

Relation of academic stress on academic achievement of visually impaired students

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ABSTRACT

The present study aims to explore the effect of academic stress on academic achievement of visually impaired students. 40 high school students (20 boys and 20 girls) of residential school participated in the study. The objectives of the study were i) To identify the main sources of stress in visually impaired students ii) To study the difference in academic stress level of male and female visually impaired students iii) To study of the impact of academic stress on academic achievement of visually impaired students. Academic stress scale was used to measure the level of stress experienced by the student and marks of midterm exam were taken as a measure of academic achievement of the students. Statistical analysis was conducted to find out the effect of academic stress on academic achievement. The result shows that highly stressed students scored less marks and students with low stress performed well in the exam. There is a strong negative correlation between academic stress and academic achievement. Also, girl students showed high level of academic stress vis-à-vis boy students.

Keywords: *Academic Stress, Visually Impaired, Achievement, Level of Stress, Residential*

People of all ages are affected by stress. It is an uncomfortable condition that affects our sense of happiness and quality of life. Stress is the dynamic relationship between an individual and the environment in which a stimulus disturbs an individual's homeostasis, causing him/her to react to the situation with all available resources. The investigator focuses on academic stress in this article and is particularly interested in understanding the context and the situations in which students live and the effect of academic stress on the achievement of students. Academic stress is any stress connected with school. Particularly stress that occurs in an academic environment affects students just like teachers, at any educational level.

Stress related to education and academics can be defined as academic stress. Bisht (2014) also explained academic stress as a claim linked to academic activities that go above the available recourses of the student who is involved in the process. Academic stress also

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reflects individual's perception of academic frustration, academic conflict, academic pressure and academic anxiety in the words of Bhist. Abouserie (1994) also emphasized that students are most stressed during examination and foremost pressures are exams, competition for grades, scarcity of time, enormous syllabus etc. George Essel and Patrick Owusu (2017) have enlisted important academic stressors felt by students. They are increased work load, lower grades, longer hours of study, language difficulties, procrastination, examination, missing classes and frustration due to misunderstanding.

Academic environments can be highly competitive for students with visual impairment. Their disability coupled with frustration and anxiety aggravates their academic stress. Students with visual impairment must depend on their coping abilities to handle school-related stress successfully. High school students experience stress in many situations. Adolescence is a crucial period full of changes, and it must be carefully managed if teenagers are to develop appropriately. Even though some of the issues of adolescence do not start off in the school situation, they may still influence students' academic performance. Williams argues that we must concentrate on the social, physical, and psychological needs of teenagers to avoid the probable harmful effects of adolescent stress on health and academic performance. However, not all sources of stress are academic. Some are due to family problems, anxiety about upcoming school terms, and difficulty adapting to change and body image perception etc. To thwart negative outcomes associated with stress, such as suicide, depression and anxiety we must measure students' stress to help those in need to work on their coping strategies so they can manage stress and thereby improve their quality of life. In this study, the investigator examined visually impaired high school students at the Govt Blind School, Tilak nagar and Ranga Rao Memorial school for the Disabled.

This study aims to investigate the stress level of visually impaired students. Students are the future of any nation. If the students will be in stress how will he/she be able to excel in his career and subsequently contribute in national development? Wellbeing of the student is more important. Academic performance of children with visual impairments is affected due to stress, particularly in the area of reading and writing. Alternative media and tools like Braille or an alternative form of print may help. Research shows that developmental competence of students is an integral to their academic competence (Masten et al., 2005). Findings of this study will contribute in identifying the main stressors of the visually impaired students and to suggest ways to minimize stress and improve performance and identify coping mechanism.

Statement of the problem

Statement of the problem is "Effect of academic stress on academic achievement among visually impaired students".

Objectives of the study

The study has mainly three objectives

1. To identify the main sources of stress in visually impaired students.
2. To study the difference in academic stress level of male and female visually impaired students.
3. To study of the relation of academic stress on academic achievement of visually impaired students.

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Hypothesis

Following hypothesis were formulated in the study

1. Academic stress of male students will be higher than the female visually impaired students.
2. There is a relationship between academic stress and academic achievements of visually impaired students.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

In order to achieve the objectives and verify the hypotheses of the study it was essential to identify students with visual impairment (SWVI). Hence for this purpose SWVI studying in special school at secondary level were considered as sample. In Mysore district there are only two special schools where student populations with visual impairment study. The schools are Govt Blind school for Boys, Mysuru and Ranga Rao memorial school for the disabled, Mysuru. The investigator selected both schools purposively to study about the relation of stress and achievement of visually impaired students. The sample consisted of 40 visually impaired students of Blind schools which are residential. They were selected using purposive sampling technique. Age range was 13-16 year. 20 participants were female student studying at Ranga Rao school for the Disabled, Mysore district, Karnataka and 20 Boys of Blind school, Tilak Nagar, Mysore district, Karnataka.

Procedure

Research design is the framework created to integrate the different components of the study in a coherent and logical way to effectively address the Research Problem. The method adopted for the study is normative survey. It is the method of investigation, which attempts to describe and interpret prevailing conditions, practices, process, effects, attitudes, beliefs etc. A survey method was employed to study the differences in academic stress of the visually impaired students in relation to their academic achievement.

Instruments

Academic stress scale – A Kannada translation of academic stress scale of Abha Rani Bhist was used to study academic stress of students. Scale of Academic stress (SAS) has 80 items, out of which 29 were negative and the rest were positively worded. Out of 80 items, 26 were for Academic Frustration, 15 each for Academic conflict and Academic Anxiety while Academic Pressure was found with 24 items. This scale consists of 80 items and each item has five responses like Too much, Much, Average, Less, Not at all. Scoring is done by assigning 0 to 4 mark and maximum marks was 320. High score indicates high stress level and low score on the scale indicates low stress level.

(ii) Marks scored in the last exam of various subjects were considered as measure of Academic Achievement. Investigators collected the marks of students from the school records.

RESULTS

1. Level of stress among visually impaired students

Table 1- Percentage of visually impaired students with different level of Academic stress

Sl No	Gender	N	High level of stress	Average Level of stress	Low level of stress	Percentage		
1	Girls	20	10	6	4	50%	30%	20%
2	Boys	20	5	10	5	25%	50%	25%

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The above Table 1 shows that 50% of girls were regarded to have high level of stress, 30% of girls have average level and 20% of girls have low level of stress. 25% of boys have high level of stress and 50% of the boys have average level of stress 25% of boys have low level of stress respectively

Table 2 - Difference in academic stress level of male and female visually impaired students

Gender	N	Academic frustration Mean	Academic Pressure Mean	Academic Conflict Mean	Academic Anxiety Mean	Total Academic stress	Mean	SD	t value
Boys	20	32	30	20	21	103	25.7	6.13	1.66
Girls	20	40	36	19	22	118	29.25	10.3	

Gender wise difference in stress of visually impaired students is shown in Table 2- mean, standard deviation and t value of boys and girls visually impaired students is presented. The table shows the value of 't' for the degree of freedom (38) is significant implying that there is difference between the mean stress score of female and male students with visual impairment.

Table 3 - Relationship between academic stress and academic achievement of visually impaired students.

Sl. No	Variable	Co efficient of correlation	Level of significance
1	Academic stress Vs Academic achievement	-0.09	Strong negative

DISCUSSION

One of the objectives of the study was to find the level of stress among visually impaired students. It was reported that 50% of girls were regarded to have high level of stress and 30% of girls have average high and 20% of girls have low level of stress. From the Table 1 it was revealed that 25% of boys have high level of academic stress and 50% of the boys have average level of stress 25% of boys have low level of stress respectively.

The second objective of the study was to find if there exist any differences in the stress of the visually impaired boys and girls. The table shows the value of 't' for the degree of freedom (38) was shown higher than the table value of 't'(0.05) .Therefore the null hypothesis which said that 'there exists no significant difference in the stress of the visually impaired students in relation to gender variation' would be rejected. It indicates that and female visually impaired students have higher level of stress than visually impaired boys.

Another objective of the study was to find out the level of relationship between the scores of academic stresses of the visually impaired students and their academic achievement. As such the null hypothesis formulated in this regard was "there would be no significant relation between academic stress of visually impaired students and their academic achievement". Pearson's coefficient of correlation was used to find relation between academic stress and achievement. It was found out that there exists a negative relation between stress and achievement.

The students in this study reported that exams were their greatest source of stress, which may indicate that students need help to improve their study skills and they may also need

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additional guidance, as making career choices was the second greatest source of stress in this study.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, the results reported here indicate that the students in our sample are psychologically well developed, but the previously mentioned risk factors for stress must be addressed to prevent future negative consequences.

Based on these results, some of the recommendations for improving student quality of life:

1. Offering training programs to students to teach them how to manage stress and anxiety before examinations, this can be organized in the form of workshops.
2. Provide students courses on how to prepare for examinations, including the development of study skills and memory strategies so they can improve their academic performance in difficult subjects
3. Vocational guidance and career advice that students get with the aim of reducing the stress associated with career choices to the students and
4. Try to develop programme to identify students with family problems or problems of adapting with school, so they can be given psychological support. Physically handicapped children require support of varying extent from teachers, classmates, family members and the community at large in order to derive the fullest benefits from their school experience, these exceptional children have special needs that demand additional support beyond those ordinarily available in the normal school environment. Such support may be in the form of special educational services, special infrastructural or learning facilities and most importantly special skills on the part of the teachers in orders to enable them to participate effectively in the learning process in the school setting.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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