



Academic Stress Among Higher Education Students In West Bengal: A Status Survey

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ABSTRACT:

Desperation, pressure, and procrastination are constantly felt when there is stress, especially for students. On this phenomenon, numerous investigations have been carried out. Stress related to higher education students can have a detrimental effect on their mental and emotional well-being. The existence of stress among college students worries us all. The aim of the research is to determine the current degree of academic stress experienced by students pursuing higher education. In order to assess the degree of academic stress in higher education, 150 undergraduate students from the University of Kalyani, West Bengal are included in this study. Random sampling was used to select the sample. According to the study, regardless of the parameters chosen, students pursuing higher education experience a moderate amount of academic stress.

INTRODUCTION:

Stress is the feeling of anxiousness, either bodily or emotional. Numerous experiences in life give rise to negative feelings like rage, frustration, and anxiety, which in turn cause stress in a person. The body's response to a demand or difficulty is stress. Stress level is categorized depending on how someone reacts to a particular circumstance. Stress is defined as a behaviourally negative physiological process that arises from an individual's attempt to adjust or make sacrifices to stressors (Bernstein et al. 2008). According to Auerbach and Grambling (1998), "stressors are situations that interfere with or threaten to interfere with a person's ability to go about their regular life and force them to change". Stress, according to Malach et al. (2007), is the awareness of a discrepancy between the demands placed on a person by their environment (stressors) and their capacity to meet these expectations. Stress, according to Auerbach & Grambling (1998), can be defined as any circumstance that raises a threat or risk to one's health. Over the last several years, there has been a rise in the pressure placed on students to perform well academically. Exams, assignments, and numerous other tasks must be completed. In addition to the design, parents and teachers put a lot of pressure on the students to obtain good results. Due to these expectations, students work extremely hard and ultimately experience increased stress. A student's personality and perspective on life are significantly shaped during their adolescence. Teenagers frequently use the term "peer pressure" which has the potential to be both powerful and detrimental. The students in higher education are the victim of severe stress in many ways and academic stress is one of them. Reddy et al. (2018) opined that college students experience stress in a variety of factors which he termed as multifactorial. There are several evidences that show academic stress affects the college students (Misra and McKean, 2000). This paper studies the level of academic stress among higher education students in the Murshidabad district, West Bengal.

NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

Exam anxiety, procrastination, and pressure are just a few of the academic issues that students nowadays must deal with. A person experiencing academic stress is anxious or apprehensive about how they will perform in class. As a result, pupils could find it difficult to give their best exam performances. A variety of factors, including the demand for perfection, anxiety about academics, parental pressure, competition, class load, and job-related pressure, can lead to academic pressure among teenagers and college students. In many pupils, there is also evidence of nervous breakdowns, panic attacks, and melancholy. Treatment of students should be improved since they are viewed as the future foundation of our nation, bearing the responsibility of guiding future generations. It is therefore necessary to comprehend the academic stress that college students face in this modern world.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

The problem undertaken for study is stated as "Academic Stress among Higher Education Students: A Status Survey."

OBJECTIVES:

1. To find out the level of 'academic stress' among higher education students in the Murshidabad district under the University of Kalyani, West Bengal, India.
2. To figure out whether there is significant difference in 'academic stress' scores between the Male and Female students of the said students.
3. To draw out whether there is significant difference between Rural and Urban students with respect to 'academic stress' of the said students.
4. To find out whether there is significant difference between Science and Arts students with respect to 'academic stress' of the said students.

HYPOTHESES:

Ho1. There is no significant relationship between higher education male students and female students regarding 'academic stress'.

Ho2. There is no significant relationship between higher education rural area students and urban area students regarding 'academic stress'.

Ho3. There is no significant relationship between higher education science subject students and arts subject students regarding 'academic stress'.

METHODOLOGY:

Descriptive normative survey was used as the methodology in this study by the researcher. The goal of the normative survey approach is to analyse, describe, and assess the conditions or situations prevailing in the society involving data interpretation to portray a better picture of any phenomena.

SAMPLE:

A sample is the representative of any population that has been selected by scientific means in order to analyse and investigate a phenomenon. A researcher can make certain inferences about the characteristics of any population on the basis of the sample taken. 150 undergraduate students from four colleges affiliated with the University of Kalyani in West Bengal, India, were chosen randomly for this study. The sample was selected on the basis of simple random sampling and it represents the population as a whole.

TOOL USED:

The researcher has used the standardized academic stress scale constructed by R. Balaji Rao for collection of data.

THE ACADEMIC STRESS SCALE USED:

Determining the degree of academic stress experienced by college students is one of the main objectives of the study. To this end, the researcher employed the R. Balaji Rao constructed and standardised academic stress scale. There are up to 40 items on this scale, and there are five possible answers for each one: "No Stress," "Slightly Stress," "Moderate Stress," "Highly Stress," and "Extremely High Stress."

Response	Weightage
"No Stress"	0
"Slightly Stress"	1
"Moderate Stress"	2
"Highly Stress"	3
"Extremely High Stress"	4

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES:

Descriptive and Differential analysis are used for deriving the results. Mean, S.D, 't-test' are done to come into the conclusion.

DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY:

This study is limited only to the college students of Murshidabad district under the University of Kalyani. For measuring the status of stress, only gender, locality and subject specific discussion is taken under consideration.

TESTING OF HYPOTHESES:

Ho1. There is no significant relationship between higher education male students and female students regarding 'academic stress'.

TABLE - 1:

Variables	Samples	N	Mean	S.D	t-value	Level of significance
Gender	Male	82	92.02	6.63	2.21	Rejected at 0.05 level
	Female	68	94.32	6.13		

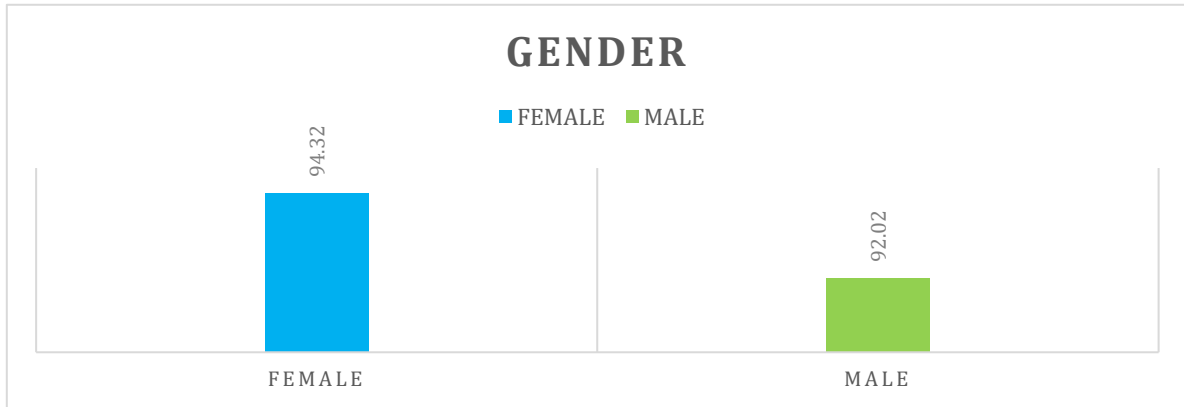


Fig 1: Gender wise distribution of the means of the responses

Table No. 1 indicates that the mean score of male students regarding academic stress is 92.02 and for female students is 94.32 which means is greater than male students and the calculated t- value is 2.21 which is higher than 1.96. So, it can be said that there is a significant difference between male and female students regarding their academic stress at 0.05 level. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Ho2. There is no significant relationship between higher education rural area students and urban area students regarding 'academic stress'.

TABLE-2:

Variables	Samples	N	Mean	S.D	t-value	Level of significance
Locality	Urban	48	94	6.24	1.23	Accepted at 0.05 level
	Rural	102	92.63	6.58		

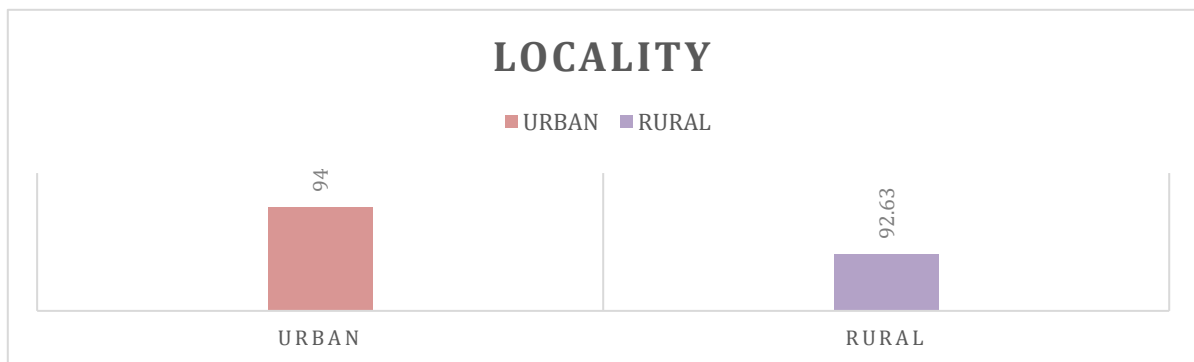


Fig 2: Locality wise distribution of the means of the responses

Table no. 2 refers that the mean score of urban students regarding academic stress is 94 and for rural students is 92.63. The calculated t- value is 1.23 whereas the statistical table value at 0.05 level is 1.96. So, calculated t-value 1.23 is less than 1.96. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. There is no significant difference between urban and rural students regarding their academic stress.

Ho3. There is no significant relationship between higher education science subject students and arts subject students regarding 'academic stress'.

TABLE-3:

Variables	Samples	N	Mean	S.D	t-value	Level of significance
Stream	Arts	91	92.44	6.53	1.49	Accepted at 0.05 level
	Science	59	94.03	6.35		

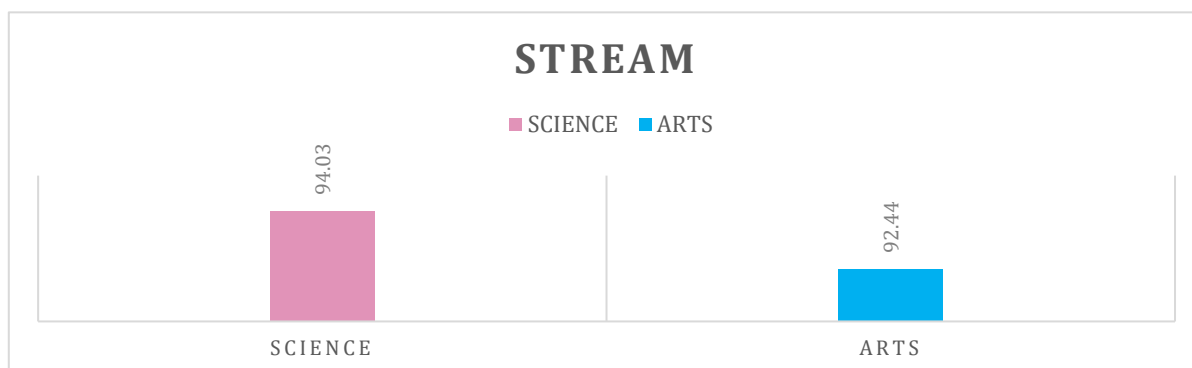


Fig 3: Stream wise distribution of the means of the responses.

Table No. 3 shows that the mean score of science students regarding academic stress is 94.03 and for arts students is 92.44 but the calculated t- value is 1.49 which is lower than statistical t-value at 0.05 level. So, there is no significant difference between arts and science students regarding their academic stress.

FINDINGS:

The primary conclusions of this study are listed below.

1. The academic stress experienced by higher education students is moderate in level, and it persists in spite of the factors mentioned.
2. There is a significant difference in the measurement of academic stress scores of male and female students which is similar to the works of Khadem, O. (2019); Brougham, Zail, Mendoza, & Miller (2009).
3. No significant difference in the scores of academic stress related issues of the students from rural and urban areas are found. This finding reflects the similar result of the work of Aneetta Baby, Inchara Chamaiah Swamy (2022).
4. The academic stress scores of students studying the arts and sciences are similar. This result is also supported by the previous cited study where no significant difference in the level of academic stress between the streams were found.

10. WAYS TO COMBAT STRESS AMONG HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS:

Stress can be released at different point of practices. Here are few stress management way outs for the college students that the researcher wants to highlight:

- i. Judicious use of time by means of practising hobbies, listening music, watching movies or motivational videos, reading books, gossiping with friends may release the pressure of stress.
- ii. The physical and mental health of the students must be kept under consideration especially their psychological domain.
- iii. Problems arising out of conflicts, gender-based issues, finance must be looked into seriously providing ample opportunities to sort out the issues.
- iv. A good and healthy communication between the students and their family, friends and teachers also reduce such psychological maladies.
- v. Students must actively participate in any work with positive intent. The teachers, family and friends may help them in doing this.
- vi. Flexible evaluation policy and healthy competitive mind set must be endorsed.
- vii. Every institute must start Yoga centres where students can perform yogic culture and meditation which benefits in managing stress.
- viii. Colleges must endorse cells and programmes that supports students' wellbeing by providing guidance, counselling, redressals etc.

These are the few out of many stress management ways where we must keep our focus so as to reduce this malady which is a serious concern in the present scenario.

11.CONCLUSION:

Regardless of the factors listed, the current study shows that higher secondary students experience a moderate amount of academic stress. The academic stress experienced by female students is greater than that of male pupils. There is more academic stress among urban students than rural ones. Students studying science experience greater academic stress than those studying the arts. However, no discernible substantial differences across the subgroups have been noted except the factor of gender where significant difference is noted. The significant difference in stress regarding gender where female

stress is measured higher (Hamaideh, 2012), might be due to some serious reasons. Their physical, mental, emotional, social, cultural status and stability is of the major concern. In academic sector they have to go through several challenges at the individual level or at the society at large.

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