



Personal Adjustment and Academic Stress Among Higher Secondary Students

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ABSTRACT

The present study examined the personal adjustment and academic stress among higher secondary students. The investigator adopted survey method for the present study. The tool used for the study is Academic Stress Inventory (2009) by Ying Ming Lin and Farn Shing Chen. Personal Adjustment Questionnaire is prepared by Bernila D.P. (Investigator) and Miss. R.S. Reena (Guide) in 2023. Data were collected from 300 higher secondary students of different schools in Kanyakumari District. The statistical technique used for the present study is 't'-test and correlation. Results showed that there is significant difference in the academic stress of higher secondary students with regard to gender, medium of instruction and also showed that there is no significant difference in personal adjustment of higher secondary students with regard to gender and medium of instruction.

Introduction

Personal adjustment refers to an individual's ability to effectively adapt to and manage changes and demands in their life. It involves balancing various aspects of life, including emotional, social, and practical elements, to maintain overall well-being and functionality.

Academic stress is a common problem that affects students of all ages. It can be caused by a variety of factors, such as a heavy workload, difficult exams, tight deadlines, competitive classmates, and high expectations from parents and teachers. Academic stress can have a negative impact on

students' physical and mental health. It can lead to anxiety, depression, sleep problems, and headaches. It can also make it difficult for students to concentrate and perform well in school.

Significance of the study

The rate of academic stress is increasing alarmingly in the outgoing students from different departments. It needs quick and immediate attention and action for its effective management. If this important field of study is left unattended, this may lead to many incurable psychological problems based on this concept. Individuals suffer from different types of stresses due to the complexity of life. The students should be trained to manage the stress. When students perform under stress, they tend to ignore their attitude and health, with the result they become a source of nuisance to others in the school. Students who are unable to get help or manage their stress ultimately commit suicide causing a permanent agony to both the parents and society. Therefore, it is necessary to undertake an in-depth research among the school children so as to design suitable methods to protect the children from the stressful life. Further a number of changes are made in the curriculum, text books used, and pedagogy at different points of time and so a periodical study of stress among students would go a long way to evolve a system which brings down the 'stress and also helps the students to enjoy their life at school.

At this juncture, identification of the chief sources of academic stress and adjustment styles of the students assume enormous importance. Hence, it has been felt that a study of academic stress and personal adjustment among a sample of higher secondary school students would be worthwhile to ensure an education of high quality to our young generation. Hence, the present study is aimed to identify the various academic stress areas that are causing and different personal adjustment strategies to cope with these problems of stress by the higher secondary school students of Kanyakumari District. So the investigator has chosen the title as **Personal Adjustment and academic stress among Higher Secondary Students.**

Objectives

- To find out whether there is any significant difference in personal adjustment of higher secondary students with regard to gender and medium of instruction.
- To find out whether there is any significant difference academic stress of higher secondary students with regard to gender and medium of instruction.

- To find out whether there is any relationship between personal adjustment and academic stress of higher secondary students.

Hypotheses of the study

- There is no significant difference in personal adjustment of higher secondary students with regard to gender.
- There is no significant difference in the personal adjustment of higher secondary student with regard to medium of instruction.
- There is no significant difference in the academic stress of higher secondary student with regard to gender.
- There is no significant difference in the academic stress of higher secondary student with regard to medium of instruction.
- There is no significant relationship between personal adjustment and academic stress among higher secondary students.

Methodology

The investigator has used survey method for the present study. The tool used for the study is Academic Stress Inventory (2009) by Ying Ming Lin and Farn Shing Chen. Personal Adjustment Questionnaire is prepared by Bernila D.P. (Investigator) and Miss. R.S. Reena (Guide) in 2023. Data were collected from 300 higher secondary students of different schools in Kanyakumari District. The statistical technique used for the present study is 't'-test and correlation.

Analysis of the data

Ho1: There is no significant difference in the personal adjustment of higher secondary students with regard to gender

Table 1. Significance of difference in the personal adjustment of higher secondary student with regard to gender

Variables	Gender	N	Mean	Standard deviation	t-value		Remarks (5% level)
					Calculated	Table	
Personal Adjustment	Male	144	64.28	7.441	1.612	1.96	NS
	Female	156	65.71	7.859			

NS – Not significant

From the above table it is inferred that the calculated t-value (1.612) is less than the table ‘t’ value (1.96) at 5% level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted. It shows that there is no significant difference in the personal adjustment of higher secondary students with regard to gender.

Ho2: There is no significant difference in the personal adjustment of higher secondary students with regard to medium of instruction

Table 2. Significance of difference in the personal adjustment of higher secondary students with regard to medium of instruction

Variables	Medium of instruction	N	Mean	Standard deviation	t-value		Remarks (5% level)
					Calculated	Table	
Personal Adjustment	Tamil	20	64.28	9.043	1.875	1.96	NS
	English	280	65.71	7.550			

NS – Not significant

From the above table it is clear that the calculated t-value (1.875) is less than the table ‘t’ value (1.96) at 5% level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted. It shows that there is no significant difference in the personal adjustment of higher secondary students with regard to medium of instruction.

Ho3): There is no significant difference in the academic stress of higher secondary students with regard to gender

Table 3. Significance of difference in the academic stress of higher secondary student with regard to gender

Variables	Gender	N	Mean	Standard deviation	t-value		Remarks (5% level)
					Calculated	Table	
Academic Stress	Male	144	84.28	15.643	4.829	1.96	S
	Female	156	75.06	17.315			

S – Significant

From the above table it is inferred that the calculated t-value (4.829) is greater than the table ‘t’ value (1.96) at 5% level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis is not accepted. It shows that there is significant difference in the academic stress of higher secondary students with regard to gender.

Ho4: There is no significant difference in the academic stress of higher secondary students with regard to medium of instruction

Table 4. Significance of difference in the academic stress of higher secondary students with regard to medium of instruction

Variables	Medium of Instruction	N	Mean	Standard deviation	t-value		Remarks (5% level)
					Calculated	Table	
Academic Stress	Tamil	20	89.20	18.512	2.653	1.96	S
	English	279	78.76	16.883			

S – Significant

From the above table it is clear that the calculated t-value (2.653) is greater than the table ‘t’ value (1.96) at 5% level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis is not accepted. It shows that there is significant difference in the academic stress of higher secondary students with regard to medium of instruction.

Ho5: There is no significant relationship between personal adjustment and academic stress of higher secondary students

Table 5. Significance of relationship between personal adjustment and academic stress of higher secondary students

Variables	N	r- value		Remarks (5% level)
		Calculated	table	
Personal Adjustment	300	0.086	0.139	NS
Academic Stress				

NS –Not Significant

It is inferred from the above table that the calculated ‘r’ value (0.086) is less than the table value (0.139) at 5% level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted. It shows that there is no significant relationship between personal adjustment and academic stress of higher secondary students.

Findings and interpretations

- There is significant difference revealed in the academic stress of higher secondary students with regard to gender. It has been found that the male students experience more stress than their female counterparts. This may be due to the fact that there is a difference between gender in perception and attitude towards life. Male students are sincere and more responsible by nature whereas females are generally less responsible and happy go lucky. Female students were found to utilize the emotion-focused coping dimension and endorsed the use of coping strategies more often than males.
- There is a significant difference revealed between higher secondary students of medium of instruction in the academic stress. While comparing the mean scores, Tamil medium students feels academic stress than English medium students. This may due to the fact that, Tamil medium students suffer from more academic stress than English medium students. When they commit mistakes in classroom instruction, not able to express personal problems with peers and teachers, have inconsistency in use of language, request the teachers to repeat the points. These problems can create additional pressure on students to not perform well academically.

Educational Implications

- Schools can create environments that support students' holistic development, promote positive mental health, and enhance academic achievement for all learners. Collaboration among educators, families, communities, and policymakers is essential for implementing evidence-based strategies and policies that prioritize student well-being and academic success.
- It is the responsibility of family and school to provide stress free and congenial environment to adolescents for their academic growth and well-being.
- Schools must give due importance to co-curricular activities like sports, music, swimming etc. Yoga must be a part of curriculum since it plays an important role in increasing the concentration power and bringing down the stress level moreover Guidance and counseling programmes must be strengthened to help the adolescents to overcome their academic related stress
- Educators should consider students' personal adjustment and stress levels when designing curriculum and instructional strategies. Providing opportunities for differentiated instruction, project-based learning, and student-centered approaches can accommodate diverse learning needs and preferences, reducing stress and promoting academic success.
- Peer support networks and positive social relationships are critical for students' personal adjustment and resilience to academic stress. Schools can facilitate opportunities for peer mentoring, group counseling, and collaborative learning experiences that promote peer support and foster a sense of belonging and community among students.

Conclusion

The interplay between personal adjustment and academic stress among higher secondary students is a critical area of concern that directly impacts their overall well-being and their academic performance. Effective personal adjustment, which includes managing emotions, developing coping strategies, and maintaining a balanced lifestyle, significantly influences how students experience and handle academic stress. Students who excel in personal adjustment tend to exhibit better resilience, reduced stress levels, and improved academic outcomes. Conversely, high levels of academic stress can impede personal adjustment by overwhelming students and affecting their emotional and social functioning. Addressing this dynamic requires a multifaceted approach, including implementing supportive academic environments, fostering strong social networks, and providing resources for stress management. By enhancing personal adjustment skills and offering targeted interventions to alleviate academic stress,

educators and policymakers can support students in navigating their educational challenges more effectively, ultimately promoting healthier, more successful academic experiences.

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