



The Role of Parental Support in Reducing Academic Stress in High School Students

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ABSTRACT :

Due to increasing academic demands, examination pressure, and expectations regarding future educational and career success academic stress has become an obvious issue among high school students. Parental support plays an important role in helping adolescents to cope with academic challenges. The objective of the present study is to examine the role of parental support in reducing academic stress among high school students by using primary data. A descriptive correlational research design was adopted, and data were collected from 300 students studying in Grades 9 to 12 from selected urban high schools. Standardized questionnaires were used to measure students' perceived academic stress and levels of parental support, including emotional, informational, and instrumental support. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and t-tests. The findings revealed a significant negative relationship between parental support and academic stress, indicating that higher levels of perceived parental support are associated with lower academic stress among students. The study highlights the importance of supportive and balanced parental involvement in adolescents' academic lives. The findings suggest that parents, schools, and policymakers should work collaboratively to develop supportive home environments that enhance students' coping abilities and psychological well-being.

Keywords: Academic stress, parental support, high school students, emotional support, adolescent well-being

1.0 Introduction

Academic stress is a common experience among high school students and has become a growing concern for educators, parents, and mental health professionals. High school education is a critical stage in students' academic journey, as it lays the foundation for higher education and future careers. During this period, students are expected to manage heavy academic workloads, perform well in examinations, and meet parental and societal expectations. These demands often exceed students' coping capacities, leading to increased levels of academic stress. Prolonged exposure to academic stress can result in negative outcomes, including anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, burnout, and poor academic performance. Adolescents are particularly vulnerable to stress because they are undergoing rapid physical, emotional, and cognitive development.

Parental involvement has long been recognized as an important factor influencing students' academic outcomes. However, not all forms of parental involvement are equally beneficial. While excessive control and unrealistic expectations may increase stress, parental support, characterized by encouragement, understanding, guidance, and emotional warmth, can serve as a protective factor. Parental support helps students feel secure, valued, and capable of handling academic challenges.

1.1 Review of Related Literature

Sang et al. (2018) investigated the fluctuation of emotional states before and after the mid-term examination and the influence of different emotional regulatory strategies. The sample for the present study comprised of 72 adolescent students (12 to 18 years of age). The sample subjects reported their emotional states and corresponding regulation before and after mid-term examination up to six times over a period of two weeks. The results revealed that students reported increasingly emotional states as time went by. Improvement of adolescents' daily emotional states was more significant after the mid-term examination. Participants also reported decreasingly positive emotional states and increasingly negative ones as time went by before mid-term examination. The results further showed that adolescent students who used down-regulation at a certain sampling moment reported more pleasant emotional states at the subsequent sampling moment than those who used up-regulation. However, adolescents who used more up-regulation in a negative emotional event reported more negative emotional states at the subsequent sampling moment after the mid-term examination.

Kapre, U. C. (2017) studied to identify the impact of school environment on academic stress of students. The sample for the present study consisted of 400 9th standard underachieving students studying in secondary schools located at Faridabad district of Haryana. Tools used were School Environment Inventory developed by K.S. Mishra (2002) and Academic Stress Scale developed by Uday et al. (2002). The results revealed that a significant relationship exists between the school environment and academic stress of the underachievers studying in government and government-aided schools.

Subramani, C., and Kadhiraivan, S. (2017) examined the relationship between academic stress and mental health among high school students. The sample consisted of 200 high school students studying in government and private schools in and around Salem city, Tamil Nadu. Sample subjects were

selected through stratified random sampling procedure. Tools used for collection of data were Educational Stress Scale for Adolescents. The results indicated that students from private school experienced higher level of academic stress than that of government school students. The results further revealed that academic stress has a significant impact on mental health of high school students.

Bartwal, R. S., and Singh, R. (2014) jointly studied to compare rural and urban school going adolescent students on academic stress. The sample consisted of 200 school going male and female adolescent students. Random sampling technique was used to draw the sample. Bisht Battery Scale of Academic Stress developed by Asha Rani Bisht (1987) was used to measure the academic stress of the sample subjects. Data was collected from rural and urban area of Bathinda (Punjab). The results of the present study revealed that no significant difference exists between rural and urban adolescent students with regard to academic stress.

Faires, J., Nichols, W. D., and Rickelman, R. J. (2000) studied Effects of parental involvement in developing competent readers in first grade. In this study 8 first grade students were taken as sample to determine effect of parental training and involvement on Children's reading level. The researchers about their study said that parents in the experimental group received training three times per week on selected parts of the Reading Recovery program, which they implemented with children at home during the five-week study. Parents of students in the control group did not have access to the program. Informal assessments used by the teacher to evaluate reading levels indicated significant gains made by students in the experimental group.

1.2 Academic Stress among High School Students

Previous studies have showed that academic stress is prevalent among adolescents. Researchers have identified major sources of academic stress, including examination pressure, excessive homework, time management difficulties, and fear of disappointing parents and teachers. High levels of academic stress have been linked to emotional problems such as anxiety, depression as well as behavioural issues like absenteeism and reduced academic engagement.

Studies also indicate that female students often report higher levels of academic stress than male students, possibly due to higher self-imposed expectations and emotional sensitivity. Moreover, competitive educational environments intensify stress levels among students.

1.3 Concept of Parental Support

Parental support may include various forms of assistance provided by parents to their children. It is generally categorized into three types:

1. **Emotional Support:** Expressions of love, care, empathy, encouragement, and reassurance.
2. **Informational Support:** Guidance related to academic planning, study strategies, and problem-solving.
3. **Instrumental Support:** Practical help such as providing study materials, arranging tutoring, or creating a conducive study environment.

Research suggests that emotional support is particularly important during adolescence, as it helps students manage stress and regulate emotions effectively.

1.4 Parental Support and Academic Stress

Several studies have reported a negative relationship between parental support and academic stress. Students who perceive their parents as supportive tend to experience lower stress levels and demonstrate better coping strategies. Emotional support from parents helps adolescents interpret academic challenges as manageable rather than threatening.

However, many existing studies rely on secondary data or focus primarily on academic achievement rather than stress outcomes. This highlights the need for research based on primary data that directly examines the stress-reducing role of parental support.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The present study was conducted with the following objectives:

1. To examine the relationship between parental support and academic stress among high school students.
2. To identify the type of parental support (emotional, informational, or instrumental) that most effectively reduces academic stress.
3. To study gender differences in academic stress and the effectiveness of parental support.

1.6 Methodology

1.6.1 Research Design

A descriptive and correlational research design was used to examine the relationship between parental support and academic stress among high school students.

1.6.2 Sample

The sample consisted of 300 high school students studying in Grades 9 to 12. Stratified random sampling was used to ensure equal representation of male and female students.

Table 1: Sample Distribution

| Variable | Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------|----------|-----------|------------|
| Gender | Male | 150 | 50% |
| | Female | 150 | 50% |
| Grade | 9 | 75 | 25% |
| | 10 | 75 | 25% |
| | 11 | 75 | 25% |
| | 12 | 75 | 25% |
| Total | | 300 | 100% |

1.7 Tools for Data Collection

Two standardized questionnaires were used:

1. Academic Stress Scale (25 items)
2. Parental Support Scale (20 items)

Both scales used a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Table 2: Description of Research Instruments

| Scale | Dimension | No. of Items |
|-----------------------|---|--------------|
| Academic Stress Scale | Examination stress, workload, fear of failure | 25 |
| | | |

| | | |
|------------------------|--|----|
| Parental Support Scale | Emotional, Informational, Instrumental | 20 |
|------------------------|--|----|

1.8 Procedure

Permission was obtained from school authorities. Informed consent was taken from parents and students. Questionnaires were administered during school hours, and confidentiality was maintained.

1.9 Statistical Techniques Used

Table 3: Statistical Tools Applied

| Objective | Statistical Tool |
|---|---------------------------|
| Relationship between stress and support | Pearson Correlation |
| Gender differences | t-test |
| Description of variables | Mean & Standard Deviation |

1.10 Results and Discussion

1.10.1 Level of Academic Stress

Students reported moderate to high academic stress.

Table 4: Mean Scores of Academic Stress

| Gender | Mean | SD |
|--------|------|------|
| Male | 3.59 | 0.61 |
| Female | 3.85 | 0.65 |

Female students showed significantly higher academic stress than male students.

1.10.2 Perceived Parental Support

Table 5: Mean Scores of Parental Support

| Type of Support | Mean | SD |
|-----------------------|------|------|
| Emotional Support | 3.62 | 0.68 |
| Informational Support | 3.41 | 0.71 |
| Instrumental Support | 3.32 | 0.69 |

Emotional support was perceived as the most prevalent form of parental support.

1.10.3 Relationship between Parental Support and Academic Stress

Table 6: Correlation between Parental Support and Academic Stress

| Type of Support | Correlation (r) |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Emotional Support | -0.53** |
| Informational Support | -0.42** |
| Instrumental Support | -0.36* |

| | |
|--------------------------|---------|
| Overall Parental Support | -0.48** |
|--------------------------|---------|

(*p < 0.05, **p < 0.01)

The findings indicate a significant negative relationship between parental support and academic stress.

1.11 Discussion

The results found that parental support plays a crucial role in reducing academic stress among high school students. Emotional support was found to be the strongest predictor of lower stress, highlighting the importance of warmth, empathy, and encouragement. Informational and instrumental support also contributed to stress reduction by helping students manage academic demands effectively. Gender differences suggest that female students may be more emotionally responsive to parental support.

1.12 Conclusion

The present study concludes that parental support significantly reduces academic stress among high school students. Students who perceive higher levels of emotional, informational, and instrumental support from their parents experience lower academic stress and are better equipped to cope with academic challenges. Emotional support emerged as the most effective stress-buffering factor. The study emphasizes the need for parents to adopt more supportive environment rather than pressurizing approaches. Schools should promote parental awareness programs, and policymakers should encourage family-centred educational practices. Further research may also explore longitudinal designs and include qualitative methods for more deeper insights.

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