

Research Paper

Effect of Differences in Academic Course Upon Academic Stress and Emotional Intelligence among Higher Secondary Students of Kolkata

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ABSTRACT

In present study, an attempt has been made to study the differences in emotional intelligence and academic stress across gender and different academic courses. For the objectives of the present study, 3 groups of students were selected – humanities group, science group and commerce group. 30 students were in each group, among them 15 were male and 15 were female. The students were administered student's academic stress scale by Sreenivas and Kumar (1999) and emotional intelligence scale by Nuthankumar Thingujam and Usha Ram (1999). Gender differences have been found in case of academic stress in all three academic courses. In case of emotional intelligence, only science group students revealed significant gender differences. Students belong to three academic courses were found to have differences in level of academic stress. The differences in academic course also found to have differences in emotional intelligence. Academic stress and emotional intelligence were found to correlate negatively in all 3 academic courses. Though no gender difference was evident in this relationship.

Keywords: *Academic Stress, Emotional Intelligence*

Concept of Academic Stress

Academic stress is one of the main stressors a type of distress. Academic means taking different exams writing different text and completing assignment. Academic stress can be described as a student's connections with environmental stressors, the student's cognitive thoughtfulness of and coping with the academic-related stressors, and emotionally or physiological reaction to the stressors.

Sources of Academic Stress

Some sources of Academic Stress are as:

- Lower grade
- Many hours of studies
- Language difficulties
- Procrastination
- Examinations

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Received: April 01, 2024; Revision Received: May 20, 2024; Accepted: May 24, 2024

Effect of Differences in Academic Course Upon Academic Stress and Emotional Intelligence among Higher Secondary Students of Kolkata

- Missing Lectures
- Frustration due to misunderstandings

Symptoms of Academic Stress

Some symptoms of Academic Stress are as:

- Sleep Disturbance.
- Inability to Concentrate.
- Increased Fear or Anxiety.
- Social Isolation or Withdrawal.
- Substance Abuse.
- Poor Appetite.
- Low Immunity.
- Withdrawal from Activities and Friends.
- Irritability and Impatience.
- Bed Wetting.
- Attempts to get out of School.
- Unusual and Unexplained Crying Spells.
- Stomach Aches and Digestive Problems.
- Excessive Worry and Negative Thoughts.
- Drop in Grades.
- Health Problems.

There are three kinds of common stress triggers students experience:

- Social
- Academic
- Daily life

Concept of Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence refers to the capability of a person to manage and control his or her emotions and possess the ability to control the emotions of others as well. EQ refers to an individual's ability to perceive, control, evaluate and express emotions. People with high EQ can manage emotions, use their emotions to facilitate thinking, understand emotional meanings and accurately perceived other's emotions.

Emotional Intelligence is divided into two main areas – personal intelligence and interpersonal intelligence, which break down into these characteristics:

- Self-regard and regard for others.
- Self-awareness and awareness of others.
- Emotional resilience, flexibility and trust.
- Personal power – the belief that people are responsible for their outcomes in life, rather than being the victim of circumstances or other people.
- Involvement of Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence involves:

- Emotional Literacy
- Managing Emotions
- Developing Empathy

Effect of Differences in Academic Course Upon Academic Stress and Emotional Intelligence among Higher Secondary Students of Kolkata

- Intrinsic Motivation

Components of Emotional Intelligence

Major components of EQ are:

- Self Awareness
- Self Management
- Social Awareness
- Relationship Management

EQ is self-confidence, Interpersonal skills, social competence. Challenge in today's world is to raise one's EQ.

- By knowing ones own emotions, distinguishing between feelings and actions.
- By motivating one self practice some emotional self control and delay gratification.
- By recognizing emotions in others, be sensitive to other feelings and listen well.
- By managing emotions by finding a balance between over sensitivity or overemotional suppression.

Academic Stress and Emotional Intelligence

Coping with stress requires adaptation to new social norms and situations. Also, both academic stress and environment are important and determinative to form the student's experiences beside 5 variables including age, sex, motivation, self-esteem and academic self concept. The scale of emotional intelligence can be used to identify individuals who may need education of special skills to deal with stress. Ciarrochi et.al believed that some forms of emotional intelligence can keep people safe from stress and lead to better compliance. In another study, Ciarrochi et.al suggested that emotional indicators and stressors factors impacted on socio psychological health status. Moreover, it is reported that perceived emotional intelligence on depression is moderated effectively by culture. Salovey, concluded that Emotional Intelligence was associated with health and individuals with higher Emotional Intelligence were able to deal better with stress and were less vulnerable in stress conditions.

Significance of The Study

The present study has been so designed to analyze how choice of academic stream can play a contributory role in the development of academic stress as a maintaining emotional balance. It is well known that choice of academic source is by and large determined by ability, aptitude, interest. But, if choices are made out of these then student may face academic stress which is often detrimental to the equilibrium of emotionality. However, the opposite is also evident. The study has a value in relieving academic stress as well as balancing cognition and affection. The findings will prove beneficial in the field of student counseling as well as mental health field.

Problem

Effect of Differences in Academic Course upon Academic Stress and Emotional Intelligence among Higher Secondary Students of Kolkata.

Objectives

The study has following objectives:

- To analyze how differences in academic course affecting the level of Academic Stress.

Effect of Differences in Academic Course Upon Academic Stress and Emotional Intelligence among Higher Secondary Students of Kolkata

- To analyze how differences in academic course affecting the Emotional Intelligence of the students.
- To analyze the relation between Academic Stress and Emotional Intelligence.

Hypothesis

- There will be significant difference in the level of academic stress of students of Commerce and Science.
- There will be significant difference in the level of academic stress of students of Commerce and Humanities.
- There will be significant difference in the level of academic stress of students of Humanities and Science.
- There will be significant difference in emotional intelligence between students of Commerce and Science.
- There will be significant difference in emotional intelligence between students of Commerce and Humanities.
- There will be significant difference in emotional intelligence between students of Humanities and Science.
- There will be significant relation between academic stress and emotional intelligence across different academic courses.
[Specific Sub-hypothesis will be developed as per requirement of the study].

Sample

The sample will consist of 3 groups. They are following:

- Group 1: 30 students of class XII of Commerce. Among them 20 were boys and 20 were girls.
- Group 2: 30 students of class XII of Science. Among them 20 were boys and 20 were girls.
- Group 3: 30 students of class XII of Humanities. Among them 20 were boys and 20 were girls.

Inclusion Criteria of the Sample

- All students will be fresher I.e. appearing higher secondary examination for the first time.
- The age ranges will be from 17 to 20 years.

Exclusion Criteria of the Sample

- Having history of serious or chronic physical or psychological illness.
- Failed or compartmental candidates.

Tools

- **General Information Schedule:** It will consists of basic information example, Name, Age, Sex, Qualifications etc.
- **Student Academic Stress Scale (SASS):** Academic Stress of the subjects was assessed by using student academic stress scale (SASS) developed by Sreenivas and Kumar (1999), which consists of 40 items divided into five components.
 - Personal inadequacy.
 - Fear of failure.
 - Interpersonal difficulties with teachers.

Effect of Differences in Academic Course Upon Academic Stress and Emotional Intelligence among Higher Secondary Students of Kolkata

- Teacher-Pupil relationship/ Teaching methods.
- Inadequate study facilities.

Among 40 statements, Eight are related to each component. Each statement has five options varying from the response of “No stress “to “Extreme stress “with regard to the degree of stress. A response “No stress “is given a score of “0 “, a score of “1“is given to a response of “Slight stress “, a score of “ 2 “ is given to a response of “ Moderate stress “, a response of “ High stress “ is given a score of “ 3 “, and a score of “ 4 “ is given to a response of “ Extreme stress “. Therefore 160 (4×40) is the maximum possible score and the highest score on each factor would be “ 32 “. Each factor has equal number of items. High score indicates high academic stress. The reliability of the instrument was established by Test-retest Method and it is 0.84.

- **Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS):** The Emotional Intelligence of the subjects was assessed by using Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS) developed by Nuthankumar Thingujam and Usha Ram (1999). The tool consists of 33 items. Each statement has five options I.e. “Strongly Disagree “, “Disagree “, “ Neutral “, “ Agree “, “ Strongly Agree “. A response of “Strongly agree “ is given a score of “ 5 “, a score of “ 4 “ is given to a response of “ Agree “, a score of “ 3 “ is given to a response of “ Neutral “, a score of “ 2 “ is given to a response of “ Disagree “ and a response of “ Strongly disagree “ is given to a score of “ 1 “ for positive statements. Whereas “ 5 “, “ 4 “, “ 3”, “ 2 “ and “ 1 “ scores are given for negative statements. The negative statements in the instruments are “ 5 “, “ 28 “ and “ 33 “. The minimum and maximum possible scores are 33 and 165 respectively. Low score on the scale indicates Low Emotional Intelligence and high score indicates High Emotional Intelligence. The reliability of the Instrument 0.90 was established by Test-Retest Method and the validity is 0.78.

Collection of Data

For collecting data, different higher secondary schools were approached. The Head of the Institutions were contacted and explained the purpose of the Study. After getting their approval, students were met. They were also explained the purpose of the study. Willing individuals were included in the study. The individuals were ensured to keep their responses private. More or less 1 to 1.5 hours were taken to collect the data. The data were collected in a group.

Statistical Analysis

- Descriptive Statistics (Mean and Standard Deviation) were calculated to understand the nature of sample.
- Parametric Statistics “t” Test were calculated to find out the Mean Difference between Groups with respect to a Dependent Variable.
- Product Moment Correlation was calculated to find out the correlation.

DISCUSSION

- Therefore, Gender differences as well as differences according to Academic Course do not exist in case of Humanities Group.
- Academic Stress and Emotional Intelligence were found to have Negative Correlation in all three Academic Courses under study.
- The Positive Correlation failed to show any gender wise differences.

Effect of Differences in Academic Course Upon Academic Stress and Emotional Intelligence among Higher Secondary Students of Kolkata

- Previous findings have indicated Academic Stress is likely to carry with the level of education (Abirmani 2017). The findings of the present study have led to the insight that differences in Academic Course also make differences in the level of Academic Stress.
- Jan et. al. (2018) have found strong link between Academic Stress and Emotional Intelligence. Our present findings also confirmed this inter- relationship.
- Ranasinghe et. al. (2017) concluded that higher Emotional Intelligence leads to lower Perceived Stress. Academic Stress has been identified to exert influences on Academic Performance.

CONCLUSION

The present study findings have led to the following conclusions:

- Gender Difference exists among students of Science Group and Commerce Group with regard to Academic Stress.
- Female students of Commerce Group have been found to have different level of Academic Stress from Science Group and Humanities Group of Female students.
- Female students of Humanities Group and Science Group did not differ significant by with respect to Academic Stress.
- In case of Male students of Humanities Group was found to differ significantly from Science Group and Commerce Group with regard to Academic Stress. Science and Commerce male students did not show any difference.
- Gender Difference has been to exist only in case of Science Group for Emotional Intelligence.
- In case of Emotional Intelligence only students belong to Commerce Group and Science Group differed significantly. Humanities Group and Science Group or Humanities Group and Commerce Group did not show any significant differences with respect to Emotional Intelligence.
- Female students of Humanities Group and Commerce Group were found to have different levels of Emotional Intelligence.
- Male students of Humanities Group and Commerce Group were found to differ significantly in case of Emotional Intelligence. Thus, it can be concluded that irrespective of gender Humanities Group and Commerce Group students bear differences in the level of their Emotional Intelligence.
- Humanities Group and Science Group whether Male or Female differed significantly with respect to Emotional Intelligence.

Limitations

- Due to shortage of time, the study was conducted on a small sample.
- No qualitative analysis done to see the factors contributing to increase the level of Academic Stress.
- Proper randomization was somehow not possible within stipulated time.

Suggestions

- The relation of Academic Stress and Emotional Intelligence can be explained.
- Other than Emotional Intelligence, Parental Pressure and Expectations may be included to see their impact on Academic Stress.

Effect of Differences in Academic Course Upon Academic Stress and Emotional Intelligence among Higher Secondary Students of Kolkata

Applications

- The findings of the present study has it's application in Stress Management. As we have been high Emotional Intelligence tend to lower level of Stress. Therefore, balance in Emotional Control can be practiced among students to cope with Academic Stress. Not only students must be taught to gain control over their Emotional Turmoil to get balanced personality.
- Moreover, before selecting Academic Control Assessment of Emotional Intelligence is also important besides Assessment of Ability.

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Effect of Differences in Academic Course Upon Academic Stress and Emotional Intelligence among Higher Secondary Students of Kolkata

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Effect of Differences in Academic Course Upon Academic Stress and Emotional Intelligence among Higher Secondary Students of Kolkata

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Acknowledgment

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

How to cite this article: Bhattacharya, P. (2024). Effect of Differences in Academic Course Upon Academic Stress and Emotional Intelligence among Higher Secondary Students of Kolkata. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 12(2), 2152-2160. DIP:18.01.185.20241202, DOI:10.25215/1202.185