



## ACADEMIC PRESSURE AMONG STUDENTS PURSUING PROFESSIONAL COMMERCE COURSES: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY IN KOZHIKODE DISTRICT

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**ABSTRACT** Academic pressure has become a major concern among students pursuing professional courses in India. This study examines the level and determinants of academic stress among students enrolled in professional commerce programs in Kozhikode district, Kerala. A descriptive research design was adopted, and primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire. The data were analyzed using SPSS software, employing reliability analysis (Cronbach's Alpha), descriptive statistics, and chi-square tests. The results indicate that academic workload, examination pressure, and subject complexity significantly influence academic stress, while family expectations show a weaker association. The study also reveals that academic stress negatively affects sleep patterns, physical health, and concentration levels. The findings highlight the need for institutional support and effective coping strategies to reduce academic pressure among students.

**KEYWORDS :** Academic Stress, Commerce Students, Professional Courses, Kozhikode

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Academic pressure is increasingly recognized as a significant issue affecting students' mental health and academic performance. In highly competitive educational systems, students face continuous demands related to examinations, assignments, and performance expectations. This pressure is particularly intense among students pursuing professional courses, where academic success is closely linked to career opportunities.

Professional commerce programs such as Bachelor of Commerce (B.Com), Chartered Accountancy (CA), Cost and Management Accountancy (CMA), and Company Secretaryship (CS) are characterized by rigorous curricula and frequent evaluations. Students enrolled in these programs often balance college education with coaching classes and professional exam preparation.

In Kozhikode district, commerce education is widely pursued, and students are exposed to a competitive academic environment. Excessive academic pressure can result in stress, anxiety, reduced academic performance, and health problems. Therefore, it is essential to examine the factors contributing to academic stress and its impact on students' well-being.

### 2. METHODS

#### 2.1 Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive research design to analyze academic pressure among students pursuing professional commerce courses.

#### 2.2 Sample and Data Collection

Primary data were collected from 50 students using a structured questionnaire. The respondents were selected using convenience sampling from Kozhikode district.

#### 2.3 Variables

- Independent Variables: Academic workload, examination pressure, family expectations, subject complexity
- Dependent Variable: Academic stress

#### 2.4 Hypotheses

- H1:** Academic workload is significantly associated with academic stress
- H2:** Examination pressure is significantly associated with academic stress
- H3:** Family expectations are significantly associated with academic stress
- H4:** Subject complexity is significantly associated with academic stress

#### 2.5 Statistical Tools (SPSS)

Data were analyzed using SPSS software with the following techniques:

- Reliability analysis (Cronbach's Alpha)
- Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation)
- Chi-square test of independence

### 3. RESULTS

#### 3.1 Reliability Analysis (SPSS Output)

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
0.84	10

#### Interpretation:

The Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.84 indicates good internal consistency, confirming that the questionnaire is reliable for measuring academic stress.

#### 3.2 Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation
Academic Workload	3.42	0.91
Examination Pressure	3.38	0.88
Family Expectations	3.01	0.95
Subject Complexity	3.56	0.89
Academic Stress	3.47	0.93

#### Interpretation:

Students reported moderate to high levels of academic stress. Subject complexity and academic workload show relatively higher mean values, indicating stronger stress impact.

#### 3.3 Chi-Square Analysis (SPSS Output)

Variables Tested	$\chi^2$ Value	df	p-value	Result
Workload $\times$ Stress	4.17	1	0.041	Significant
Exams $\times$ Stress	3.89	1	0.048	Significant
Family Expectations $\times$ Stress	2.10	1	0.147	Not Significant
Complexity $\times$ Stress	5.02	1	0.025	Significant

#### Interpretation

The chi-square results reveal that:

- Academic workload has a significant relationship with stress ( $p < 0.05$ )
- Examination pressure significantly influences stress levels
- Subject complexity is a strong contributor to academic stress
- Family expectations do not show a statistically significant association

#### 3.4 Effects of Academic Stress

The analysis indicates that academic stress leads to:

- Sleep disturbances among more than half of the respondents
- Physical health issues such as fatigue and headaches
- Memory and concentration problems

These findings suggest that academic stress has both psychological and physical impacts on students.

### 4. DISCUSSION

The results of this study confirm that academic pressure among professional commerce students is influenced primarily by academic factors. Academic workload, examination pressure, and subject complexity emerged as significant determinants of stress, which is consistent with earlier studies (Reddy et al., 2018; Pascoe et al., 2020).

Subject complexity was found to be the most influential factor,

indicating that technical subjects such as taxation and auditing pose greater challenges for students. Examination pressure also contributes significantly, reflecting the competitive nature of professional courses.

Interestingly, family expectations did not show a statistically significant relationship with stress. This suggests that academic and institutional factors may have a stronger influence on stress levels than social expectations in this context.

The study also highlights the negative effects of academic stress on sleep, health, and cognitive functioning, emphasizing the need for effective stress management strategies.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Academic pressure is a major issue among students pursuing professional commerce courses in Kozhikode district. The study identifies academic workload, examination pressure, and subject complexity as the key factors contributing to stress.

While a moderate level of stress may motivate students, excessive academic pressure negatively affects their well-being and academic performance. Educational institutions should provide counseling services, improve academic scheduling, and offer guidance to help students manage stress effectively. Students should also adopt healthy lifestyle practices to maintain their mental and physical well-being.

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