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Academic stress among adolescents as per stream of education

Vandana and Dr. Krishna Duhan

Abstract

Adolescence is a period of rapid change and time of searching personal identity. This stage is called as the period of "stress and storm". Academic stress is mental distress with respect to some anticipated frustration associated with academic failure or even unawareness to the possibility of such failure. Students have to face many academic demands like school examination, answering questions in the class and showing progress in school subjects. According to most high school students, their greatest academic stressors include tests, grades, homework, academic and achievement expectations and parental pressure. The study aimed to assess the academic stress among adolescents as per stream of education in Hisar city of Haryana state. A total sample of 200 respondents studying in both arts and science stream was taken randomly in the age group of 16-18 years i.e. 100 respondents from rural and 100 respondents from urban area. To draw rural sample government senior secondary school from 'Dobhi' village was taken randomly and to have the urban sample two schools i.e. government girl's senior secondary school, Sushila bhawan and government senior secondary school, Jhajpool were selected randomly. With regards to gender, equal sample size was taken. Tool used for the research was Academic stress scale by Rao (2012). Results revealed that on total sample 47 per cent urban respondents had moderate academic stress than their counterparts. Results as per stream of education highlighted that 44 per cent science stream respondents had high level of stress than arts stream respondents in rural area. Results also revealed that 46 per cent urban arts stream respondents had high level of stress as compared to science stream respondents whereas, 48 per cent arts and 46 per cent science stream respondents had moderate level of stress in urban area. Significant mean differences was found in academic stress of rural and urban respondents ($Z=1.99^*$), and rural arts and science stream respondents ($Z=2.19^*$).

Keywords: Academic stress, adolescents, school, stress and storm

Introduction

Stress is viewed as a negative emotional, cognitive, behavioural and physiological process that occurs as a person tries to adjust to or deal with stressors (Bernstein *et al.* 2008) ^[3]. Stressors are defined as circumstances that disrupt, or threaten to disrupt, individual's daily functioning and cause people to make adjustments (Auerbach and Grambling 1998) ^[2]. Auerbach and Grambling (1998) ^[2] define stress as an unpleasant state of emotional and physiological arousal that individuals experience in situations that they perceive as dangerous or threatening to their well-being. Stress can have both positive and negative effects on people. It means that stress may be a normal, adaptive reaction to threat. Its role is to signal and prepare individuals to take defensive action. Stressors are demands made by the internal or external environment that upset balance, thus affecting physical and psychological well-being and requiring action to restore balance (Lazarus and Cohen, 1977) ^[6].

Academic stress is defined as the anxiety and stress that arises from schooling and education. Now a day there is often a lot of pressure that comes along with pursuing a degree and one's education. It may be studying, homework, tests, labs and reading etc. Stress arises among adolescents due to doing all of the work, balancing the time and finding time for extra-curricular activities.

Academic problems have been reported to be most common source of stress for students. Stress in family like divorce, intrapersonal conflicts and maternal depression leads to stress in the adolescents who deteriorates functioning (Forehand *et al.* 1991) ^[5]. Schafer (1996) ^[9] observed that the most irritating daily hassles, usually school-related stressors such as constant pressure of studying, too little time, writing term papers, taking tests, future plans and boring instructor. Students experienced academic stress arising from both their own expectations to excel as well as expectations arising from their parents and teachers (Ang and Huan, 2006) ^[1].

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The National Crime Records Bureau (2014) registered that 1.8% of students committed suicide due to failing in examinations. There was an 80% rise in suicide rates due to academic stress in a city in India during one-year time frame as published by the Bureau (2014). Studies in India also implicate the negative consequences of academic stress as indicated in the research done by Verma, Sharma and Larson (2002) [10] and Deb *et al.* (2015) [4]. Students with high-stress levels in academia were seen to exhibit signs of depression, anxiety, phobia, school refusals, increased irritability and complaints and reduced interest in schoolwork.

Methodology

For the present study, Hisar district was taken randomly from Haryana state. Further Hisar block II was selected randomly. From selected block one village named ‘Dobhi’ was taken randomly having one government senior secondary school for adolescents of both arts and science stream. To have urban sample two schools i.e. government girl’s senior secondary school, sushila bhawan and government senior secondary school, Jhajpool were selected randomly from Hisar city. A list of adolescents of arts and science stream studying in 10+1 and 10+2 (16-18 years) was prepared from rural and urban areas. From the list 50 adolescents were taken from each science and arts stream from rural and urban area thus making

a total sample of 200 adolescents i.e. 100 adolescents from rural area and 100 from urban area. With regards to gender, equal sample size was taken. Tool used for the research was Academic stress scale by Rao (2012) [8]. Frequencies, percentages and Z test were used to draw inferences.

Results

Table 1: Academic stress among respondents as per area (N=200)

Levels of academic stress	Rural (n=100) f (%)	Urban (n=100) f (%)	Total (N=200) f (%)
Low (71-109)	19(19.0)	11(11.0)	30(15.0)
Moderate (110-148)	41(41.0)	47(47.0)	88(44.0)
High (149-187)	40(40.0)	42(42.0)	82(41.0)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentage

Results presented in table 1 highlighted that out of total sample more percentage of respondents (44%) perceived moderate level of academic stress followed by high level (41%). Further, 47 per cent respondents of urban area perceived moderate level of academic stress against 41 per cent in rural area. Results also depict that a good percentage of urban respondents (42%) had high level of academic stress against 40 per cent of rural respondents.

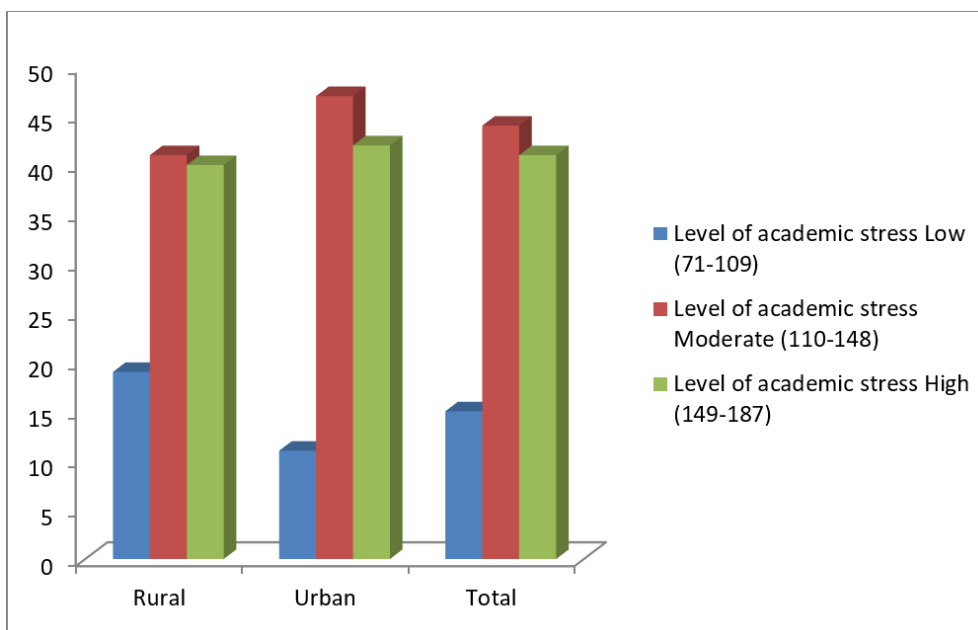


Fig 1: Academic stress among respondents as per area

Table 2: Academic stress among respondents as per stream of education (N=200)

Levels of academic Stress	Rural			Urban			Total (N=200) f (%)
	Arts (n=50) f (%)	Science (n=50) f (%)	Total (100) f (%)	Arts (n=50) f (%)	Science (n=50) f (%)	Total (n=100) f (%)	
Low (71-109)	8(16.0)	11(11.0)	19(19.0)	5(5.0)	6(6.0)	11(11.0)	30(15.0)
Moderate (110-148)	20(40.0)	21(42.0)	41(41.0)	24(48.0)	23(46.0)	47(47.0)	88(44.0)
High (149-187)	18(36.0)	22(44.0)	40(40.0)	23(46.0)	19(38.0)	42(42.0)	82(41.0)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentage

Results presented in table 8 depict that on total sample 44 per cent of arts and science stream respondents perceived moderate level of academic stress followed by high level (41%) of stress. Results further highlighted that 42 per cent of

science and 40 per cent of arts stream respondents perceived moderate level of academic stress in rural area. The similar trend was observed with urban arts (48%) and science stream (46%) respondents.

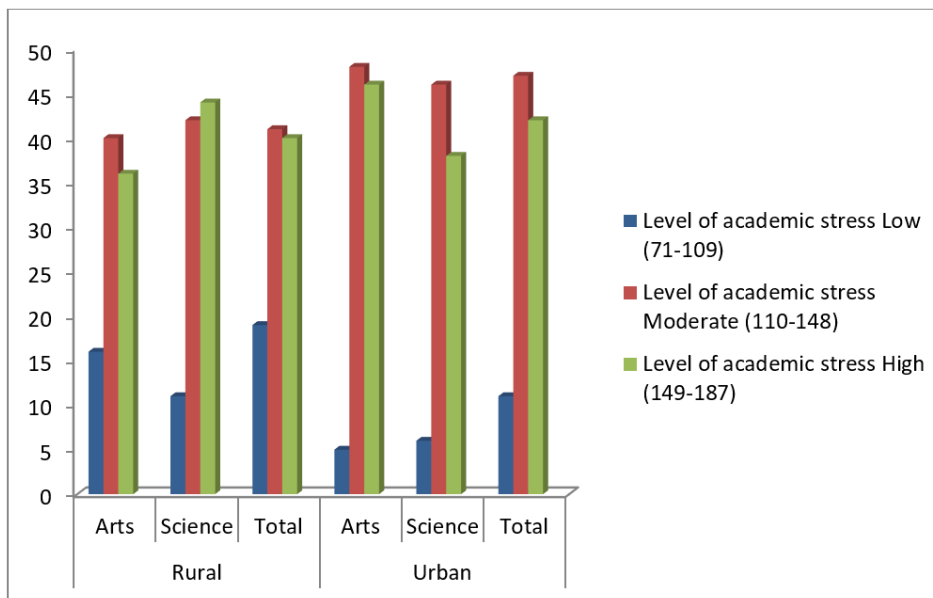


Fig 2: Academic stress among respondents as per stream of education

Table 3: Mean differences in academic stress among respondents (N=200)

Aspects	Academic stress	
	Mean±SD	Z -Values
Area of residence		
Rural (n=100)	144.03±15.23	1.99*
Urban(n=100)	139.12±19.45	
Stream of education		
➤ Rural		
Arts (n=50)	148.32±19.00	2.19*
Science (n=50)	139.74±20.12	
➤ Urban		
Arts (n=50)	143.30±24.41	1.79
Science (n=50)	134.94±22.19	

* Significant at the 0.05 level

To compare academic stress among rural and urban, male and female, arts and science stream respondents ‘Z’ test was computed and standard deviation was calculated. Results showed significant mean differences in academic stress of rural and urban respondents (Z=1.99*), and rural arts and science stream respondents (Z=2.19*).

Discussion

1. Academic stress among respondents as per area

Results revealed that on total sample more percentage of respondents (44%) perceived moderate level of academic stress followed by high level (41%). Further, 47 per cent respondents of urban area perceived moderate level of academic stress against 41 per cent in rural area. Results also depict that a good percentage of urban respondents (42%) had high level of academic stress against 40 per cent of rural respondents. Further results showed significant mean differences in academic stress of rural and urban respondents (Z=1.99*). On the basis of results it may be concluded that in urban area slightly higher percentage of respondents had high academic stress than rural respondents. The reason may be that in the present study more percentage of parents in urban area were educated up to graduation / post-graduation than their counterparts and they were more ambitious towards academics of their children and they had high expectations for their children which might be the cause of higher academic stress among urban respondents. Results are supported by Prabhu (2015) [7] stated that the higher secondary students

were having moderate level of academic stress. Study found that urban students had high academic stress than rural students.

2. Academic stress among respondents as per stream of education

Results related to stream of education of respondents depict that 42 per cent of science and 40 per cent of arts stream respondents perceived moderate level of academic stress in rural area and similar trend was observed with urban arts (48%) and science stream (46%) respondents. Significant mean differences in academic stress was found between arts and science stream respondents (Z=2.19*). Results of the present study are in the line of study carried out by Prabhu (2015) [7] stated that science stream students had more academic stress than arts students.

Conclusion

Results depict that higher percentage of urban respondents (47%) had moderate and high level of academic stress than rural respondents. Results as per stream of education highlighted that higher percentage of science stream respondents had high level of stress in rural area than their counterparts, whereas in urban area, more percentage of arts stream respondents had moderate and high level of academic stress than science stream respondents. Significant differences in mean values of academic stress were observed in rural and urban and stream of education in rural area.

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