70

Academic Stress and Adjustment Among High School Students

Akbar Hussain,   Ashutosh Kumar   and   Abid Husain
Jamia Millia Islamia   Patna Training College   Jamia Millia Islamia,
New Delhi   Patna University, Patna   New Delhi

Present study was undertaken to examine the level of academic stress and overall adjustment among Public and Government high school students and also to see relationship between the two variables (academic stress and adjustment). For that purpose 100 students of class IX were selected randomly from two different schools out of which 50 were taken from Public and the remaining 50 were taken from Government school Sinha and Sinha scale for measuring academic stress was used to see the magnitude of stress and Sinha and Singh Adjustment Inventory for school students was used to examine level of adjustment among the students. Results indicated that magnitude of academic stress was significantly higher among the Public school students where as Government school students were significantly better in terms of their level of adjustment. However, inverse but significant relationships between academic stress and adjustment were found for both the group of students and for each type of school.

Keywords: Academic Stress, Adjustment

Stress and anxiety in children and teenagers are just as prevalent as in adults. Negligence of parents, high expectations in academic or other performances, abused childhood, growing up tensions and demand for familial responsibility etc. the main causes of childhood and teen stress. Parents who are not emotionally available for their children or lack positive coping mechanisms themselves, often spur stress in their offspring.

Stressed children show signs of emotional disabilities, aggressive behavior, shyness, social phobia and often lack interest in otherwise enjoyable activities. In a study Dawood (1995) found that students stress affects their academic performance. He further showed that the most frequently mentioned stressor by students was school and fear related stressors. Many teenagers tend to become non-conformist and fall prey to teenage depression in response to a variety of growing up anxieties. However, stress induced fears and anxiety in children adversely affects children's performances at various levels. Hodge (1996) investigated that prevalence of stress were found particularly among those students who were by their nature prone to anxiety.

Tung and Chahal (2005) examined relationship between stress and adjustment and found no significical causal relationship between stress and the adjustment . However direction of the results implied that level of adjustment influences the number of stress full events and amount of stress experienced by them.

Each day we faced with new situations that demands decisions involve change in both our internal state and our external environment. The process of adjustment involves a person's attempt to cope with master and transcend such challenges. This working definition provides a starting point

for understanding adjustment. However, adjustments are not always definite. Neither it is right or wrong nor do they necessarily have clear starting points or endings. This combination of questions can make the concept of adjustment difficult to grasp. According to Aggrawal (2004) the adjustment of adolescent very much depends on the fulfillment of their significant specific needs that consist of physical needs, emotional needs, social needs, intellectual needs, moral needs and vocational needs. It may be helpful, therefore, to devote a little more space to two important qualities of adjustment. First, it is a process that involves continuous changes and the second people develop consistent pattern of adjustment to these constant changes. Students make many transitions during their years of schooling: from home to school, middle to high school, and high school to college or work. These transitions are usually major events in the lives of students and parents. The stresses created by these transitions can be minimized when the new environment is responsive to each particular age group. This digest presents a brief overview of some of the issues involved in the transition from elementary to middle school and provide suggestions for transition programs and activities. In a study Isakson et al, (1999) employed a short term longitudinal design to assess the adjustment of adolescents as they mode from junior high to high school and found that the adolescents did experience significant changes during the initial transition into high school that were related to sense of school membership, perceived support from parents was also related to adolescents adjustment to the transition.

Keeping in view the growing problem of academic stress among school students the study was undertaken to examine the level of academic stress among high school students and its probable impact on the overall adjustment among them. The

hypotheses are as follows:

1. Level of academic stress among public school students will be significantly higher than the Government school students.

2. Adjustment level of public school students will be significantly different from Government school students.

3. There will be inverse relationship between academic stress and overall adjustment among high school students.

Method

Sample

Altogether 100 class IX male students were randomly selected from two different types of schools of Delhi. Out of 100 students, 50 were taken from public school and the remaining 50 were taken from Government school.

Tools

For assessing academic stress of students a 30 items composite scale for assessing academic stress among students consisting of force choice type answer was used. The scale was developed by Sinha et al., (2003) and was published in the Journal of Mental Health and Human Behavior. Similarly, for examining the level of adjustment of the subjects, a 60 items scale developed by Sinha and Singh (1971) was administered on the sample. The scale consist of items in three different areas namely emotional, social and educational with 20 items each. The answer is forced choice and higher score indicating poor adjustment.

Results and Discussion

Table-1: Mean, SD and t value of academic stress and adjustment scores of students of public (n=50) and private schools (n=50)

Group	Mean	SD	t value
Public School	22.44	4.89	3.60**
Govt. School	16.90	4.12	
Public School	26.74	4.89	2.97**
Govt. School	78.08	4.12	

Table-3: Correlation between academic stress and adjustment scores for the students of two types of schools.

Group	Public School Students	Govt. School students
R between academic stress and adjustment	-.54**	-.49**

From the results given in table 1, it appeared that magnitude of academic stress among high school students was fowd to be high particularly among the public school students as the mean scores were 22.44 and 16.90 respectively for public school and private school students. The difference in terms of academic stress between the two groups of students was also statistically tested by computing t ratio which was also found significant (t=3.61). Thus it can be said that academic load and school environment of public school might be contributing towards enhancement of stress among students. Similar results were also obtained by Bohannon (2000). He investigated the impact of school related stressors on public school students and found significant correlations among them. Hence it can be safely said that public school students suffer from higher level of stress related to their academics. Thus hypothesis presuming higher level of academic stress among public school students was found to be proved.

Results given in table II, Indicating the level of overall adjustment among school students revealed that overall adjustment of public school students was more poor than the Government school students as the mean scores for adjustment were found to be 26.24 and 18.08 respectively for the public and private school students. The difference between the two groups of students with regard to their level of adjustment was also statistically tested and found significant (t=2.97). Isakson (1999) have also found that adolescents experienced significant changes during the initial transition into high school that were related to sense of school membership etc. was also related to adolescents' adjustment to the transition. Hence adjustment among public school students was found to be poor probably because they suffer from high level of academic stress. Thus hypothesis of significant difference between the two groups of students with regard to their level of adjustment was also found to be proved.

It was apparent from the results presented in table III that academic stress and overall adjustment of students were inversely related to each other for both public school as well as private school students as (r = -.54 and -.49 respectively). The association between the two variables was so strong that it was also found statistically significant for both the groups. On the basis of results it can be said that academic stress adversely affects overall adjustment of students. Hence the hypothesis presuming inverse relationship between academic stress and level of adjustment among school students was found to be proved as the two variables found to be affecting each other adversely.

Thus, it may be concluded that private school students by and large suffer from higher level of academic stress than their Government school counterparts. Not only that their level of adjustment was also much poor than the Government school students. As far as relationship between the academic stress and adjustment is concerned inverse relationships between the two variables were found for each group of sample which was indicating the academic stress not only impedes academic performance but also adjustment to a greater extent.

References

Aggrawal, J.C. (2004). *Psychology of learning and Development*, Shipra Publication, Delhi.

Bohannon, A.P. (2000). The relationship of School related stressors to discipline

referrals, attendance, grade point average and under achievement among high school students. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 57, 1482.

Dawood, N. (1995). Stressors encountered by junior high school students and their relation to grade point average, sex and grade. Jordan, Deanship of Academic Research, 22, 3671-3706.

Hodge, Glenda Mae (1996). Adolescent Anxiety, distress and coping: A study of senior school students and higher school certificate examination stress. *Dissertation Abstract International*, *57,* 01-14.

Isakson, K. (1999). The adjustment of adolescents during the transition into high school: A short-term longitudinal study.

Journal of Youth and Adolescence, *28*, 1-26.

Sinha, U.K. Sharma, V. and Nepal, M.K. (2003). Scale for assessing academic stress. *Journal of Mental Health and Human Behavior*, 6, 35-42.

Sinha, A.K.P. and Singh, R.P. (1971). *Adjustment Inventory for school students.* National Psychological Corporation, Agra, India.

Tung, S. and Chahal, N. (2005). Relationship between Stress and Adjustment Adolescents females; A causal study , *Journal of Personality study and Group Behavior* , Amritsar, 25, 19-31.

Akbar Hussain, PhD, Sr. Lecturer, Department of Psychology, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi -110 025

Ashutosh Kumar, Sr. Lecturer, Patna Training College, Patna University, Patna-800 004

Abid Husain, PhD Research Scholar and Counsellor, (VCTC) , Department of Psychology, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi -110 025