



A STUDY ON ACADEMIC STRESS AMONG INTERMEDIATE STUDENTS

John Kanaparthi

Research Scholar, Department of Education, Acharya Nagarjuna University

Dr. Pakala Naga Suresh Kumar*

ICSSR Post-Doctoral Fellow, Department of Education, Acharya Nagarjuna University,
Nagarjuna Nagar – 522510, Guntur, Andhra Pradesh, India.

*Corresponding Author: drnagasuresh.education@gmail.com

Prof. T. Swarupa Rani

Research Supervisor, Department of Education, Acharya Nagarjuna University

Paper Received On: 25 MAR 2022

Peer Reviewed On: 31 MAR 2022

Published On: 1 APR 2022

Abstract

Academic stress has emerged as a major challenge among intermediate students due to increasing academic demands and competitive educational environments. The present study examined the level of academic stress among intermediate students and compared stress with respect to gender, locality, type of management, and academic stream. A descriptive survey method was adopted for the study. The sample comprised 500 intermediate students selected from recognized junior colleges in Guntur District, Andhra Pradesh. Data were collected using the Academic Stress Scale developed by R. Balaji Rao (2012). The findings indicated that there was no significant difference in academic stress between male and female students. However, urban students, private college students, and science students reported significantly higher academic stress than their respective counterparts. The study emphasizes the need for systematic counselling services, supportive learning environments, and stress management programmes to promote students' academic success and psychological well-being.

Keywords: Academic stress, Intermediate students, Counselling, Psychological well-being.



[Scholarly Research Journal's](http://www.srjis.com) is licensed Based on a work at www.srjis.com

Introduction

Education plays an important role in developing students' knowledge, skills, aspirations, and future opportunities. In the present educational environment, increasing academic expectations and competition for higher education and career opportunities place considerable demands on students. When these demands become difficult to manage, students may experience academic stress, which can influence their learning and overall educational functioning. Academic stress refers to the mental and emotional pressure experienced when students perceive academic demands as difficult to handle. It may arise from academic workload, examinations, performance expectations, parental pressure,

competition, and concerns about future education and careers (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The extent to which students experience such pressure may vary according to their individual and educational circumstances.

Intermediate students represent an important group for studying academic stress because this stage involves the transition from school education to higher education and career-oriented decision-making. Along with academic responsibilities, students must cope with developmental changes associated with adolescence. Persistent academic pressure may affect concentration, motivation, self-confidence, learning, and academic performance (Misra & McKean, 2000). Although a manageable level of stress may encourage students to remain focused and improve their efforts, excessive stress can adversely affect psychological well-being and may contribute to anxiety, sleep difficulties, irritability, and reduced interest in studies (Pascoe, Hetrick, & Parker, 2020).

In the Indian educational context, understanding academic stress among intermediate students is particularly relevant because this stage involves important academic choices and preparation for future educational and career pathways. Students may experience stress differently depending on their personal and educational backgrounds. Examining these variations can help identify groups that may require greater academic guidance and counselling support. The findings may be useful to teachers, parents, counsellors, and educational institutions in planning appropriate measures to promote effective coping, academic adjustment, and student well-being. Therefore, the present study seeks to examine the level of academic stress among intermediate students and its variation with respect to selected demographic and educational variables.

Statement of the Problem

The present study, entitled “*A Study of Academic Stress among Intermediate Students*,” aims to assess the level of academic stress among intermediate students and to examine whether academic stress differs with respect to gender, locality, type of management, and academic stream.

Operational Definitions of the Study

Academic Stress

In the present study, academic stress refers to the level of psychological strain experienced by intermediate students due to academic demands such as examinations, workload, performance expectations, competition, and other study-related challenges, as measured by the academic stress scale used in the study.

Intermediate Students

Intermediate students refer to students who are studying in the first or second year of Intermediate education in the colleges selected for the study.

Review of Literature

Ghosh (2016) studied academic stress among high school students and found that private school students experienced significantly higher academic stress than government school students. The study also reported higher stress levels among female students, indicating the influence of school type and gender on academic stress.

Kadapatti (2017) examined the prevalence of academic stress among pre-university students and found that many students experienced moderate to high levels of academic stress. The study also reported higher stress among female, urban, and second-year students, emphasizing the need for appropriate stress-management interventions.

Ravi sadda (2018) reported that male intermediate students experienced higher academic stress compared to female students. The study further indicated that students studying in urban colleges experienced more academic stress than students from rural colleges.

Poonam and Dixit (2019) observed that most adolescent students experienced mild academic stress and adopted moderate coping strategies. The study concluded that academic stress, coping strategies, and selected demographic variables were not significantly associated.

Chandan K. P. and Shivappa R. (2020) reviewed academic stress among higher secondary students and identified academic difficulties, poor coping with studies, family concerns, peer pressure, and inadequate parental and teacher support as major causes of stress.

Aswartha Reddy A. and Lalitha K. (2021) revealed that academic stress was comparatively higher among male adolescents than female adolescents. The study also indicated that students studying in corporate colleges experienced greater academic stress than those in government colleges.

Objectives of the Study

- To assess the levels of academic stress among Intermediate students.
- To examine differences in academic stress among Intermediate students with respect to gender, locality, type of management, and academic stream.

Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the academic stress of male and female intermediate students.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the academic stress of rural and urban intermediate students.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference in the academic stress of students studying in Government and Private junior colleges.

H₀₄: There is no significant difference in academic stress of intermediate students belonging to Arts and Science streams.

Methodology of the Study

The present investigation followed a descriptive survey method to assess the level of academic stress among Intermediate students and to analyze differences in academic stress with respect to selected variables. The sample consisted of 500 first-year and second-year Intermediate students drawn from Government and Private junior colleges in Guntur District, Andhra Pradesh. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure representation of the relevant subgroups within the population. The study examined academic stress in relation to gender, locality, type of college, and academic stream

Tool Used for the Study

Academic stress was assessed using the Academic Stress Scale developed by R. Balaji Rao (2012). The scale consists of 40 items with five response categories: *No Stress*, *Slight Stress*, *Moderate Stress*, *High Stress*, and *Extreme Stress*. Scores range from 40 to 200, with higher scores indicating higher academic stress. The scale has established content validity through expert evaluation and demonstrated satisfactory reliability, with a reported reliability coefficient of 0.81, indicating good internal consistency.

Statistical Techniques Used

The collected data were analysed using percentage, mean, standard deviation, and t-test. Percentage was used to describe the distribution of students, while mean and standard deviation indicated the level and variability of academic stress. The t-test was employed to determine the significance of differences between the selected groups.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table-1
Levels of Academic stress among Intermediate students

Variable	Scores	Sample	%	Level
Academic Stress	40 to 93	78	15.60	Low
	94 to 146	337	67.40	Moderate
	147 to 200	85	17.00	High

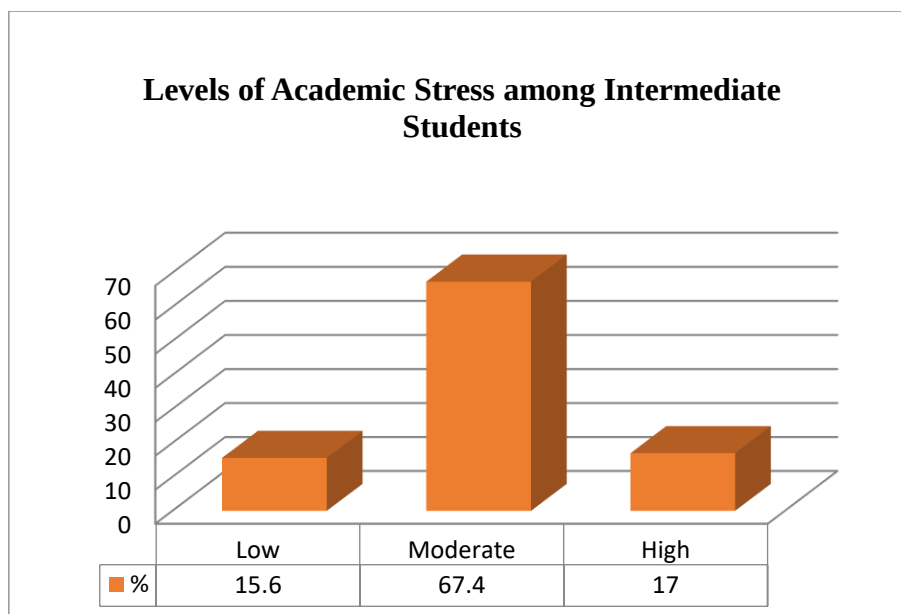


Table 1 reveals that 15.60% of intermediate students had a low level of academic stress, 67.40% had a moderate level, and 17.00% had a high level. Thus, the majority of intermediate students experienced a moderate level of academic stress. Hence it is stated that the intermediate students differed in their academic stress.

Table-2
Gender-wise Comparison of Academic Stress Among Intermediate Students

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value
Male	250	105.48	13.67	1.28@
Female	250	106.96	12.24	

@ Not Significant at 0.05 level

Table 2 indicates that the mean academic stress scores of male and female intermediate students are 105.48 and 106.96, respectively. The calculated t-value (1.28) is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. Hence, it is concluded that there is no significant difference in the academic stress between male and female intermediate students.

Table -3
Locality-wise Comparison of Academic Stress Among Intermediate Students

Locality	N	Mean	SD	t-value
Rural	250	108.23	14.31	3.53**
Urban	250	112.67	13.75	

* **Significant at 0.01 level

Table 3 shows that the mean academic stress scores of rural and urban intermediate students are 108.23 and 112.67, respectively. The higher mean score of urban students indicates that they experience greater academic stress than rural students. The calculated t-value (3.53) is statistically significant at the 0.01 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. It is concluded that there is a significant difference in the academic stress between rural and urban intermediate students.

Table -4
Management -wise Comparison of Academic Stress Among Intermediate Students

Management	N	Mean	SD	t-value
Government	250	110.61	14.26	4.88 **
Private	250	116.74	13.78	

** Significant at 0.01 level

Table 4 presents the mean academic stress scores of government and private intermediate students are 110.61 and 116.74, respectively. The higher mean score of private students indicates comparatively greater academic stress than that of government school students. The calculated t-value (4.88) is statistically significant at the 0.01 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. It is concluded that there is a significant difference in the academic stress between Government and Private intermediate students.

Table -5
Academic Stream -wise Comparison of Academic Stress Among Intermediate Students

Academic Stream	N	Mean	SD	t-value
Arts	250	111.92	12.87	3.22 **
Science	250	115.73	13.55	

** Significant at 0.01 level

Table 5 depicts the mean academic stress scores of Arts and Science intermediate students are 111.92 and 115.73, respectively. The higher mean score obtained by science students signifies comparatively greater academic stress than arts students. The calculated t-value (3.22) is statistically significant at the 0.01 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. It is inferred that there is a significant difference in the academic stress between Arts and Science intermediate students.

Findings of the Study

- The majority of intermediate students (67.40%) experienced a moderate level of academic stress, followed by 17.00% with a high level and 15.60% with a low level of academic stress.
- No significant difference was found in academic stress between male and female intermediate students.
- Urban intermediate students experienced significantly higher academic stress than rural intermediate students.
- Intermediate students studying in private colleges experienced significantly higher academic stress than intermediate students studying in government colleges.
- Intermediate students belonging to the Science stream experienced significantly higher academic stress than intermediate students belonging to the Arts stream.

Educational Implications

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed to reduce academic stress and promote the well-being of Intermediate students:

- Students should follow structured study schedules, manage their time effectively, and practise healthy coping strategies.
- Teachers should identify students experiencing high academic stress and provide timely academic guidance and support.
- Teachers should adopt learner-centred teaching methods and balanced assessment practices to minimise unnecessary academic pressure.
- Students experiencing high levels of academic stress should be provided with targeted counselling, academic guidance, and appropriate follow-up support.
- Educational institutions should conduct periodic academic-stress assessments to identify students at risk and initiate timely preventive or supportive interventions.
- Parents should maintain realistic academic expectations and provide consistent encouragement and emotional support.
- Educational institutions should provide accessible counselling services and organise regular programmes on stress management, life skills, and emotional well-being.
- Educational administrators should ensure balanced academic workloads and implement student-friendly academic practices.
- Educational policymakers should integrate mental health education and student-wellness provisions into Intermediate education.

Conclusion

The present study highlights academic stress as an important concern among Intermediate students, with moderate stress being the predominant level. No significant difference was found between male and female students, whereas significant differences were observed across locality, type of college, and academic stream. Urban, private-college, and Science students reported comparatively higher academic stress, indicating the need for greater attention to their academic needs. Early identification of stress, supported by timely counselling, academic guidance, supportive teaching, and balanced academic expectations, can help students manage academic demands more effectively. The study therefore underscores the importance of institutional support in promoting students' academic adjustment, well-being, and healthy educational development.

References

- Best, J. W., Kahn, J. V., & Jha, A. K. (2016). *Research in education* (10th ed.). Pearson India Education Services.
- Chandan, K. P., & Shivappa, R. (2020). Academic stress among higher secondary school students: An overview. *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts*, 8(10), 3858–3862.
- Deb, S., Strodl, E., & Sun, J. (2015). Academic stress, parental pressure, anxiety and mental health among Indian high school students. *International Journal of Psychology and Behavioral Sciences*, 5(1), 26–34.
- Ghosh, S. M. (2016). Academic stress among government and private high school students. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 3(2), 119–125.
- Kadapatti, M. G. (2017). Prevalence of academic stress among students. *International Journal of Home Science*, 3(3), 461–463.
- Koul, L. (2019). *Methodology of educational research* (5th rev. ed.). Vikas Publishing House.
- Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S. (1984). *Stress, appraisal, and coping*. Springer Publishing Company.
- Misra, R., & McKean, M. (2000). College students' academic stress and its relation to their anxiety, time management, and leisure satisfaction. *American Journal of Health Studies*, 16(1), 41–51.
- Pascoe, M. C., Hetrick, S. E., & Parker, A. G. (2020). The impact of stress on students in secondary school and higher education. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*, 25(1), 104–112.
- Poonam, & Dixit, K. (2019). A study to assess the academic stress and coping strategies among adolescent students: A descriptive study. *Indian Journal of Applied Research*, 9(12), 28–29.
- Reddy, A. A., & Lalitha, K. (2021). Academic stress among adolescents in government and corporate colleges. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 9(1), 25–31.
- Sadda, R. (2018). Effect of academic stress on intermediate students: A study. *American International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences*, 23(1), 55–58.
- Siva Giri, P. V., & Reddy, L. G. (2017). Influence of demographic variables on the academic stress of junior college students in Chittoor district. *International Educational Applied Scientific Research Journal*, 2(11), 1–3.
- Sumalatha, K. (2013). Academic stress in relation to academic achievement of senior intermediate students. *ZENITH International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 3(9), 193–202.