

Research Paper

A Study on Academic Stress and Academic Performance among University Girls Hostel Students

Vinayak P L^{1*}, Prof. Parashurama K G², Maresha N³, Sumalatha G A⁴

ABSTRACT

The study investigates the relationship between academic stress and academic performance among female undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) students residing in hostels. The research explores how stress, induced by academic pressures and communal living, impacts academic outcomes. A sample of 120 students (60 UG, 60 PG) was assessed using the Academic Stress Scale (ASS) and Academic Performance Scale (APS). Results reveal that PG students experience significantly higher academic stress compared to UG students, leading to poorer academic performance. The study emphasizes the need for tailored stress management interventions to improve academic performance and overall well-being.

Keywords: *Academic stress, academic performance, UG students, PG students, hostel life*

Academic stress is a prevalent issue in higher education, especially among students living in hostels who are adjusting to independent living and academic demands. Academic stress refers to the emotional strain resulting from academic pressures such as exams, assignments, and the pressure to succeed. It can adversely affect students' psychological well-being, leading to anxiety, burnout, and poor academic performance.

For female students, these stressors are often amplified by societal expectations to excel academically while managing personal responsibilities. Hostel life introduces additional challenges, such as communal living, homesickness, and the absence of immediate familial support. Female hostel students at both the UG and PG levels face unique stressors that can significantly impact their academic performance.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Sharma and Patel (2019) investigated academic stress and performance among Indian UG and PG students, finding that PG students experience higher stress due to increased academic responsibilities, negatively impacting their performance.

¹Guest Faculty, DOSR in Psychology, Tumkur University, Tumakuru, Karnataka, India.

²Professor, Department of Studies and Research in Social Work, Tumkur University, Tumakuru, Karnataka.

³Research Scholar, DOSR in Social Work, Tumkur University, Tumakuru, Karnataka, India.

⁴Psychology Student, DOSR in Psychology, Tumkur University, Tumakuru, Karnataka, India.

*Corresponding Author

Received: June 16, 2024; Revision Received: June 27, 2024; Accepted: June 30, 2024

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Ahmed and Singh (2020) conducted a comparative study that revealed PG students experience more stress than UG students, which correlates with lower academic performance.

Lee, Kim, and Park (2018) found that mild academic stress can enhance motivation among UG students, improving performance, while excessive stress has the opposite effect.

Gupta, Sharma, and Mehta (2021) showed that PG students face higher academic stress due to workload and expectations, leading to poorer academic outcomes.

Behera and Joshi (2022) explored the interplay between stress and academic achievement, concluding that moderate stress can improve performance in UG students, but PG students under high stress experience a decline in performance.

METHODOLOGY

Aim:

To examine the relationship between academic stress and academic performance among female hostel students, focusing on differences between UG and PG levels.

Objectives:

1. To investigate the relationship between academic stress and academic performance.
2. To analyze differences in academic stress and academic performance between UG and PG students.
3. To assess the impact of communal living on academic stress.
4. To determine whether academic stress predicts academic performance among female hostel students.

Variables

- **Independent Variables**
 - Academic stress
 - Level of education (UG/PG)
- **Dependent Variables**
 - Academic performance

Inclusion Criteria

- Female students currently residing in university hostels.
- Undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) students.
- Age group: 18–25 years.

Exclusion Criteria

- Students living outside of university hostels (e.g., staying with family or in rented accommodations).
- Male students.
- Students above the age of 25.

Hypotheses:

1. There is no significant relationship between academic stress and academic performance.
2. There is no significant difference in academic stress between UG and PG students.
3. There is no significant impact of hostel living on academic stress.

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Sample

A purposive sample of 120 female hostel students, equally divided between UG (60) and PG (60) levels.

UG	PG	TOTAL
60	60	120

Research Design:

The study employed a comparative and correlational design. It compared stress levels and academic performance between UG and PG students, while correlational analysis assessed the relationship between stress and performance.

Tools

- **Academic Stress Scale (ASS):** A 40-item scale measuring stress across dimensions such as personal inadequacy, fear of failure, and teacher-student relationships.
- **Academic Performance Scale (APS):** An 8-item scale measuring academic outcomes through self-reported performance indicators.

Procedure:

Data were collected through questionnaires distributed to hostel students. Participants were assured of confidentiality, and informed consent was obtained.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS:

H₀: There will be no significant difference in academic stress and academic performance between UG and PG students.

Table 1 The Findings of the Independent t-test (n=60 for each group)

Variables	Groups	M	SD	T	P
AS	UG	29.5	5.131	-10.910	0.000
	PG	57.67	19.512		
AP	UG	67.02	12.654	17.381	0.000
	PG	31.50	9.509		

Note: AS=Academic Stress; AP=Academic Performance

This table 1 shows the mean, t and p values of academic stress and academic performance (ap) between UG and PG students.

Academic Stress (AS): The mean academic stress score for UG students is 29.5, compared to 57.67 for PG students. The t-value (-10.910) and p-value (0.000) indicate a significant difference in academic stress between the two groups.

This finding aligns with previous research, suggesting that postgraduate students experience higher academic stress due to increased workload and pressure than undergraduate students.

Academic Performance (AP): The mean academic performance score for UG students is 67.02, while PG students have a significantly lower mean of 31.50. The t-value (17.381) and p-value (0.000) show a significant difference between the groups in academic performance.

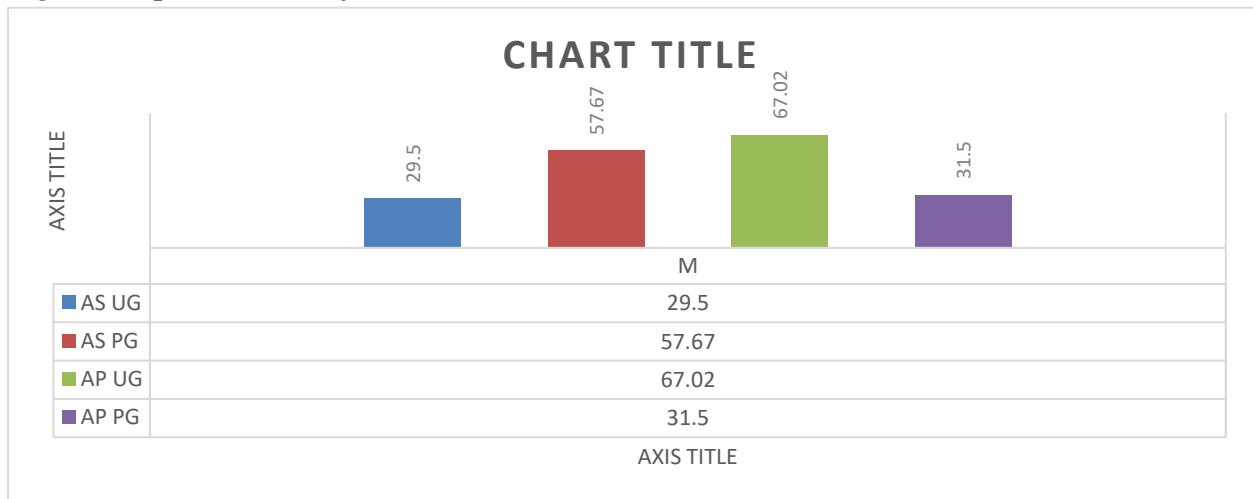
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This mirrors the findings of similar studies, which have demonstrated that undergraduate students tend to perform better academically than postgraduate students, possibly due to differing academic demands and responsibilities.

This result aligns with previous research by Sharma and Patel (2019), who found that lower academic performance among PG students is often linked to greater academic pressures.

There are significant differences between UG and PG students in both academic stress and academic performance, Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Figure 1 Representation of mean value



PEARSON CORRELATION COEFFICIENT:

- *H₀: There is no significant relationship between academic stress and academic performance among UG students.*

Table 2 The findings of the Pearson correlation coefficient between the study variables among UG students (n=60)

Variables	AS	AP
AS	1	.255*
AP	.255*	1

This table 2 shows the correlation value between academic stress (AS) and academic performance (AP) among UG students.

The correlation analysis indicates a weak positive correlation ($r = 0.255$, $p < 0.05$) between academic stress and academic performance for UG students, suggesting that slight increases in stress may be linked to better academic outcomes, although the relationship is modest. Similar findings were reported by Lee et al. (2018), who noted that mild stress could enhance motivation among UG students. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected for UG students.

Figure 2 The Scatter Plot Representing the Relationship Between Academic Stress Academic Performance (n=60)

- *H₀*: There is no significant relationship between academic stress and academic performance among PG students.

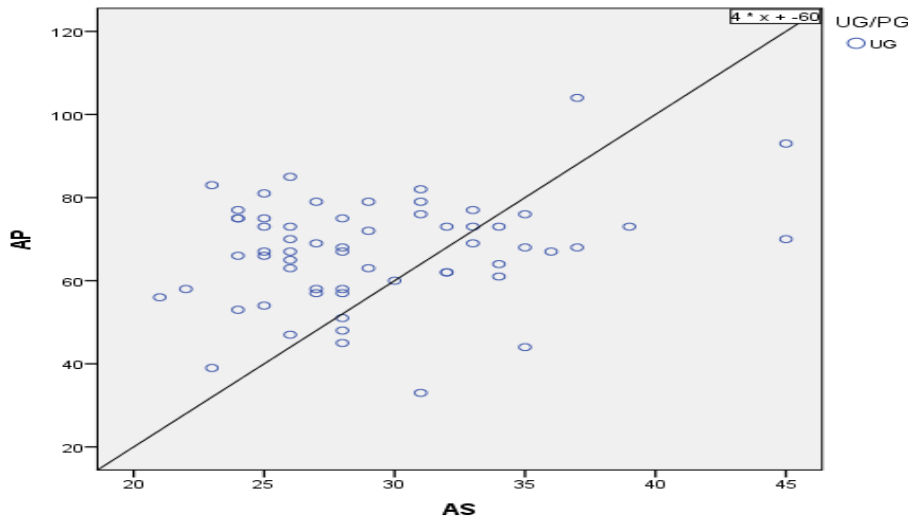


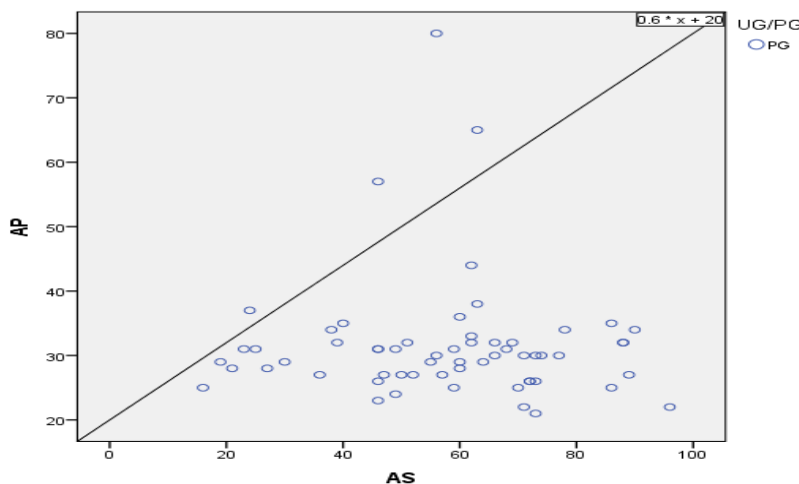
Table 3 The findings of the Pearson correlation coefficient between the study variables among PG students (n=60)

Variables	AS	AP
AS	1	-.038
AP	-.038	1

The correlation analysis for PG students reveals no significant relationship between academic stress and academic performance ($r = -0.038$, $p > 0.05$). This suggests that academic stress does not substantially affect performance among PG students. The null hypothesis is accepted for PG students.

These results contrast with those of Gupta et al. (2021), who observed a stronger negative correlation between stress and performance in PG students.

Figure 3 The Scatter Plot Representing the Relationship Between Academic Stress Academic Performance (n=60)



Simple Linear Regression:

➤ *H₀: Academic stress does not significantly predict academic performance.*

Table 4 the findings of the linear regression analysis for academic performance (n=120)

IV	R ²	B	SEB	T	F	P
Constant	0.348	76.027	3.716	20.458	62.926	0.000
AS		-.616	.078	-7.933		0.000

The regression analysis demonstrates that academic stress is a significant predictor of academic performance (B = -0.616, p < 0.001). The model explains 34.8% of the variance in academic performance (R² = 0.348). This negative coefficient suggests that higher levels of academic stress are associated with lower academic performance. These results support the findings of Ahmed and Singh (2020), who similarly reported that excessive stress negatively affects academic outcomes. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

CONCLUSION

This study provides valuable insights into the differences in academic stress and performance between undergraduate and postgraduate students. PG students experience significantly higher academic stress and poorer academic performance compared to UG students, highlighting the need for tailored support systems for postgraduate students. Additionally, while academic stress has a slight positive impact on UG student performance, excessive stress overall negatively impacts academic outcomes, particularly for PG students.

The significant relationship between academic stress and performance in this study underscores the importance of developing stress management strategies in educational settings to promote better academic outcomes, particularly for postgraduate students. The study emphasizes the need for targeted interventions to help PG students manage their increased workload and responsibilities, thereby enhancing their academic success.

Implications

The findings of this study have important implications for educators, administrators, and mental health professionals. The significant impact of academic stress on performance suggests that stress management programs should be integrated into university support systems. Initiatives such as stress reduction workshops, counselling services, and workload management training can help students—especially postgraduates—balance their academic demands and reduce the negative effects of stress.

Additionally, educators should be aware of the differing stress levels and academic challenges faced by UG and PG students and adapt their teaching methods and assessments accordingly. More research is needed to explore other factors that contribute to the stress-performance relationship and to develop comprehensive strategies that address both academic and emotional well-being for students at different academic levels.

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Acknowledgment

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

Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

How to cite this article: Vinayak, P.L., Parashurama, K.G., Maresha, N. & Sumalatha, G A (2024). A Study on Academic Stress and Academic Performance among University Girls Hostel Students. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 12(2), 4896-4903. DIP:18.01.438.20241202, DOI:10.25215/1202.438