

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ACADEMIC STRESS AND SELF - ESTEEM OF
SECONDARY SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS**

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Abstract

The present study was conducted to explore the relationship between academic stress and self-esteem among adolescent school students. To achieve this goal, 200 students of class IX and X were selected as the sample from secondary schools of Pathankot district in Punjab state. The investigator used Stress Inventory for School Students developed and standardized by Seema Rani and Dr. Basant Bahadur Singh (2011 and Self-Esteem scale by Santosh Dhar & Upinder Dhar (2005). Pearson's Coefficient of Correlation technique was applied to find out the relation between the variables. The study revealed that there is a positive and statistically significant correlation between academic stress and self-esteem of adolescent students. No significant difference was found between the academic stress of government and private secondary school adolescents, on the other side female and rural secondary school adolescents were found having more academic stress than male and urban students.

Key Words: Academic Stress, Adolescents and Self-Esteem

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is defined as the period of conversion from childhood to adulthood that involves biological, cognitive, and socio - emotional changes. A key task of this period is preparation for adulthood. Indeed, the future of any culture hinges on how effective this preparation is. It is a psychological process of change accompanying the period from the onset of puberty to the attainment of adulthood. It is a crucial stage between childhood and adulthood. Broadly, it covers three stages i.e. early, middle and late adolescence. It is the most susceptible age and in this age, the adolescents have to face the challenges like exhaustive readjustment with family, school and social life. Most of the adolescents during this stage experience stress as well as unpleasant feelings.

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Academic Stress

The haunting devil that reins the lives of many students in academic institutions is academic stress. It is a mental pressure from being exposed to new learning situations, adjusting with new social settings etc. Academic stress can be defined as mental distress experienced by students with respect to expected disappointment associated with academic failure. The challenges faced by students are school tests, showing progress, fulfilling teachers' and parents' expectations, overcrowded classes, understanding the content imparted by the teacher, methods of teaching etc. These challenges are related to academic stress although modern educational system is based on child centered approach but in the present scenario students are being suffered by the stress in their academic life. According to Wilks (2008) "Academic stress is the product of a combination of academic-related demands that exceed the adaptive resources available to an individual"

Causes of Academic Stress

1. The exposure to new and difficult concepts during the intermediate period exposes the students to academic stress.
2. Students have to face stress of adjusting to a new environment while changing their schools due to some reasons.
3. Getting through entrance exams lead to great academic pressure on the students.
4. Exams are a source of tension, stress and anxiety for many students as they are highly pressurized by their parents and teachers to perform well in the exams.
5. Sometimes school environment itself becomes the cause of students' stress.
6. Peer relationships can provide estruses or distress in regard to dress, behaviour, choice of friends and many other areas of life.
7. Academic Anxiety is one of the most common causes of academic stress is anxiety (Misra, 2000).
8. Social comparison by the parents is the issue that causes anxiety among the students to worry about their academic progress report (Rao, 2008)
9. Teachers' expectations from the students lead to failure and thereby this stressful schedule causes a lot of academic pressure.

10. Due to over scheduling students are often unable to shoulder the two tasks simultaneously and hence ending in failure.

11 Parents' expectations from their children regarding high scores, clearing competitive exams and being admitted to renowned institutions drives the students towards academic strains.

Self-esteem

Self-esteem is an overall assessment of the individual's worthiness, expressing their positive or negative orientation. Being a component of Self-concept, Rosenberg defines it as a sum of individual thoughts and feelings, having reference to him as an object. The synonyms of the term self-esteem are: 1) self-importance; 2) self-respect; 3) self-love (which may contain elements of pride); self-completeness. Self-esteem, however, differs from self-confidence and self-efficacy which include conviction in terms of personal qualities and future performance. Branden's descriptions of self-esteem are as follows:

1. Self-esteem is a fundamental human need; it is part of the process of life and is indispensable to normal and healthy self-development and is vital for survival.
2. Self-esteem is an automatic and inevitable consequence of the individual's choices.
3. Self-esteem is a part as well as a background to individual's feelings, thoughts and actions. Self-esteem is a part of our personality and in order to raise it we need to have a sense of personal worth coming from those life challenges that demonstrate our success.

Self-esteem has two elements – self-knowledge and self-awareness. It includes the individual's perceptions about their own strengths and weaknesses, abilities, attitudes and values. Its development starts at birth and is constantly developing under the influence of experience. During different periods of human age the child realizes one or other side of their own self. The child becomes aware of self-esteem leads to poorer school performance leading to academic stress. To conclude we may say that self-esteem is central to what we do with our lives – the loyalty we have to developing ourselves and caring for others – and is at the heart of everything that an adolescent will achieve in their life. Self-esteem is formed in the family by the parents and parental attitude is of paramount importance.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Abouserie (1994) conducted study on the sources and levels of stress in relation to locus of control and self-esteem among university students. Examinations results were found as the chief causes of stress among students, followed by studying for exams, too much to do and the amount to learn respectively.

Lo (2002) investigated the perception and sources of stress, coping mechanisms used, and self-esteem in nursing students during three years of their undergraduate nursing programme. Results indicated that in a first year, students experienced significantly less transient stress as compared to second year and students in third year had more positive self-esteem than year two students.

Deniz (2006) conducted a co relational study to find out the relationships among coping styles with stress, decision self-esteem, decision-making styles and life satisfaction. Significant correlation was found between Life satisfaction and decision self-esteem along with all decision-making styles (vigilance, buck-passing, procrastination and hyper vigilance).

Valsaraj (2014) conducted a study on academic stress and self-esteem among higher secondary school students in selected private schools of Udupi district. The study reveals moderate stress among 80.2% students, mild stress among 13.5% students and severe stress among 6.2% students. 82.3% students were having normal self-esteem and 6.2% were having low self-esteem among the subjects. Low negative but significant relationship was found between academic stress and self-esteem.

Pandey and Chalise (2015) investigated the level of academic stress and self- esteem. The mean score of self-esteem and academic stress was 11.9 and 18.4 respectively. Almost 78% students have low self-esteem while 74% have high academic stress. Lower age, lower education and low perceived family support were found as significant variable for high academic stress and low self-esteem. High academic stress was found among the lower financial support group.

Kumar (2018) conducted a study the impact of academic climate on self-esteem and academic stress among nursing students. Self-esteem was reported well among nursing students (81.58%). (47.63%) were reported most stressful stressors followed by personal (45.75%) and academic stressors (40.75%) by the students.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In the present era we see the students facing Academic stress involving mental distress regarding anticipated academic challenges or failure. The impact of academic stress has led to reduced outcomes in the areas of exercise, nourishment, substance use and self-care. During the adolescence period which is considered as a period of stress and storm, the students undergo varied developmental changes affecting their way of self-evolution and self-esteem as well as their academic achievement. Academic stress has positive effect on the self-esteem. Mostly the students having academic stress, they have high self-esteem and they are also good in their studies. In the same way, those who have high self-esteem perform well in their academics and they have positive academic stress. This motivated the researcher to study the relationship between academic stress and self esteem of secondary school students. After reviewing the previous studies, the researcher found that most of the studies were conducted on other than secondary school adolescents. Hardly any study was found on the population of secondary school students. That is why the researcher thought to conduct such study on school adolescents. The present study can be proved fruitful as its results may guide school administrator, teachers, parents, curriculum designers and councilors to provide educational guidance to the students for making their self-esteem appreciable.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Following were the objectives of the present study:

1. To study the relationship between Academic stress and self-esteem of secondary school adolescents.
2. To study the difference between Academic stress of male and female secondary school adolescents.
3. To study the difference between Academic stress of government and private secondary school adolescents.
4. To study the difference between Academic stress of rural and urban secondary school adolescents.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

The following hypotheses were formulated for the present study:

1. There exists no significant relationship between Academic stress and self-esteem of secondary school adolescents.
2. There exists no significant difference between Academic stress of male and female secondary school adolescents.
3. There exists no significant difference between Academic stress of government and private secondary school adolescents.
4. There exists no significant difference between Academic stress of rural and urban secondary school adolescents.

METHOD

For the purpose of present investigation, descriptive survey method of research was employed.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The population of the present study was the school adolescents of X class of Pathankot District (Punjab). The investigator selected a sample of 200 students (100 male and 100 female). From these selected adolescents, 50 adolescents were taken from government and 50 from private secondary schools from the above mentioned district. Further 25 students were selected randomly from each 50 government and private secondary school students

TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES USED

Stress Inventory for school students developed and standardized by Seema Rani and Dr. Basant Bahadur Singh (2011) and Self-Esteem scale by Santosh Dhar & Upinder Dhar (2005) were used to assess the academic stress and self-esteem of adolescents respectively. The data was analyzed by using t-test and Pearson's Coefficient of Correlation.

DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The present study was delimited to X class students of secondary schools of district Pathankot of state Punjab.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The analysis and interpretation of the data was done by calculating the Mean, SD, t- value and r-value as per the requirement of the objectives of the study.

Table1: Relationship between Academic Stress and Self-esteem of secondary school adolescents

Variables	N	R	Level of Significance	Remarks
Academic Stress & Self-esteem	100	0.302	0.01 level	Significant

Table 1 shows the Co-efficient of correlation (r) between Academic Stress and Self-esteem of students ($N=100$) as 0.302 which is significant at 0.01 level showing that Academic Stress and Self-esteem are significantly correlated. The magnitude of correlation indicates that Academic Stress and Self-esteem of secondary school adolescents bear a positive and significant correlation. Hence the Hypothesis-1: *There exists no significant relationship between Academic Stress and Self-esteem of secondary school adolescents is rejected.*

Table2: Difference of Academic Stress among male and female secondary school adolescents

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Remarks
Male	50	40.042	8.407	3.15	Significant
Female	50	48.620	9.615		

Significant at 0.01 level

Table 2 shows the Mean scores of Male ($N=50$) and Female ($N=50$) secondary school adolescents on Academic Stress. The Mean score of male and female secondary school

adolescents on Academic Stress was found to be 40.042 and 48.620. S D for the same was found to be 8.407 and 9.615 relatively. The calculated t -value i.e. 3.15 which is more than the table value 2.54 showing significant difference between Academic Stress of secondary school adolescents with respect to gender. The mean score of female adolescents is more than the mean score of male adolescents which shows that female secondary school adolescents bear more academic stress than male adolescents.

Hence, Hypothesis-II: *There exists no significant difference of Academic Stress among secondary school male and female adolescents is rejected.*

Table3: Difference of Academic Stress among government and private secondary school adolescents

School	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Remarks
Government	50	40.516	7.401	1.87	Not significant
Private	50	40.618	8.425		

Table 3 shows the Mean scores of government (N=50) and private (N=50) secondary school adolescents on Academic Stress. The Mean score of government and private secondary school adolescents on Academic Stress was found to be 40.516 and 40.618. S D for the same was found to be 7.401 and 8.425 relatively. The calculated t -value i.e. 1.87 which is less than the table value 1.96 showing insignificant difference between the Academic Stress of secondary school adolescents with respect to school.

Hence, Hypothesis-III: *There exists no significant difference of Academic Stress among government and private secondary school adolescents is accepted.*

Table 4: Difference of Academic Stress among Rural and Urban secondary school adolescents

Locality	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Remarks
Rural	50	48.284	8.264	2.48	Significant
Urban	50	40.452	7.116		

Significant at 0.05 level

Table 4 shows the Mean scores of government (N=50) and private (N=50) secondary school adolescents on Academic Stress. The Mean score of rural and urban secondary school adolescents on Academic Stress was found to be 48.284 and 40.452. S D for the same was found to be 8.264 and 7.116 relatively. The calculated t -value i.e. 2.48 which is more than the table value 1.96 showing significant difference between the Academic Stress of secondary school adolescents with respect to locality. The mean score of rural adolescents is more than the mean score of urban adolescents which shows that rural secondary school adolescents bear more academic stress than urban adolescents.

Hence, Hypothesis-IV: *There exists no significant difference of Academic Stress among rural and urban secondary school adolescents is rejected.*

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. Positive and significant relationship was found between the academic stress and self-esteem of secondary school adolescents.
2. Significant mean difference of academic stress was found between male and female secondary school adolescents. It was found that female secondary school students have more academic stress than the male adolescents.
3. No significant mean difference of academic stress was found between government and private secondary school adolescents.

4. Significant mean difference of academic stress was found between rural and urban secondary school adolescents. It was found that rural secondary school students have more academic stress than urban secondary school adolescents.

CONCLUSION

The present study was mainly dealt with the academic stress of secondary school adolescents in Pathankot district of Punjab state. After analyzing and interpreting the data, it was found that there is positive and significant correlation between academic stress and self-esteem of secondary school adolescents. It shows that the adolescents having more academic stress have high level of self-esteem. Female secondary school adolescents were found having more academic stress than the male adolescents. It may be due to gender differences. Rural secondary school adolescents were also found having more academic stress than urban secondary school adolescents. It may be due to lack of proper educational facilities. No significant difference of academic stress was found between government and private secondary school adolescents.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The present study is concerned with academic stress and self-esteem of school adolescents. Result shows positive relationship between academic stress and self-esteem of adolescents. So it is the responsibility of the teacher and parents to maintain this relationship between academic stress and self-esteem by providing good classroom environment and family environment to the students. They should be free from any biasness or subjectivity, inferiority and superiority complex because marginal increase in self-esteem may lead to high academic stress. Parents and teachers should maintain the balanced or good relationship among the academic stress and self-esteem of female adolescents by ensuring their involvement in their academic task. School management, teachers and parents should try their best to maintain the balance between academic stress and self-esteem of rural adolescents by providing them proper facilities and required guidance.

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