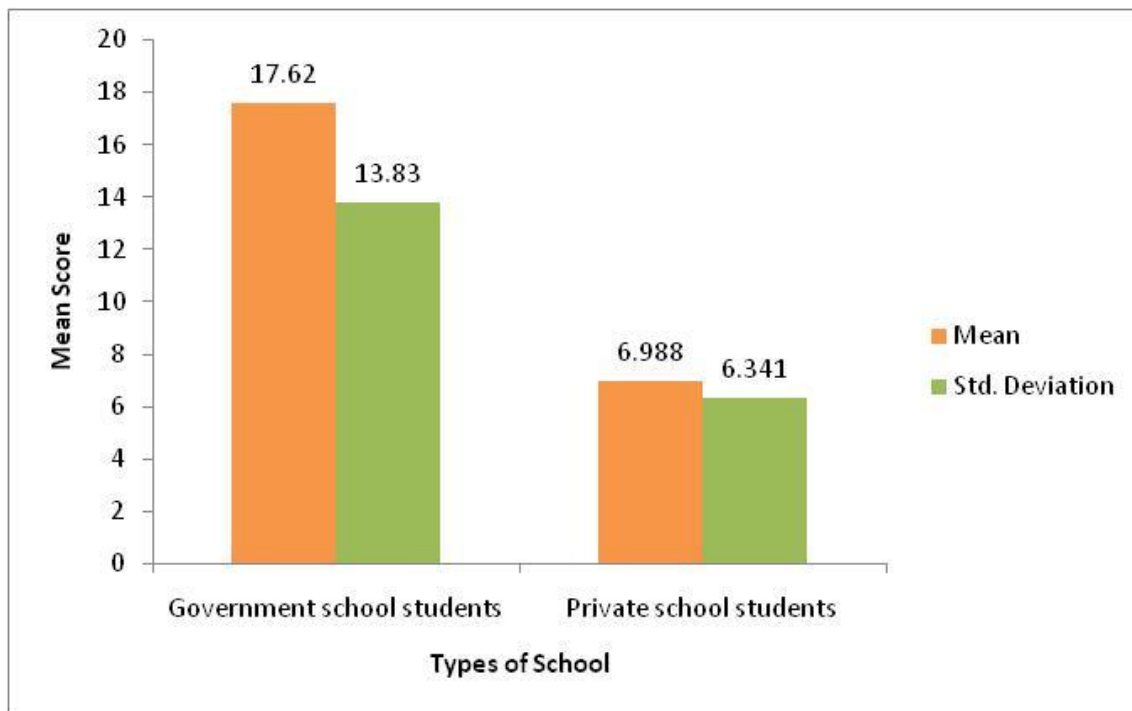


Fig. 2: Mean and SD Scores of Academic Stress in relation to types of school

Table 2 examines academic stress levels among students from government and private schools, comparing their mean scores and standard deviations. The analysis is based on an equal sample size of 250 students from each type of school. The findings reveal that government school students reported a higher mean academic stress score ($M = 17.62$, $SD = 6.988$) compared to private school students ($M = 13.83$, $SD = 6.341$). This difference is statistically significant, with a t value of 6.347, which is significant at the 0.01 level. Hence, the null hypothesis, "There is no significant difference between the academic stress of government and private senior secondary school students" is rejected. These results indicate that government school students experience significantly greater academic stress than their counterparts in private schools within the sampled population.

Findings of the Study

The study revealed significant differences in the academic stress levels among senior secondary school students based on gender and type of school. Male students were found to experience higher levels of academic stress compared to female students. This indicates that gender-related factors may contribute to how students perceive and respond to academic challenges. Additionally, students from government schools reported significantly higher levels of academic stress compared to those from private schools. This suggests that institutional factors such as resources, teaching approaches, and the overall school environment play a crucial role in influencing students' stress levels.

Conclusion with Implications and Suggestions

The study concludes that academic stress is significantly influenced by both gender and the type of school attended by senior secondary school students. Male students and those in government schools exhibit higher levels of stress, indicating the need for targeted strategies to alleviate academic pressures within these groups. These findings underscore the importance of creating gender-sensitive educational policies and providing adequate resources and support in government schools.

To address these challenges, schools should implement robust counseling programs to help students develop effective stress management techniques. Teachers and administrators should focus on fostering a supportive learning environment that minimizes unnecessary academic pressures. Moreover, government schools should be equipped with better infrastructure and learning resources to create parity with private institutions.

Parental involvement and awareness programs can also play a critical role in reducing stress levels by promoting realistic expectations and emotional support for students. Future research should explore other potential factors contributing to academic stress, such as socio-economic background and cultural influences, to further enrich the understanding of this issue and develop comprehensive solutions.

References

1. Barseli, M., & Ifdil, I. (2017). Konsep stres akademik siswa. *Jurnal Konseling Indonesia*. <https://dx.doi.org/10.29210/119800>
2. Brown, L. (2008). The incidence of study-related stress in international students in the initial stage of the international sojourn. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 12(1), 5-28.
3. Desa, Asmawati, Yusoooff, F., & Kadir, N. A. (2012). *Acculturative stress among international postgraduate students at UKM*. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 59, 490-496. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1016/J.SBSPRO.2012.09.287>
4. Jayasankara, Re, K., Keshu, M., Thomas, S., & Dey, A. M. (2016). Cognitive and cultural aspects of academic stress: A review. *International Journal of Educational Psychology and Research*, 5(1), 45-52.
5. Kant, R., Jain, S., Yadav, R., & Tomar, A. (2023). A cross-sectional study to assess level of academic stress and its associated factors among school-going adolescents attending coaching institute, Jaipur, Rajasthan. *Global Journal for Research Analysis*, 12(11). <https://dx.doi.org/10.36106/gjra/8703620>
6. Mohammad, T., & Ospanova, M. (2020). Examining the ability to stress resistance of foreign and Kazakh students (on the example of the Medical University of Karaganda). *Pedagogical Sciences*, 2020(3), 89-99.
7. Negi, A., & Kaur, K. (2018). Socio-personal and academic factors affecting the extent of perceived stress among undergraduate students of northern state agricultural universities (SAUs) of India. *Asian Journal of Home Science*, 13(1), 18-27.
8. Ng, K. (2016). A review of academic stress among Hong Kong undergraduate students. *Journal of Modern Education Review*, 6(8), 571-582.
9. Prasad, K., & Vaidya, R. (2017). Causes of stress among PhD research scholars with reference to Rashtrasant Tukadoji Maharaj Nagpur University: An empirical analysis.
10. Srinivasa, S. R. (2022). Psychosocial correlates of stress among international and American students. *International Journal of Social Science Studies*, 10(2), 45-60.
11. Tripathi, K., & Sharma, K. (2013). Causes of academic stress among college students and its management. *International Journal of Scientific Research*, 2(6), 10-12.