

## Influence of Counselling on Academic Stress Levels Among Adolescents

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the impact of counselling interventions on academic stress levels among adolescents. Academic stress among adolescents is a pervasive issue with implications for mental health, academic performance, and overall well-being. The research employs a quantitative approach, utilizing pre- and post-intervention surveys to measure changes in academic stress levels among a sample of 30 adolescents taken from local high schools, with a focus on diverse socio-economic backgrounds to capture a representative sample. The academic stress scale by Jain and Dixit was used. Academic stress was assessed both before and after the intervention during the pre- and post-testing periods. The intervention involves five days of group counselling sessions conducted by a trained counsellor, comprising a total of five counselling sessions of one hour per session. The content of the counselling sessions is tailored to address common stressors related to academic performance, such as time management, test anxiety, and peer pressure. Data analysis involves paired-sample t-tests to assess the impact of counselling on academic stress levels. The findings of this study conclude the effectiveness of counselling in significantly reducing academic stress among adolescents ( $p < 0.01$ ). The paper aims to emphasize the significance of counselling in alleviating stress by fostering holistic well-being and aiming for academic achievement among adolescents.

**Keywords:** *Counselling, Academic Stress Levels, Adolescents*

Adolescence marks a pivotal period characterized by significant physical, emotional, and cognitive development. Amidst these transformations, adolescents often grapple with the challenges of academic stress, which can profoundly impact their well-being and academic performance. The pressures of academic achievement, social expectations, and future uncertainties contribute to the burden of stress experienced by many adolescents today. Consequently, addressing academic stress has become a critical concern for educators, parents, and mental health professionals alike.

In response to the pervasive issue of academic stress among adolescents, counselling interventions have emerged as a promising avenue for support and intervention. Counselling offers a structured and personalized approach to address the multifaceted nature of academic

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## **Influence of Counselling on Academic Stress Levels Among Adolescents**

stress, targeting both its underlying causes and manifestations. By providing adolescents with coping strategies, emotional support, and skill-building techniques, counselling aims to alleviate stressors related to academic performance and foster resilience in the face of challenges.

Despite the growing recognition of counselling as a potential solution for academic stress, the empirical evidence regarding its effectiveness remains inconclusive. While some studies suggest positive outcomes associated with counselling interventions, others report mixed or minimal effects. Thus, there exists a pressing need for rigorous research to evaluate the influence of counselling on academic stress levels among adolescents.

This paper aims to contribute to the existing literature by examining the impact of counselling interventions on academic stress levels among adolescents. By adopting a quantitative research design, this study seeks to provide empirical insights into the efficacy of counselling in mitigating academic stress and promoting well-being among adolescents. Through a randomized controlled trial (RCT) approach, the study endeavors to establish causal relationships between counselling interventions and changes in academic stress levels.

The findings of this research hold significant implications for educational practices, mental health interventions, and policy development aimed at supporting adolescent well-being. By elucidating the role of counselling in addressing academic stress, this study aims to inform evidence-based strategies for promoting holistic development and academic success among adolescents. Through collaboration between researchers, educators, and mental health professionals, we can strive towards creating nurturing environments that empower adolescents to thrive academically and emotionally.

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Hosseinkhani et al., (2020) investigated the relationship between various sources of academic stress and adolescent mental health, mediated by academic self-efficacy and self-concept. A cross-sectional study comprising 1724 students aged 12-19 from 53 high schools in Qazvin City, Iran, utilized Multilevel Structural Equation Modeling (MSEM). Results revealed that high academic stress was linked to reduced mental health, with family, peer, and educational system stress exerting the greatest impact on students. Notably, family-related stress emerged as the most significant predictor of adolescent mental health. Self-concept played a crucial mediating role, while academic self-efficacy showed no significant relationship. These findings underscore the importance of addressing family-related stressors in promoting adolescent mental well-being.

Ogakwu et al., (2023) investigates the efficacy of Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy (REBT) in managing academic stress and improving school adjustment among university students. Employing a pretest-posttest control group design, 97 Industrial Technical Education students participated in the study. Measures of academic stress and adjustment were administered at three points. Multivariate analysis revealed significant improvements in both domains following REBT treatment compared to a waitlisted control group. These improvements were sustained at follow-up. Gender did not moderate the treatment effect. Findings underscore the effectiveness of REBT in reducing academic stress and enhancing school adjustment, highlighting the importance of integrating this approach into school counselling services.

## **Influence of Counselling on Academic Stress Levels Among Adolescents**

Ramaprabou and Dash (2018) examines the influence of academic stress on achievement motivation among college students. Fifty students from various professional, arts, and science colleges in Puducherry participated. Data were collected using the Academic Stress Scale and Achievement Motivation Scale. Statistical analyses included t-tests and one-way ANOVA. Results indicate that moderate stress correlates with higher achievement motivation.

Loon et.al., (2020) conducted a comprehensive meta-analysis of 54 studies, encompassing 61 independent samples and 16,475 individuals, to evaluate the effectiveness of school-based intervention programs targeting psychological stress among adolescents. Results indicate a moderate overall effect in reducing psychological stress, with significant effects observed within specific student subgroups. These findings suggest that school-based interventions hold promise in alleviating stress among selected adolescent populations. The implications of these results extend to practice, policy, and future research, emphasizing the potential of tailored interventions in mitigating psychological stress among adolescents and highlighting the importance of continued investigation in this area.

### ***Objective:***

The objective of the present research paper is as follows:

- To study the effect of counselling on academic stress of adolescents.

### ***Hypothesis:***

The hypothesis of the present research paper is as follows:

- There is significant effect of counselling on academic stress of adolescents.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Sample:***

The sample comprises 30 adolescents selected through convenience sampling from Udaipur, located in Rajasthan.

### ***Tool:***

The academic stress scale by Poorva Jain and Neelam Dixit was used. It consists of 28 items pertaining to the issues related to academic failure. It is based on five-point likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The test-retest reliability was 0.86 and the test have face validity. A score of 5 is given to strongly agree, 4 to agree, 3 to undecided, 2 to disagree and 1 to strongly disagree. High score is indicative of high academic stress.

### ***Procedure***

The Academic Stress Scale was first given as a pre-test, followed by a post-test after five counselling sessions. Each counselling session, lasting one hour, constituted five hours of intervention. The counselling was conducted daily, completing the sessions over five days.

### ***Counselling Schedule***

<b>Day 1: Session 1</b>	
Assessment and Goal Setting	20 mins
Psychoeducation	40 mins
<b>Day 2: Session II</b>	
Cognitive-Behavioural Techniques	60 mins
<b>Day 3: Session III</b>	

## Influence of Counselling on Academic Stress Levels Among Adolescents

Stress Management Skills Training	60 mins
<b>Day 4: Session IV</b>	
Emotional Regulation	60 mins
<b>Day 5: Session V</b>	
Building Resilience and Self-Efficacy	40 mins
Monitoring and Follow-Up	20 mins

### *Counselling Steps*

Reducing academic stress among adolescents through counselling involves a series of structured steps designed to address the underlying causes of stress and equip adolescents with coping strategies to manage academic pressures effectively. Here's a description of the typical counselling process aimed at decreasing academic stress levels among adolescents:

1. *Assessment and Goal Setting*: The counselling process had commenced with an initial assessment to comprehend the specific stressors impacting the adolescent's academic performance and well-being. This had involved conducting interviews, administering standardized assessments, and gathering information from teachers and parents. Based on this assessment, collaborative goals had been established between the counsellor and the adolescent, focusing on reducing stress and enhancing coping skills.
2. *Psychoeducation*: Psychoeducation had played a crucial role in helping adolescents understand the physiological and psychological aspects of stress. Counsellors had provided information about the impact of stress on academic performance, physical health, and mental well-being. Adolescents had learned about common stressors encountered during their academic journey, such as test anxiety, perfectionism, time management challenges, and social pressures.
3. *Cognitive-Behavioural Techniques*: Cognitive-behavioural techniques had been employed to challenge negative thought patterns and develop adaptive coping strategies. Adolescents had learned to identify irrational beliefs and cognitive distortions contributing to their stress levels. They had been taught cognitive restructuring techniques to replace negative thoughts with more balanced and realistic perspectives. Additionally, behavioural techniques such as relaxation exercises, mindfulness practices, and systematic desensitization had been introduced to manage physiological arousal and reduce anxiety.
4. *Stress Management Skills Training*: Counselling sessions had focused on equipping adolescents with practical stress management skills to navigate academic challenges effectively. This had included time management strategies, organization skills, effective study habits, and problem-solving techniques. Adolescents had learned to set realistic goals, prioritize tasks, and break down overwhelming tasks into manageable steps. They had also explored healthy coping mechanisms such as physical exercise, hobbies, and social support networks.
5. *Emotional Regulation*: Adolescents had learned to recognize and regulate their emotions in response to academic stressors. Counsellors had helped them develop emotional awareness and resilience, enabling them to cope with setbacks and disappointments constructively. Through techniques such as emotion regulation exercises, mindfulness meditation, and relaxation techniques, adolescents had learned to manage stress-induced emotions such as anxiety, frustration, and overwhelm.
6. *Building Resilience and Self-Efficacy*: Counselling sessions had aimed to foster resilience and self-efficacy, empowering adolescents to navigate academic

## Influence of Counselling on Academic Stress Levels Among Adolescents

challenges with confidence and optimism. Adolescents had been encouraged to celebrate their achievements, learn from failures, and cultivate a growth mind-set towards learning and personal development. By emphasizing strengths and building on past successes, counsellors had helped adolescents develop a sense of mastery and competence in overcoming academic obstacles.

7. *Monitoring and Follow-Up*: The counselling process had involved ongoing monitoring and evaluation of progress towards the established goals. Counsellors had tracked changes in academic stress levels, academic performance, and well-being over time. Follow-up sessions had provided opportunities to reinforce coping skills, address emerging issues, and adapt strategies based on the adolescent's evolving needs. Collaboration with parents, teachers, and other support systems had ensured continuity of care and support beyond the counselling sessions.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

*Table 1 Showing Skewness and Kurtosis measures for Pre and Post testing for Academic Stress*

	Pre-test		Post-test	
	Skewness	Kurtosis	Skewness	Kurtosis
<b>Academic Stress</b>	0.555	-0.942	0.148	-0.832

Table 1 demonstrates that the skewness and kurtosis measures for both Pre and Post testing across Academic Stress are below 1, suggesting a normal distribution of the data. Therefore, the paired 't' test is employed to compare Academic Stress scores at pre and post-testing situations of counselling and presented in table 2.

*Table 2 Comparison of Academic Stress Scores at Pre and Post-testing Situations of Counselling*

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Mean Difference	't'	p value
		<b>Academic Stress</b>	Pre-test	91.133	30	17.029	7.667
	Post-test	83.467	30	12.678			

Table 2 shows that the mean scores for the academic stress were 91.133 at the pre-testing situation and 83.467 at the post-testing situation. The 't' score calculated was 6.822, which was found to be significant at the 0.01 level ( $p=0.000$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). This indicates a significant difference in the academic stress between the pre-testing and post-testing situations. Moreover, the mean scores indicate that academic stress decreases after counselling sessions for adolescents.

Academic stress often decreases due to counselling for several reasons. Firstly, counselling provides individuals with coping strategies and stress management techniques tailored to their specific academic challenges. This equips them with the tools to effectively manage their stressors. Secondly, counselling offers a supportive environment where students can express their concerns and feelings, reducing feelings of isolation and promoting a sense of belonging. Additionally, counsellors can help students reframe their perspectives on academic challenges, fostering a more positive mind-set and reducing anxiety. Moreover, counselling sessions may address underlying issues contributing to academic stress, such as perfectionism or low self-esteem, leading to long-term reductions in stress levels. Overall,

## Influence of Counselling on Academic Stress Levels Among Adolescents

the guidance and support provided in counselling can empower students to navigate academic stressors more effectively, resulting in decreased levels of stress over time.

### CONCLUSION

On the basis of the analysis of results the hypothesis “*There is significant effect of counselling on academic stress of adolescents*” is **accepted**.

Counselling serves as a vital tool in reducing academic stress by providing tailored support and strategies uniquely suited to each individual's needs. Through counselling sessions, individuals can pinpoint specific stressors in their academic lives, whether it's exam anxiety, time management issues, or self-imposed perfectionism. With the guidance of counsellors, students learn effective coping mechanisms to navigate these stressors, such as relaxation techniques, mindfulness practices, and cognitive-behavioural strategies to reframe negative thoughts. Moreover, counselling fosters the development of problem-solving skills, resilience, and self-confidence, empowering students to confront academic challenges with a positive mindset and adaptability. By offering emotional support in a safe and non-judgmental environment, counsellors help students address underlying emotions and concerns related to academic stress, reducing feelings of isolation and fostering a sense of belonging. Furthermore, counselling interventions promote holistic well-being by encouraging healthy habits and providing practical academic support, ultimately equipping individuals with the tools and resources needed to effectively manage academic stress and thrive academically. Counselling interventions can effectively decrease academic stress levels among adolescents, fostering resilience, well-being, and academic success.

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#### **Conflict of Interest**

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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