

Academic stress and Stress Management among Senior Secondary School Girls of Kashmir

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ABSTRACT

The study examines the academic stress and stress management among senior-secondary school girls of Kashmir. The data of the study was collected from various districts of Kashmir valley using simple random sampling method. Academic stress and stress management of 400 adolescents aged 17 to 18 years was assessed with Academic Stress Questionnaire developed by Akram, Khan & Baby (2013) and Adolescents' Stress Management scale developed by the investigator herself. For analysis purpose, t-test and Pearson's product-moment correlation method were used. The results of the study revealed significant difference in the academic stress scores of government and private senior secondary school girls of Kashmir. Moreover, a significant difference was found in the stress management scores of government and private senior secondary school girls of Kashmir. A significant negative correlation was found between academic stress and stress management among secondary school girls of Kashmir. Our study contributes to the preferable understanding that for adolescent girls there are unique biological, psycho-social and behavioural processes therefore it is very important to improve the adolescent girls' confidence in their academic competence. The study also helps us to know different stress management techniques used by adolescent girls.

Keywords: *Academic Stress, Stress Management, Adolescents*

The stage of adolescence is known as a developmental period of life marked by difficulties and instabilities that can effectuate stress (Florencio et al., 2017). Due to the distinctive vulnerability of this period it is possible for adolescents to have stress and strain. The period of adolescence has a prominent role in the academic life of the student as well. The academic performance and personal development during adolescence decide about the coming stage of higher education. This period of life has psychological, social and neurobiological basis, therefore, increased stress during this stage of life could results in the excessive prevalence of psychological problems like depression, anxiety, task aversiveness which adversely affects adolescent's academic competence (Waghachavare et al.,2013). During the period of adolescence the academic stress has been reported by various research studies. Academic stress is caused in educational context and after exploring the scholastic

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stressors among adolescent students, researchers have revealed inadequate academic atmosphere, poor administration, fear of failure, unrealistic future expectations and highly combative circumstances as major academic stressors. Besides, high anticipation and demands of parents, financial burdens and employment pressures, disadvantaged study tendencies and poor time management are also among major stressors of academic stress. Academic stress has high prevalence towards physical, psychological and behavioural problems. The frequently observed problems among the students of academic stress are poor academic achievement, helplessness, concentration difficulties, health issues, substance abuse and diminished peer popularity, low self-esteem, dependency. When a student constantly has to give 'flight' or 'fight' response, he finds himself helpless to properly manage this stressful situation. Then the only need here is stress management to maintain the overall well-being of an individual. Stress Management concept is used for denoting the potentials which a person uses to combat with daily stressors. It is the capability to manage and regulate when the individuals, circumstances and situations make extreme and disproportionate demands. Successful management of stress includes the techniques and strategies which help a person to manage and regulate their emotions, think systematically, adjust their behavior in a given situation and act on the environment productively (Compas et al., 2001). There have been corroborations and evidences which reveal that resilience promoted self-efficacy and self-esteem and high self-confidence are important contributors for healthy development. During stressful and adverse period coping also acts as regulating and maintaining factor that help a person to adjust and manage internal and external demands which exceed a person's internal and external resources (Lazarus & Launier, 1978). The researchers have divided the concept of coping into two techniques which include direct coping modes and indirect coping modes. Direct coping consists of techniques which are directed towards improving or adjusting the challenging situations, managing external stressors and adopting appropriate problem-solving behaviours. This type of coping style is mostly applicable when dealing with stressors that are changeable in nature (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The indirect coping modes consists of strategies that help in regulating inactive internal stressors which are more likely to initiate when a person considers challenging situations as unfavourable. In order to deal with stressors in constructive way problem focused coping strategies have been found to be very effective (Penley et al., 2002). However, various research studies reveal that people are using a combination of both problem-focused as well as emotion-focused coping strategies. There is also a three-dimensional concept of coping in which two adaptive coping styles from a maladaptive coping style (Hampel & Petermann, 2005 & Seiffge-Krenke, 2000). Adaptive coping consists of better psychological adjustment and includes problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping, primary control, secondary control, and approach coping. Maladaptive coping strategies consists of unhealthy psychological adjustment and includes self-blame, rumination, catastrophizing, aggression, and avoidance (Hampel & Petermann, 2005). Literature suggests that maladaptive or defective coping strategies, such as using chosen or non-prescribed medication and avoidance has an adverse effect on academic performance, self-esteem and well-being of students (Penley et al., 2002). In academic setting it is very important for adolescents to understand and recognize the strategies and techniques which help to manage stress. Stress management is the process of acquiring and utilizing healthy techniques with the goal of managing stress and improving daily functioning. Stress Management strategies will enable students to get succeed in their academic and personal life. Various stress management techniques such as recreation, positive outlook, self-analysis, interpersonal skill development, yoga cum meditation; time management, enhancing emotional awareness could prove useful in managing the stress. The centre of attention of the present study is Academic Stress and Stress Management among

adolescents. (i.e., Senior Secondary School Girls). Unmanaged and high level of academic stress has disadvantageous effect on life style, academic performance and overall health of adolescents. In addition, the investigators have examined that adolescent students stress management is notably under-researched. Therefore, the present study aimed to explore the academic stress and stress management adolescent girls.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

An extensive and detailed assessment of the literature provides a basis for interpreting and discussing the results of the study. In this section, the researcher has attempted to present an overview of the scientific research that exists in the proposed research area. This section is divided into two subsections: I) National scenario and II) International scenario.

Zajacova et. al.,(2005) sought to explore the impact of academic self-efficacy and stress on academic achievement. The results showed that stress negatively affects student performance. Academic self-efficacy was found to be the strongest predictor of academic achievement. The results also showed a negative correlation between academic self-efficacy and stress, indicating that the higher the level of self-efficacy among students, the lower the level of stress, and vice versa.

Sonali (2016) aimed to explore the role of socioeconomic status in the academic stress of students in various higher secondary schools. The results showed that boys with low socioeconomic status were more susceptible to compared to boys with high socioeconomic status. However, girls from different socioeconomic backgrounds did not show significant differences in their study load. Personal incompetence and inadequate learning environments have proven to be major sources of academic stress among boys with low social and economic status.

Pascoe et al., (2020) conducted a study to examine the impact of academic stress on student learning ability, academic performance and mental health. The results of the study showed that academic stress has a negative impact on the ability to learn, academic performance and mental health of students.

Wilks (2008) attempted to explore the relationship between academic stress and perceived resilience. The results of the study showed that academic stress was negatively associated with resilience and social support. Peer group support has been found to contribute significantly in developing resilience among students.

Brar (2013) sought to explore coping strategies, parental relationships, and social support in relation to students' academic stress. The results of the study showed that coping strategies and parental involvement were significantly associated with academic stress. The healthier the response method the student exercises; the less was the academic stress faced by the student. In addition, a significant negative association was found between parent involvement and students' academic stress.

Meijer et al.,(2002) conducted a study to investigate the role of coping style and locus of control in predicting psychosocial adjustment among adolescent students aged 13 to 16 years. The results of the study confirmed that the two coping styles, i.e., the search for social support and confrontation proved to be highly influential in predicting positive social adjustment among adolescents. However, depression was predictor of poor social adjustment of adolescents.

Pinheiro and Matos (2013) attempted to determine the role of peer relationships in predicting active coping and self-esteem. The study also attempted to explore the mediating role of social skills in peer relationships, coping skills, and self-esteem. The results of the study showed that the quality of relationships with certain peer figures can contribute to the development of an active response style and a protective base, especially among adolescents who do not have family support. Adolescents who perceive supportive qualities in peer relationships have been found to have high self-esteem. It has also been found that such adolescents are better able to establish positive and compassionate relationships with others, which can lead to the development of active coping skills.

Objectives of the study

- To compare government and private senior-secondary school girls of Kashmir on academic stress.
- To compare government and private senior-secondary school girls of Kashmir on stress management.
- To find the relation between academic stress and stress management of senior secondary school girls of Kashmir.

Hypotheses

- H₀₁ There is no significant difference between government and private senior secondary school girls of Kashmir on academic stress.
- H₀₂ There is no significant difference between government and private senior secondary school girls of Kashmir on stress management.
- H₀₃ There is no relation between academic stress and stress management of senior secondary school girls of Kashmir.

METHOD AND PROCEDURE

The sample of the present study consisted of 400 senior-secondary school girls of Kashmir division which was further subdivided on the basis of type of school (government and private). Simple random sampling technique was used to obtain the data from three districts of Kashmir division (Anantnag, Srinagar and Baramulla).

Tools Used

Academic Stress Questionnaire developed by Akram, Khan & Baby (2013). The tool is a four point Likert scale having 36 items which measure five dimensions of academic stress.

Adolescents' Stress Management Scale by the investigator herself. It is a self-constructed, a five point Likert scale having 34 items which measure four dimensions of stress management among senior-secondary school girls.

Analysis and interpretation of data

Table 1: Mean comparison of government and private senior-secondary school girls of Kashmir on academic stress (N=400)

Variable	Groups	N	Mean	SD	SEM	df	t	Sig.
Academic Stress	Government	200	92.49	18.554	1.357			
	Private	200	84.78	21.496	1.473	398	3.810	.000

*Significant at 0.01 level

To compare the Academic Stress scores for government and private senior secondary school girls of Kashmir, an independent sample t-test was conducted. The table reveals that there is

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significant difference in academic stress scores for government senior secondary school girls ($M=92.49$, $SD = 18.55$) and private senior secondary school girls ($M=84.78$, $SD = 21.49$); $t = 3.810$, $p=.000$ (two tailed). The mean scores of academic stress of government senior secondary school girls are ($M=92.49$) which is higher than the mean scores of private senior secondary school girls ($M=84.78$). It may be concluded that government senior secondary school girls had more academic stress than private senior secondary school girls. The results are in line with Akeela & Ashok (2018) who also revealed the significant difference in academic stress scores of adolescents of government and private secondary schools and shows that government school students experienced more academic stress than their counter part. In view of the above-mentioned results, the hypothesis number one which reads as, “there is no significant difference between government and private senior secondary school girls of Kashmir on academic stress” is not accepted.

Table 2: Mean comparison of government and private senior-secondary school girls of Kashmir on stress management (N=400)

Variable	Groups	N	Mean	SD	SEM	df	t	Sig.
Stress Management	Government	200	107.81	31.848	1.717	398	2.176	.030
	Private	200	114.01	25.066	2.329			

To compare the Stress Management scores for government and private senior secondary school girls of Kashmir, an independent sample t-test was conducted. The Table 2 reveals that there is a significant difference in stress management scores for government senior secondary school girls ($M=107.81$, $SD = 31.848$) and private senior secondary school girls ($M=114.01$, $SD=25.066$); $t=2.176$, $p=.030$ (two tailed). The mean scores of stress management of government senior secondary school girls are ($M=107.81$) which is lower than the mean scores of private senior secondary school girls ($M=114.01$). It may be concluded that private senior secondary school girls had more Stress Management than government senior secondary school girls. In view of the above-mentioned results, the hypothesis number two which reads as, “there is no significant difference between Government and Private Senior Secondary School Girls of Kashmir on Stress Management” is not accepted.

Table 3: Showing the Pearson’s correlation coefficient (r) between Academic Stress and Stress Management

Variables	r
Academic Stress	-0.54*
Stress Management	

*Significant at 0.01 level

The table 3 reveals that there is a significant negative correlation between academic stress and stress management ($r=-0.54$), indicating that higher the academic stress among adolescents lesser will be their stress management. Thus, the null hypothesis number 3 which states that “there is no significant relationship between academic stress and stress management among senior secondary school girls of Kashmir” is not accepted.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to compare academic stress and stress management among adolescent girls of Kashmir on the basis of type of school. Findings specified that private senior secondary school girls were found to be more academically stressed than their counterparts. It was also found that private senior secondary school girls manage stress less

efficiently than government senior secondary school girls, however, adolescent girls studying in government senior secondary schools were found to use more adaptive coping strategies. A significant negative correlation was found between academic stress and stress management among secondary school girls of Kashmir.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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