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Prevalence of academic stress among students

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Abstract

The present study was aimed to study the prevalence of academic stress among Pre-university students. A survey and random method were used in the study to find out about the colleges which catered to Pre University Course [PUC], to collect the data. The colleges selected were from Bangalore rural and urban area. Self structured questionnaire was used to collect the basic data. And Academic Stress Scale by Balaji Rao (2013) was used to know the academic stress among students. Majority of the students were belongs to the age group of 17-18 years. Equal percentages of both male and female students of I and II PUC studying in science, commerce and arts streams of both rural and urban area were constituted the sample. Results revealed that academic stress was more prevalent among female urban respondents studying in II PUC.

Keywords: Academic stress, prevalence, students

Introduction

Period of life that can be labelled as adolescence was defined by World Health Organization as between 10- 19 years. The National Council of Educational Research and Training (1999) defined adolescence as a period of physical, psychological and social maturity from childhood to adulthood. It is characterized by great physical changes in the body brought on by the onset of puberty. Such physical changes can influence self -image, a search for sexual and personal identity, and impact personality factors like “self-esteem, confidence, shyness, and anxiety”.³In the present scenario, as the society is influenced by modernization and westernization, the path from adolescence to adulthood is endowed with stress. This is true, especially in the case of adolescents as they have to face greater stress in the form of parental ambitions and highly competitive academic and job environments.

The performance in the 12th grade final examination is crucial for getting admission into one’s preferred choice of college or university. The poor ratio of number of available institutions to the aspirants for college education ensures that the students face tremendous competition in getting admission to tertiary education. The pressure of preparation for examinations creates a high degree of anxiety in many students, especially in those who are unable to perform at a level that matches the potential they have shown in less stressful situations. So the present study was aimed to study the prevalence of academic stress among Pre-university students.

Methodology

Objectives: The objective of the current study is to assess the prevalence of academic stress among Pre-university students.

A survey and random method were used in the study to find out about the colleges which catered to Pre University Course [PUC], to collect the data. The colleges selected were from Bangalore rural and urban area. Self-structured questionnaire was used to collect the basic data. The basic data comprised of demographic variables such as gender, course opted, educational qualification of parents, monthly income of the family and so on. And Academic Stress Scale by Balaji Rao (2013) was used to know the academic stress among students. There were 40 statements related to different situations that cause stress to the respondents such as incomplete or confusing study material, not enough discussion in class, biased / partial attitude of the teacher, lack of self-confidence, worrying about exams, the examination syllabus being too vast and so on. Each statement were rated on a 5 point scale from no stress, slight stress, medium stress, high stress and extreme stress and rated as 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 respectively.

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Four colleges were randomly selected for the study and 180 students from the rural and 180 from the urban students were part of the study. Within the 180 samples, 90 respondents were from I PUC and 90 from II PUC were selected randomly from both rural and urban area studying from different streams like science, commerce and arts. The sample consisted of both male and female respondents between the age group of 17 years to 20 years. Data for the study was collected using the questionnaire which was formulated by the researcher. The researcher made visits to the different colleges at different days and administered the questionnaire

to the respondents. The respondents were asked to fill the questionnaire and give their replies for all the given questions. Any doubts that cropped up were dealt by the researcher herself. To analyze the complied data, Statistical techniques and their interpretation for the corresponding table has been given. The tests used to analyze the data were the student ‘t’ test and chi-square.

Results and Discussion

The results obtained from the data are tabulated and discussed as below.

Table 1: Classification of Respondents by Age group and Gender

Characteristics	Category	Respondents					
		Rural		Urban		Combined	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Age group (years)	15-16	60	33.3	60	33.3	120	33.3
	17-18	111	61.7	111	61.7	222	61.7
	19-20	9	5.0	9	5.0	18	5.0
Gender	Male	90	50.0	90	50.0	180	50.0
	Female	90	50.0	90	50.0	180	50.0
Total		180	100.0	180	100.0	360	100.0

NS: Non-significant, $\chi^2 (0.05, 2df) = 5.991$, $\chi^2 (0.05, 1df) = 3.841$

Table - 1 reveals the classification of respondents by age group and gender. It shows that majority of the students (61.7 %) were belongs to the age group of 17-18 years, followed by the 15-16 age group of the respondents in both rural and

urban area. In combined respondents the age groups of 17-18 years were more when compared to other two categories of age group. Equal percentages (50) of both male and female students were there in both rural and urban area.

Table 2: Classification of Respondents by Course opted and Class studying

Characteristics	Category	Respondents					
		Rural		Urban		Combined	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Course opted	Science	60	33.3	60	33.3	120	33.3
	Commerce	60	33.3	60	33.3	120	33.3
	Arts	60	33.3	60	33.3	120	33.3
Class studying	I PUC	90	50.0	90	50.0	180	50.0
	II PUC	90	50.0	90	50.0	180	50.0
Total		180	100.0	180	100.0	360	100.0

NS: Non-significant, $\chi^2 (0.05, 2df) = 5.991$, $\chi^2 (0.05, 1df) = 3.841$

Table – 2 shows classification of respondents by course opted and class studying. It depicts that there was equal percentages (33.3) of the students in all the three categories namely science, commerce and arts in both rural and urban area. And

similar percentages of students (50) were belongs to I and II PUC in both rural and urban area. In combined respondents same result was found.

Table 3: Mean Response on Academic Stress of Rural and Urban Respondents

Respondents	Sample (n)	Mean ± SD Scores	Stress scale Response (%)		‘t’ Test
			Mean	SD	
Rural	180	89.20 ± 30.9	44.60	15.45	3.43*
Urban	180	101.20 ± 35.0	50.60	17.50	

*Significant at 5% level, Statements =40, Min. Score = 40, Max. Score =200

Academic stress response of the respondents is shown in the table 3. It reveals that both rural and urban students were having academic stress. When compared with the mean values and mean percentage, urban respondents were having more academic stress than the rural respondents. Statistically it was found to be significant at 5 % level. It shows

respondents area of living and academic stress was related. It may be the reason that urban students may aspire more about their academics and their parents also expect more about their performance that might contribute to academic stress than the rural respondents.

Table 4: Mean Response on Academic Stress scale of Rural and Urban Respondents

Variable	Respondents	Sample (n)	Mean ± SD Scores	Stress scale (%)		‘t’ Test
				Mean	SD	
Gender	Male	180	85.32 ± 33.39	47.53	16.7	8.24*
	Female	180	95.07 ± 33.79	47.66	16.9	
Class	I PUC	180	23.69 ± 22.60	33.35	5.3	5.98*
	II PUC	180	66.69 ± 10.62	61.85	11.3	

*Significant at 5% level, Statements =40, Min. Score = 40, Max. Score =200

The above table reveals the academic stress of the students. Both male and female students were having academic stress. But there was a difference in the mean values and mean percentage between male and female respondents. These values were more in female students than the male students. Statistically it was found to be significant. It depicts that female students were having more academic stress than the male students. It may be the reason that female students aspire more about their future and want to become more professional that may lead to academic stress. And parents of female students expect more about their children than the parents of male students that may also lead to academic stress among these students. With regard to the respondents class of studying and academic stress was also found to be significant at 5 % level. Both the classes of the students were having the stress, but there was a difference in the mean values and mean percentage between II PUC and I PUC respondents. II PUC respondents were having more academic stress than the I PUC students. It may be the reason that II PUC students aspire more about their future life and want to do better academic performance that might lead do academic stress. And also parents of II PUC students expect more about their children studies that also may lead to academic stress among these students.

Conclusion

Academic stress was more prevalent among urban respondents than the rural respondents. Statistically it was found to be significant at 5 % level. Female students were having more academic stress than the male students. Statistically it was found to be significant. It may be the reason that female students aspire more about their future and want to become more professional that may lead to academic stress. With regard to the respondents class of studying and academic stress was also found to be significant at 5 % level. II PUC respondents were having more academic stress than the I PUC students. It may be the reason that II PUC students aspire more about their future life and want to do better academic performance that might lead do academic stress.

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