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## Depression among post graduate students in relation to their academic stress

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### Abstract

Student represents the society's investment for future. Academic stress is one of the important stresses among adolescents and is a cause for great concern for the educationists worldwide. Stress is associated with physical, psychological and behavioural experiences of life. To delineate socio-economic and personal factors, self-prepared interview schedule was used. The Beck Depression Inventory-II (Beck, Steer & Brown, 1996) was used to measure the level of depression among post graduate students. Scale of academic stress (Bisht, 1995) was used to measure the level of academic stress among post graduate students. The present study was conducted purposively in CCS HAU, Hisar. 20 male and 20 female post graduate students were selected as a sample for the present study. So the total sample comprises of 40 post graduate students. The present investigation has come out with positive and significant correlation between academic stress and depression of post graduate students. Female students were having high academic stress as compared to male students but in case of depression it was found that males were having high level of depression as compared to female students.

**Keywords:** Academic stress, depression, psychological

### Introduction

The modern world, which is said to be a world of achievement, is also a world of stress. One finds stress everywhere; whether it is within the family, business organization or any other social or economic activity. Stress is physiological and psychological imbalance. It arises due to the demands on a person and that person's inability to meet those demands. Academic Stress in the students can be very taxing for the parents and the students themselves. Stress has been tightening its grip on the students, as they have to compete at every step of their academic career in this fast moving world. (Dhull and Kumari, 2015)

Depression is a condition in which one feels blue or sad. But these feelings are usually for a short period of time. Depression interferes with daily life activities of an individual. It is a common but serious illness (National Institute of Mental Health, 2011). It is a major cause of disability across the regions and it causes fatigue, suicide, decreased ability to do work and attend school (Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, 2013). Depression disrupts a person's thinking processes, emotional reactions and day-by-day behaviors.

These children face various stressors and which in turn lead to stress when they are not able to cope up with these stressors. Stress can be explained in terms of sadness, worries, tension, frustration which leads to depression which is temporary or may last for long. It has been found in many studies that severely depressed school children are more prone to suicide attempts. Some of the common reasons of stress can be problems with the parents, siblings, problems in the school, problems with the studies, teachers, classmates etc. the problem starts with normal stress among the individual with can turn to distress and result in many health problems both biological and psychological (walker 2005)<sup>[7]</sup>.

Academic pressure by the parents as well as the children are themselves tensed about their career and future, when fail to cope up with the situation or fail to satisfy their needs then it results into stress and depression. Adolescents are the budding future of a nation and it is imperative for the teachers, parents and caregivers to understand the factors which might be stressful to adolescents and recognize ways to help them cope up with such situation.

The main aim of this study is to explore the level of academic stress and depression among post graduate students of university.

Different factors which contribute to academic stress and depression among university students are also studied.

- To access the depression and academic stress of post graduate students.
- To study the relationship of depression with academic stress among post graduate students.
- To study the gender differences on the variables of depression and academic stress.
- To delineate the factors affecting academic stress and depression among post graduate students.

### Locale of the study

As per the objectives of the study, Haryana state was selected purposively as the locale for the present investigation because the researcher is student of CCS Haryana Agricultural University, Hisar.

### Selection of area

CCS HAU University campus was selected for the data collection. All the colleges of the university were selected randomly for collection of data.

### Selection of sample

Separate lists of boys and girls perusing post graduate degree programme in different colleges of university were prepared. From the list 20 boys and 20 girls were selected at random. So the total sample constituted of 40 students.

### Tools used

**Depression:** The Beck Depression Inventory-II (Beck, Steer & Brown, 1996).

**Academic stress:** Scale of academic stress (Bisht, 1995)

## Results and Discussion

### Assessment of academic stress among post graduate students

In this section frequency distribution of post graduate students on academic stress is presented. Table 1, highlights the distribution of students for academic stress. Data from the table reveals that 40 per cent of the students were having low and medium level of academic stress followed by high level of academic stress i.e. 20 per cent of total sample.

The results of the present study are in line with the findings of Prabu (2015) <sup>[12]</sup> reveals that the higher secondary students are having moderate level of academic stress and irrespective of sub samples of the higher secondary students are having moderate level of academic stress. The male student's academic stress is higher than female student. The urban student's academic stress is higher than rural student. The Government school student's academic stress is less than private school student. The science subject student's academic stress is higher than arts student. The students whose parent's education as literate level academic stress is higher than their counter part. Hamza *et al.* (2011) <sup>[3]</sup> suggested that the level of psychosocial stress was higher in the female students compared to the male students. The stress level in the initial three years of the course was higher than the last two years of the course. Physical problems might have led to extra stress

**Table 1:** level of academic stress among post graduate students:

| Academic stress | Number of Respondent | Percentage (100%) |
|-----------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Low(12-40)      | 16                   | 40                |
| Medium (41-67)  | 16                   | 40                |
| High (68-94)    | 8                    | 20                |

### Assessment of depression among post graduate students

Frequency distribution of post graduate students on depression is presented in table 2. Table 2, highlights the distribution of students for level of depression. Data from the table reveals that 37.5 per cent of the respondents were having minimal level of depression followed by moderate level of depression i.e., 35 per cent, severe level of depression (15%) and mild level of depression (12.5%). The results got support from the findings of Kalia and Sheoran (2000) who revealed that female students were significant higher on full 'D' scale in comparison to male students. Scheduled caste students were significantly higher on subscales self-esteem, sickness, death, full 'D' scale and total depression. No significant difference was observed among urban and rural students on subscales of depression.

**Table 2:** Level of depression among post graduate students:

| Level of Depression | Number of Respondent | Percentage (100%) |
|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Minimal (0-13)      | 15                   | 37.5              |
| Mild (14-19)        | 5                    | 12.5              |
| Moderate (20-28)    | 14                   | 35.0              |
| Severe (29-63)      | 6                    | 15                |

### Gender wise comparison of academic stress and depression among post graduate students

Means and standard deviations academic stress and depression were computed. Independent sample z-test was computed to explore whether there existed difference in academic stress and depression among male and female students. Results are presented in table 3.

Table 3, reveals that no significant differences were observed on the basis of gender of post graduate students. But on the basis of mean differences it is observed that female students had high level of academic stress (M= 53.20) as compared to male students (M= 40.45). But in case of depression opposite was seen. Male students were more depressed (M= 19.70) as compared to female counterpart (M=16.80). Raziya (2016) also revealed that significant difference exists in the academic stress of adolescents in relation to gender. Female adolescents have higher academic stress than male adolescents. Adolescents studying in Government and Private schools differ in their level of academic stress. Adolescents of private schools have more academic stress than their counterparts in government schools. Significant difference was also observed in the academic stress of male and female adolescents in Government schools but not observed in the case of Private schools.

**Table 3:** Gender wise comparison of academic stress and depression among post graduate students

| Variable        | Female (n=20) |       | Male (n=20) |       | t value |
|-----------------|---------------|-------|-------------|-------|---------|
|                 | Mean          | SD    | Mean        | SD    |         |
| Academic stress | 53.20         | 20.05 | 40.45       | 17.72 | 2.13    |
| Depression      | 16.80         | 10.81 | 19.70       | 12.05 | 0.80    |

### Relationship between academic stress and depression among postgraduate students.

Correlation coefficient was computed between academic stress and depression of post graduate students. Academic stress was found to be positively and significantly correlated with depression. It can be interpreted from the result that higher the level of academic stress among post graduate students higher was the depression. Increase in the level of stress among post graduate students results in increase in the level of depression and vice-versa.

**Table 4:** correlation between academic stress and depression among post graduate students:

| Variable   | Academic stress |
|------------|-----------------|
| Depression | 0.36*           |

Significant at \* 5% level of significance

**Factors contributing to academic stress and depression of postgraduate students**

The various socio-personal factors examined were gender, age, size of family, parental education, parental occupation, family type, caste, annual family income and academic achievement. Association was computed between socio-personal factors and academic stress of post graduate students. Same was done with depression of students.

**Association between socio-personal factors and academic stress of post graduate students**

Chi square was run between socio personal factors and academic stress among post graduate students. Various socio-personal factors included were gender, age, academic class, grade point, family type, family size, caste, parental education, parental occupation and annual family income.

Table 5, depicts that there was significant association between academic stress and gender ( $\chi^2=7.00^*$ ). Academic stress was also significantly associated with mother's education ( $\chi^2=7.46^*$ ).

There was no significant association between academic stress and age, academic class, grade point, family type, family size, caste, father's education, parental occupation and annual family income.

**Table 5:** Association between socio-personal factors and academic stress of post graduate students:

| Socio personal variables | Chi square value |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| Gender                   | 7.00*            |
| Age                      | 3.19             |
| Academic class           | 2.50             |
| Grade point              | 4.81             |
| Family type              | 1.86             |
| Family size              | 4.59             |
| Caste                    | 3.06             |
| Mother's education       | 7.46*            |
| Father's education       | 2.11             |
| Mother's occupation      | 1.26             |
| Father's occupation      | 3.45             |
| Annual family income     | 2.58             |

Significant at \* 5% level of significance

**Association between socio-personal factors and depression of post graduate students**

Chi square was run between socio personal factors and depression. Various socio-personal factors included were gender, age, academic class, grade point, family type, family size, caste, parental education, parental occupation and annual family income.

As shown in table 6, there was significant association between age and depression ( $\chi^2=9.00^*$ ). Depression was also significantly associated with family type ( $\chi^2=6.45^*$ ), mother's education ( $\chi^2=7.83^*$ ), father's occupation ( $\chi^2=20.44^*$ ) and annual family income ( $\chi^2=5.61^*$ ).

There was no significant association between depression and gender, academic class, grade point, family size, caste, father's education and mother's occupation. Reasons may be that families having better socio-economic status provide better facilities and opportunities to their children and they don't feel depressed. The results of the present study get

support from previous studies.

Chan *et al.* (2013) concluded that there were no statistical differences in the incidence of depression when gender, ethnicity, and university classification were analyzed. Multivariate analysis showed that age, study year, satisfaction with major, family income situation, parental relationship and mother's education were significantly associated with depression. Moderate depression is prevalent in Chinese university students. The students who were older, dissatisfied with their major, had a lower family income, poor parental relationships, and a lower level of mother's education were susceptible to depression.

**Table 6:** Association between socio-personal factors and depression of post graduate students:

| Socio personal variables | Chi square value |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| Gender                   | 1.46             |
| Age                      | 9.00*            |
| Academic class           | 1.47             |
| Grade point              | 4.86             |
| Family type              | 6.45*            |
| Family size              | 2.82             |
| Caste                    | 1.46             |
| Mother's education       | 7.83*            |
| Father's education       | 12.0             |
| Mother's occupation      | 5.40             |
| Father's occupation      | 20.44*           |
| Annual family income     | 5.61*            |

Significant at \* 5% level of significance

**Recommendations**

- Parents should take care to provide a supporting and stimulating environment to help students cope up with academic stress and depression.
- Counseling centers should take-up the issue of identifying the students with Psychological problems at early stage. For this conducting seminars & workshop to teachers in medical schools how to identify students Psychological problems, and on identifying what can be done.
- Create awareness among college students seeking the help of mentors or student counseling center as and when they notice any problem related to academic or emotional.
- There should be regular workshop for students on stress management, time management, and assertive training and communication skills.

**Conclusion**

The present investigation has come out with positive and significant correlation between academic stress and depression of post graduate students. Female students were having high academic stress as compared to male students but in case of depression it was found that males were having high level of depression as compared to female students. Significant association was observed in age, family type, mother's education, father's occupation and annual family income of the post graduate students and depression level which means that these factors contribute in the level of depression. Academic stress of students was affected by gender and mother's education.

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