



ACADEMIC STRESS IN RELATION TO PSYCHO-SOCIAL FACTORS

Social Science

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ABSTRACT

The present investigation is an attempt to study various Psycho-social factors contributing to the Academic stress among adolescents. The major factors considered in the study are self efficacy, emotional maturity, type of management, nature of course, caste, birth order and education of the father. Subjects of the present study are 400 students both boys and girls, studying science and arts groups in various Government and Private Junior colleges in and around Tirupati of Chittoor District, Andhra Pradesh. Major findings of the study are; 1) Emotional maturity and Self-efficacy have significant impact on the Academic stress among Junior College students; and 2) Self-efficacy and Emotional maturity are the major contributors for Academic stress, followed by nature of course and type of management.

KEYWORDS

Academic stress, Self Efficacy, Emotional maturity.

INTRODUCTION:

Children and adolescents today face a plethora of stressful problems, including family and relationship conflict, death of close family members or friends, and academic and social pressures. These include academic failure, social misbehavior, interpersonal problems, and depression. Teens reach cognitive maturity far more quickly than they reach emotional maturity according to new research that examined teenagers' development¹.

It is natural for a fresh intermediate (+2) student hailing from different social background with vast and varied cultural diversities to have some stress in situations upon his immediate entry from school background to college atmosphere. The college provides enlarged spheres of self-directed activity and self-dependence to the student. College requires significantly more effort from students than high school.

Emotional maturity simply means, "Healthy self concept, not thinking too highly or too lowly of one self". Adolescence is the stage where extreme emotions are expressed or experienced with the intensity of adulthood but devoid of adult perspective. At no stage this emotional energy is as strong and dangerous as in adolescence. It is very difficult for an adolescent to exercise control over his emotions. Moreover, adolescents are not consistent in their emotions.

Self-efficacy is one's belief in his/her own effectiveness as a person, both generally in terms of managing their life, and specifically with regard to competently dealing with individual tasks². Adolescents acquire much self-efficacy information from their families and home environments³.

Perceived self-efficacy exerts its influence through four major processes - cognitive, motivational, affective, and selection processes. Students' beliefs in their efficacy helps to regulate their own learning and to master academic activities determine their aspirations, level of motivation, and academic accomplishments².

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Studies revealed that, stress level of management students reduced when the sample was emotionally mature and the stress was more among management students who were emotionally immature⁴.

Majority of adolescents believe that school is blessing. Good parenting and teaching helped adolescents in a period of stress and storm. Academics were the main stress among adolescents. Besides that, peer and parental pressures were also some stressors among adolescents⁵.

Ansari conducted a study on under graduates' students and found from the study that emotional maturity has a significant impact over stress level of students. An emotionally mature person knows how to adjust in a social environment, how to tackle the different situations effectively with positive attitude and thus emotional maturity leads to low level of stress among undergraduates students⁶.

Allred et al. conducted a study to measure the relationship between stress, personality traits and various streams of academics such as;

science, humanities and social sciences. It was found from the study that the level of stress among college students from different academic majors were same⁷.

Ofole viewed that Nigerian freshmen are not emotionally matured to handle stress associated with transition from secondary school to university. An Ex-post survey revealed that 63.2% of freshmen were emotionally immature to cope with stress⁸.

A study by Mariola focuses on entrepreneurial self-efficacy, general self-efficacy, and global self-esteem among 332 unemployed individuals and on their role in the entrepreneurial process. Apart from providing evidence of the relationship between these self-beliefs and entrepreneurial intention, it also demonstrates how they are related to actual business start-up.. Multivariate analyses showed that entrepreneurial and general self-efficacy beliefs were important predictors of this intention⁹.

Roger et al., examined the relationship between self-efficacy and not wanting help to change health behavior. Results showed that all four specific self-efficacy scores were positively related to reporting that one did not want help. A high belief in one's own ability to change lifestyle behaviors in relation to smoking, alcohol, eating, and physical activity may lead to avoidance of help offers in a workplace setting¹⁰.

Wyatt presented a case study of one teacher's efforts to overcome low self-efficacy beliefs in teaching English to young learners in a Middle Eastern context. It provides insights into the growth processes involved, highlighting how the teacher drew reflectively upon her experiences to develop deeper practical knowledge and stronger self-efficacy beliefs with regard to the particular task, while supported by a constructivist teacher education program¹¹.

Deepa and Sunetha examined the self- efficacy and happiness in youth. A sample comprising 200 under graduate and post graduates from Hubli, Karnataka. Results indicated a positive relationship between self-efficacy and happiness in youth¹².

Md. Mahmood Alam examined the relationship between career maturity, emotional intelligence and self efficacy of adolescents. The major findings were that, there are significant relationship between career maturity, emotional intelligence and self efficacy of adolescents¹³.

George and Thomas reported the impact of study abroad experiences on self-efficacy perceptions among foreign language (FL) learners. Thirty-nine American college students taking part in both short-term and semester-long academic programs in France and Spain completed self-efficacy surveys at the beginning and at the end of their foreign sojourns. Statistical analysis of the self-efficacy measures in this investigation revealed that participation in a study abroad program (regardless of its length or destination) had a significant impact on self-efficacy perceptions in all FL sub skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking)¹⁴.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY:

Psychologists are faced with many difficulties in the study of adolescent behavior. Adolescents' school experiences help shape their self-efficacy beliefs. With cognitive maturity, adolescents are better able to interpret and integrate multiple sources of information about their competencies, and they have a much more differentiated view of their abilities¹⁵. According to Seoul, if the emotional development of the individual is relatively complete, his adaptability is high¹⁶. In short, it is viewed that Emotional Maturity and self-efficacy plays a crucial role in determining life success. Hence, the present investigation aimed to study the Impact of Emotional Maturity and Self –efficacy on Academic stress of Junior college students. In addition, effect of other demographic variables on academic stress of the subjects has also been studied.

METHODOLOGY:

The objective of the study is, to study the influence of certain Psycho-social factors on Academic stress among Adolescents.

Hypotheses:

1. Self efficacy and Emotional maturity have significant impact on Academic stress among adolescents.
2. Psycho-social variables namely Self efficacy, Emotional maturity, type of management, nature of course, caste, birth order and Father's education significantly influence the Academic stress among Adolescents.

Emotional maturity and Self-efficacy are the independent variables and Academic stress is the dependent variable in the study. Demographic variables such as; Type of management (Government/private); Nature of course (Science / Arts); Caste (Forward castes/ Backward caste); Birth order (1st / 2nd or 3rd) and Father's education

(Primary / Higher); have been considered.

TOOLS USED:

Socio demographic data sheet was used to elicits information about the various personal and familial variables of the sampled adolescents as - age, education, caste, nature of course, type of management, birth order and father's education. The self efficacy of the subjects was measured using Generalized Self Efficacy Scale developed by Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1992). It is a 4 point scale and consists of 10 items. The range of possible scores varied from minimum score of 10 to maximum score of 40. The Emotional maturity was measured using Emotional maturity scale devised Yashvir Singh and Mahesh Bhargava (1990). It is a five point scale with 48 items. Academic Stress of the subjects was assessed by using Academic Stress Scale developed by Sreenivas and Kumar (1999), which consists of 40 items divided into five components: Personal inadequacy (F-1); Fear of failure (F-2); Interpersonal difficulties with teachers (F-3); Teacher – Pupil relationship / Teaching methods (F-3) and Inadequate study facilities (F-4).

SAMPLE OF THE STUDY:

The population of the study constituted students in various Junior colleges, in and around Tirupati of Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh State. A sample of 400 students, both boys and girls, studying science and arts group subjects in Junior colleges was taken by systematic random sampling method.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

The obtained data were subjected to descriptive Statistics such as Means and Standard deviation and Inferential statistics such as 't' tests and Multiple regression analysis to test the hypotheses. The results obtained are presented below.

Table 1: Means and SDs of Self Efficacy scores on components of Academic Stress

Components of Academic stress		Low Self efficacy	High Self efficacy	t' value	P
Personal Inadequacy	Mean	14.62	12.75	9.08	Significant
	S.D	5.52	7.03		
Fear of failure	Mean	12.39	12.98	11.72	Significant
	S.D	4.88	6.73		
Interpersonal difficulties with teachers,	Mean	15.1	11.12	12.76	Significant
	S.D	7.18	4.98		
Teacher – Pupil relationship / Teaching methods	Mean	13.39	11.5	5.17	Significant
	S.D	6.75	5.93		
Inadequate study facilities	Mean	13.98	12.71	4.19	Significant
	S.D	6.88	5.93		
Academic Stress	Mean	76.81	62.93	12.33	Significant
	S.D	21.17	21.33		

Table 1 shows the means and standard deviations of scores on Academic stress with respect to their lower self efficacy and higher self efficacy among the adolescents in the study. From the table it is clear

that self-efficacy of the subjects has a significant impact on their levels of academic stress.

Table 2: Means and SDs of Emotional Maturity scores on components of Academic Stress:

Components of Academic stress		Emotionally unstable	Emotionally Stable	t' value	P
Personal Inadequacy	Mean	14.48	12.88	6.73	Significant
	S.D	5.11	6.8		
Fear of failure	Mean	15.01	13.37	8.21	Significant
	S.D	5.79	5.06		
Interpersonal difficulties with teachers	Mean	14.95	13.15	9.45	Significant
	S.D	5.53	5.66		
Teacher – Pupil relationship / Teaching methods	Mean	12.98	11.91	1.66	Not Significant
	S.D	6.54	6.69		
Inadequate study facilities	Mean	13.78	12.91	1.96	Not Significant
	S.D	6.4	5.49		
Academic Stress	Mean	71.93	63.69	8.6	Significant
	S.D	22.79	25.63		

Table 2, shows the means and standard deviations scores obtained for the academic stress and its components with respect to emotional maturity. For the components of academic stress namely, personal inadequacy, fear of failure and interpersonal difficulties with teachers, lower academic stress is experienced by the subjects who are emotionally more stable, than those who have lesser emotional stability or emotionally unstable. For total scores on academic stress, subjects with higher emotional maturity possess lower levels of stress than the subjects who are emotionally unstable. However, emotional maturity does not show significant influence on the academic stress components such as teacher-pupil relationships and teaching methods and inadequacy of study facilities.

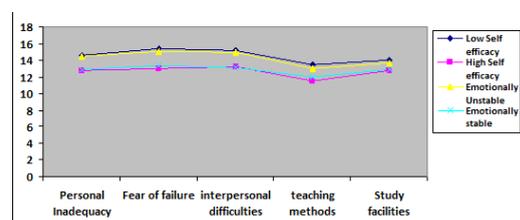


Figure : Graph showing the impact of Self efficacy and Emotional maturity on Academic stress among Adolescents

From figure 1, it is evident that, adolescents who possess lower self efficacy and those who are emotionally unstable possess greater academic stress than the subjects with higher self-efficacy and emotionally mature.

Table 3: Summary Table of MRA Stepwise for Psycho-Social variables (% of variance):

Variable	Personal Inadequacy	Fear of Failure	Interpersonal difficulties	Teacher pupil relation	Study facilities	Academic stress
Lower Self efficacy	24.7	42.9	32.01	16.20	15.20	33.20
Emotional Unstable	16.12	19.2	22.09	8.19	8.29	20.78
Nature of course	19.1	9.89	18.80	5.34	30.01	27.26
Type of management	1.89	10.34	6.75	14.09	21.45	3.67
Father's education	0.99	1.90	3.23	2.09	3.90	2.98
Caste	0.12	0.98	1.11	0.90	6.98	1.82
Birth order	4.89	0.11	0.45	0.34	0.35	2.09

As, along with psychological features like self-efficacy and emotional maturity, many of the socio-demographic factors such as course studying, type of management of the college, caste, birth order and father's level of education also shows impact on the perceived levels of academic stress among the adolescents. Thus, a Multiple Regression Analysis was carried to identify the percent contribution of each of these socio-demographic factors on the levels of academic stress perceived by the subjects.

For personal inadequacy factor (24.7%) the main contributing factor is self efficacy followed by nature of course (19.1%) and emotional maturity (16.12%). Self efficacy is the major contributor for fear of failure (42.9%), interpersonal difficulties (32.01 %) and teacher-pupil relationships (16.20 %) factors of academic stress. However, nature of course is the prime variance for study facilities factor (30.01 %) of the academic stress domain among the adolescents.

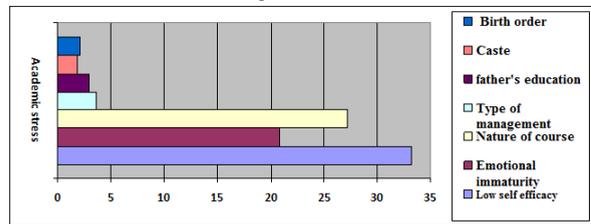


Figure 2: Shows the percent contribution of various Psycho-social factors on Academic stress

Figure 2 shows the percentage of variance of various socio-demographic factors on the levels of perceived academic stress among adolescents. From the graph it is clear that, self efficacy is the major contributor for academic stress. The next major contributors are nature of course and emotional immaturity on the part of the adolescents.

Academic stress may be caused due to student's personal Inadequacy, fear of failure, Interpersonal difficulties with teachers, poor teacher-pupil relationship or also due to inadequate study facilities. Earlier studies also viewed that Academic stress may be influenced by levels of self-efficacy¹⁷ and emotional maturity^{18,19}. Earlier studies also reveal that psychological distress anticipated towards academic challenges or failure or even a cognizance of the possibility of academic failure is referred as academic stress²⁰. Enhancing self efficacy beliefs among the adolescents and training them to improve their emotionality would help to lower the academic stress and improve their academic performance.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY:

1. Self-efficacy and Emotional maturity show significantly affect the academic stress among adolescents. Students with High self efficacy and those who are emotionally stable show lesser academic stress than their counterparts.
2. Self-efficacy and Emotional maturity are the major contributor for Academic stress, followed by nature of course and type of management.

IMPLICATIONS:

Emotional Maturity and Self efficacy has significant impact on the Academic Stress of Junior college students. Emotional Maturity and Self efficacy are made up of skills and these skills can be improved through education. Thus it is not surprising that we should look to college as the prime location for the promotion of Emotional Maturity and Self efficacy. Next in the institution of family, parents have a lot of responsibility and should care about emotional stability and self-efficacy of their children.

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