

**ACADEMIC STRESS AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF UNDERACHIEVERS IN
HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL**

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Abstract

The present study aims to find the level of academic stress felt by the underachievers studying in higher secondary schools as well as their academic achievement. It also tries to figure out the difference in academic stress and academic achievement of underachievers with respect to gender and the relationship between academic stress and academic achievement. Survey method is adapted and a sample comprising of 319 higher secondary students was selected by random sampling. A 5 point Likert type Academic Stress Scale consisting of 34 items was constructed and validated to collect data for the study. The collected data were subjected to descriptive, differential and correlation analysis. The results of differential analysis showed that (i) Boys have more Academic Stress than boys; and (ii) Girls have significantly better Academic Achievement than boys. The results of correlation analysis showed that there is a Negative Relationship between academic stress and academic achievement of underachievers studying in higher secondary schools.

Key words: Underachievement, Academic Stress and Academic Achievement.

Introduction

All round development of an individual to the fullest capacity is considered to be the aim of education throughout the globe. If an individual fails to bring out his/her potential to the at most level academically, then the career and the life of that particular individual may become substandard. Thus academic underachievement is one of the real concerns facing the educational community. Rayneri, Gerber and Wiley (2006) mention that academic underachievement is a national problem.

Underachievement

Many researchers around the globe has defined Underachievement as performing below potential. Reis and McCoach (2000) defines Underachievement as a discrepancy between ability and a student's academic achievement.

An underachiever is a person or a student who fails to achieve on par with his or her potential or does not do as well as expected in the exams.

Academic Stress

Academic stress is a mental distress arising in a learner/students out of some anticipated academic challenges or failure or even the fear of the possibility of academic failure. It can also be result of frustration associated with pressure to keep up to the demands of education.

Academic Achievement

Academic achievement is simply a measure on the extent to which a student has attained the educational outcomes. It is usually assessed with the scores or marks obtained in the test/examinations.

The dictionary of education (Carter.V.Good.1959) defines academic achievement as “the knowledge attained or skills developed in the school subjects, usually determined by test scores or marks assigned by teachers or both”.

Review of Related Literature

Elias, Ping and Abdullah (2011) stated that most sources of stress were from students' academics and also found that there was a significant negative relationship between students' stress level and their academic achievement. According to Lal (2014) stress is caused by the various problems like the problems at school, financial problems, familial problems and problems in the

surroundings. Nakalema&Ssenyonga (2014) figured that daily academic hassles were found to be the most stressful among students and academic overload/time and social expectations were the major causes of stress among students. Mishra (2017) explored the sources of academic stress and listed out a few which includes, increased amount of academic work load, fear of obtaining lower marks the exams. Bataineh (2013) found that fear of failure is the major source of stress.

Altaf and Kausar (2013) studied the effect of academic stress on students' performance and found out that Academic stress was significantly higher in younger students than older students. According to Mehfooz&Haider (2017) academic related factors are the major cause of stress in students. Chothani (2014) reported that English medium students has more academic stress than Gujarati medium students.

Siraj et al. (2013) revealed that students with severe academic stress have higher CGPA where as Sohail (2013) in his study found a significant strong negative relationship between academic stress and academic performnce. Akgun & Ciarrochi (2003) found that academic stress is negatively associated with academic performance.

Therefore it is important that students should be educated to manage academic stress effectively, otherwise it can have an adverse influence on their health and academic achievement.

Need and Significance of the Study

Students studying at higher secondary schools feels lot of pressure from within and outside. For some, it's the worry of being able to get enough marks to pass higher secondary school, while for others it's being able to get close to maximum marks. No matter what their goals are, all struggle with a tremendous amount of pressure and academic stress. Some amount of academic stress is essential in mobilizing the potentialities of the individuals to work more efficiently. But increased amount for a prolonged period will have harmful effects on the physical and mental health and academic achievement of the students and make the students perform way below than their actual potential. This may have a big bearing on the further prospects of the underachieving students. Lal (2014) higher Secondary Students are the ones going through the transitional phase, from childhood to adulthood and are more prone to be trapped by academic stress. Therefore it is necessary to study the academic stress and academic achievement of underachieving students in higher secondary schools.

Statement of the Problem

The present study intends to study the academic achievement, the level of academic stress felt by the underachievers studying in higher secondary schools. The difference in academic stress and academic achievement with respect to gender and the relationship between academic stress and academic achievement. Hence the study is termed as 'Academic Stress and Academic Achievement of Underachievers in Higher Secondary Schools'.

Objectives

1. To study about the Academic Stress of Underachievers studying in higher secondary schools.
2. To study about the Academic Achievement of Underachievers studying in higher secondary schools.
3. To study whether there is any significant difference in academic stress of Underachievers studying in higher secondary schools with respect to gender.
4. To study whether there is any significant difference in academic achievement of Underachievers studying in higher secondary school with respect to gender.
5. To study whether there is any significant relationship between academic stress and academic achievement of Underachievers studying in higher secondary schools.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in academic stress of Underachievers studying in higher secondary school with respect to gender.
2. There is no significant difference in academic achievement of Underachievers studying in higher secondary school with respect to gender.
3. There is no significant relationship between academic stress and academic achievement of Underachievers studying in higher secondary school.
4. There is no significant relationship between academic stress and academic achievement of Underachieving Boys studying in higher secondary school.
5. There is no significant relationship between academic stress and academic achievement of Underachieving Girls studying in higher secondary school.

Method of Study

As the study intends to assess the levels of academic achievement and academic stress of underachievers studying in higher secondary schools and find out their relationship, Survey Method was adopted.

Sampling and Sample

The population of the study includes all the higher secondary students performing less than their potential in Vellore district. The sample was chosen by random sampling. The investigator has collected data from a sample of 319 higher secondary students studying in 15 different schools for the present study.

Table 1

Distribution of Sample with respect to Gender

Variables	Category	Number	Percent
Gender	Boys	182	57.1
	Girls	137	42.9
Total		319	100

Research Tools Used

The marks obtained by the students in their half yearly examination collected and taken as academic achievement.

To measure the Academic Stress of Underachievers, Academic Stress Scale was constructed and validated. The Academic Stress Scale consists of 34 items. It is a 5 point Likert type scale with the scoring from 1 to 5 points. The scale is divided into 6 dimensions namely, Stress from Teachers, Stress from Exams, Stress from Results, Peer Stress, Inadequate Study Facilities and Personal Inadequacy.

Reliability and Validity

The reliability value for Academic Stress Scale was found to be 0.883 and the validity is 0.939. It meant that the tool is highly reliable and valid.

Statistical Techniques Used

The statistical techniques employed in analyzing the data are:

1. Descriptive Analysis: Mean, Standard Deviation and Percentage.
2. Differential Analysis: t-test.
3. Correlation Analysis: Pearson Product Moment Correlation.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

The raw scores collected were organised and tabulated. The data were subjected to statistical analysis; the hypotheses were tested and the results were given.

Results based on Descriptive Analysis of Academic Stress

Table 2
Mean, Standard Deviation and Mean Percentage of Academic Stress & its dimensions.

Variables/Dimensions	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean Percentage
Stress from Teachers	19.17	5.318	63.90
Stress from Exams	18.89	5.448	62.97
Stress from Results	22.21	13.83	63.46
Peer Stress	13.83	3.158	55.32
Inadequate study Facilities	13.42	3.029	53.68
Personal Inadequacy	14.62	3.667	58.48
Academic Stress	102.15	20.742	60.09

Table 2 shows that the mean value and mean percentage of Academic Stress were 102.15 and 60.09 respectively. These values clearly indicate that the level of academic stress felt by the underachievers studying in higher secondary schools was high.

Figure 1
A Pie Diagram representing the Dimensions of the Academic Stress

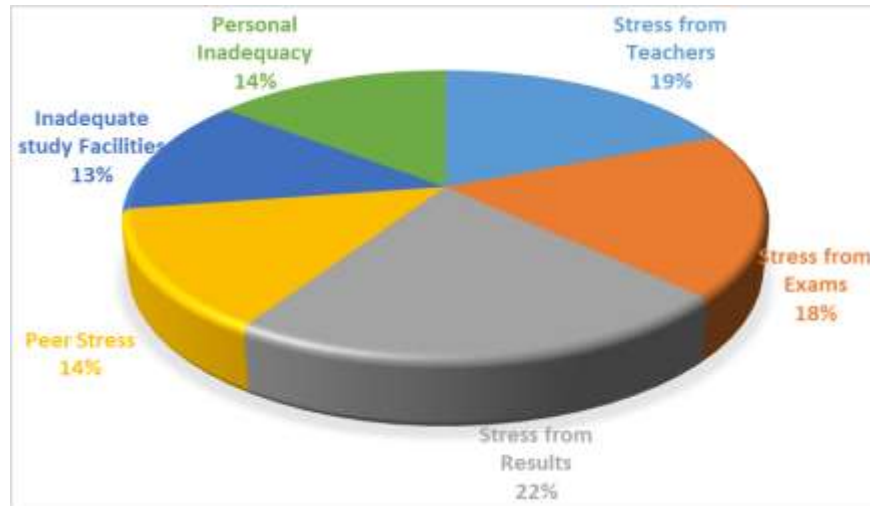


Figure 1 shows that the Stress caused by the Exam/Test Results contributes more the Academic Stress among the underachievers studying in higher secondary schools.

Results based on Descriptive Analysis of Academic Stress Achievement

Table 3
Mean, Standard Deviation and Mean Percentage of Academic Achievement.

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean Percentage
Academic Achievement	51.23	10.586	51.23

Table 3 shows that the mean value as well as the mean percentage of Academic Achievement was 51.23. This value clearly indicates that the level of Academic Achievement attained by the underachievers studying in higher secondary schools was moderately less.

Results based on Differential Analysis of Academic Stress with respect to gender

H₀- There is no significant difference in Academic Stress of Underachievers studying in higher secondary school with respect to Gender.

Table 4
Mean, Standard Deviation and t - value of Academic Stress & its dimensions with respect to gender

Variables/Dimensions	Boys		Girls		t-value	p value
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D		
Stress from Teachers	20.13	5.130	17.90	5.314	3.791	$p < 0.01$
Stress from Exams	19.92	5.582	17.52	4.963	3.983	$p < 0.01$
Stress from Results	23.21	5.360	20.89	5.754	3.705	$p < 0.01$
Peer Stress	14.11	3.041	13.47	3.283	1.806	$p > 0.05$
Inadequate study Facilities	13.95	3.128	12.72	2.751	3.636	$p < 0.01$
Personal Inadequacy	15.08	3.598	14.02	3.685	2.505	$p > 0.05$
Academic Stress	106.39	19.887	96.52	20.582	4.323	$p < 0.01$

The result given in the Table 4, shows that the t-value of Academic Stress is 4.323 and its p value is less than 0.01. Therefore the Null Hypothesis is rejected at 0.01 level of significance. Hence, there is significant difference in Academic Stress of Underachievers studying in higher secondary school with respect to Gender.

The mean value of Academic Stress of boys and girls were 104.25 and 96.34 respectively. Hence it can be concluded that the boys have significantly more Academic Stress than girls.

Results based on Differential Analysis of Academic Achievement with respect to gender

H_0 - There is no significant difference in academic achievement of Underachievers studying in higher secondary school with respect to gender.

Table 5
Mean, Standard Deviation and t - value of Academic Achievement with respect to gender.

Variable	Boys		Girls		t-value	p value
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D		
Academic Achievement	49.15	10.895	53.99	9.518	4.140	$p < 0.01$

The result given in the Table 5, shows that the t-value of Academic Achievement is 4.140 and its p value is less than 0.01. Therefore the Null Hypothesis is rejected at 0.01 level of significance. Hence, there is significant difference in Academic Achievement of Underachievers studying in higher secondary school with respect to Gender.

The mean value of Academic Achievement of boys and girls were 49.15 and 53.99 respectively. Hence it can be concluded that the girls have significantly better Academic Achievement than boys.

Results based on Correlation Analysis between Academic Stress and Academic Achievement

H_0 - There is no significant relationship between academic stress and academic achievement of Underachievers studying in higher secondary school.

Table 6

Pearson's Correlation coefficient between Academic Stress and Academic Achievement.

Variables Correlated	r value	p value	Remarks
Academic Stress and Academic Achievement	-0.746	$p < 0.01$	High Negative Correlation

The result given in the Table 6, shows that the p value is less than 0.01. Therefore the Null Hypothesis is rejected at 0.01 level of significance. Hence, there is significant relationship between academic stress and academic achievement of Underachievers studying in higher secondary school.

It also shows that the r - value is -0.746 which means the correlation is negative and high as well. Hence it can be concluded that there is significant high negative relationship between academic stress and academic achievement of Underachievers in higher secondary school.

Results based on Correlation Analysis between Academic Stress and Academic Achievement of Boys

H_0 - There is no significant relationship between academic stress and academic achievement of Underachieving boys studying in higher secondary school.

Table 7

Pearson's Correlation coefficient between Academic Stress and Academic Achievement of Boys.

Variables Correlated	r value	p value	Remarks
Academic Stress and Academic Achievement of Boys	-0.756	$p < 0.01$	High Negative Correlation

The result given in the Table 7, shows that the p value is less than 0.01. Therefore the Null Hypothesis is rejected at 0.01 level of significance. Hence, there is significant relationship between academic stress and academic achievement of Underachieving boys studying in higher secondary school.

It also shows that the r - value is -0.756 which means the correlation is negative and high as well. Hence it can be concluded that there is significant high negative relationship between academic stress and academic achievement of Underachieving boys in higher secondary school.

Results based on Correlation Analysis between Academic Stress and Academic Achievement of Girls

H_0 - There is no significant relationship between academic stress and academic achievement of Underachieving girls studying in higher secondary school.

Table 8

Pearson's Correlation coefficient between Academic Stress and Academic Achievement of Girls

Variables Correlated	r value	p value	Remarks
Academic Stress and Academic Achievement of Girls	-0.701	$p < 0.01$	High Negative Correlation

The result given in the Table 8, shows that the p value is less than 0.01 . Therefore the Null Hypothesis is rejected at 0.01 level of significance. Hence, there is significant relationship between academic stress and academic achievement of Underachieving girls studying in higher secondary school.

It also shows that the r - value is -0.701 which means the correlation is negative and high as well. Hence it can be concluded that there is significant high negative relationship between academic stress and academic achievement of Underachieving girls in higher secondary school.

Major Findings

There is a significant difference in Academic Stress of Underachievers studying in higher secondary school with respect to Gender at 0.01 level of significance. The boys (104.25) have significantly more Academic Achievement than girls (96.34).

There is a significant difference in Academic Achievement of Underachievers studying in higher secondary school with respect to Gender at 0.01 level of significance. The girls (53.99) have significantly better Academic Achievement than boys (49.15).

There is a significantly high negative relationship (r - value is -0.746) between academic stress and academic achievement of Underachievers in higher secondary school at 0.01 level of significance.

There is a significantly high negative relationship (r - value is -0.756) between academic stress and academic achievement of Underachieving boys in higher secondary school at 0.01 level of significance.

There is a significantly high negative relationship (r - value is -0.701) between academic stress and academic achievement of Underachieving girls in higher secondary school at 0.01 level of significance.

Implications

This study gives an account of how academic stress is related to academic achievement of Underachievers in higher secondary school. It shows that the academic stress and academic achievement are negatively correlated and provides a clear idea that academic stress is hampering the potential outcome of the students and results in academic underachievement. The results of the study emphasize that academic stress of students should be reduced to bring about a better academic achievement among the students.

Suggestions

1. Academic Underachievement of students at various levels can be studied in relation to some other variables
2. The contribution of academic stress to underachievement can be studied with different methods of research.
3. The factors causing academic stress among students at different levels can be studied.

Conclusion

If the educational endeavours are to succeed, the capabilities of students need to grow constantly unhampered through their educational career. Many factors cause stress among students and it is very important to figure out them from time to time. As academic stress and academic achievement are negatively related, the higher the academic stress lesser the academic achievement. Therefore it is mandatory to reduce the academic stress and maintain it to a minimum level to get academic achievement from the students.

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