

# Impact of Stress on Students in Secondary School and Higher Education

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**Abstract:** Students pursuing secondary and tertiary education face various pressures related to academic demands. Previous research suggests that Stress, particularly related to academics, reduces academic achievement and motivation while increasing the risk of dropping out. The long-term effects of lowering sustainable employment opportunities for them cost central and state governments billions of dollars every year. This article review presents recent research on the impact of academic Stress on students' learning ability and academic performance, including a discussion of a range of mental health issues such as depression and anxiety, sleep disturbance, and substance use.

**Keywords:** *Students, Academic Stress, Emotional well-being, Education and Stress*

## INTRODUCTION

Stress among students has become a growing concern in secondary and higher education environments. As students navigate the academic challenges and pressures associated with their educational journeys, the impact of Stress on their well-being and performance has garnered significant attention from educators, psychologists, and policymakers.

In secondary school, students face the dual pressures of academic achievement and social adaptation. Transitioning to higher education brings challenges, including increased academic demands, social adjustments, and the quest for future career clarity. Both stages are critical in shaping students' long-term educational and personal outcomes. However, the prevalence of Stress and its adverse effects on students' mental health, academic performance, and overall quality of life are increasingly recognized as pressing issues that require comprehensive understanding and intervention.

The impact of Stress on students in secondary school and higher education is a critical issue that affects academic performance, mental health, and overall well-being. By examining the sources and consequences of Stress and the effectiveness of support systems, educators and policymakers can better understand how to support students through these challenging stages of their educational journey.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Pascoe et al. Students in secondary and tertiary education settings face a wide range of previous research that indicates that academic-related Stress can reduce academic achievement, decrease motivation, and increase the risk of school dropout and longer-term impacts. M. C. Pascoe et al observed that the highlight that academic-related stress is a major concern for education and has negatively impacted students' learning capacity, academic performance, education and employment attainment, sleep quality and quantity, physical health, mental health, and substance use outcomes of students of secondary and higher education. Bongwong Bruno, the research was based on the impact of stress on students' social behaviour, the research indicators; time management, parental pressure, environmental factors and school curriculum were used for findings.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- To study the Stress and Academic Pressure of higher secondary school students.
- To study whether there is any significant relationship between Stress and academic achievement among higher secondary school students

- To study whether there is any significant influence of Stress on the Academic Achievement of higher secondary school students

## DISCUSSION

### ACADEMIC PRESSURE

The impact of academic pressure on students' mental health needs to be on every institution's agenda. As May marks Mental Health Month in the US and Mental Health Week in India and the World, it seems timely to focus on the interplay between academic pressure, student mental health, and the risk of misconduct.

In both educational levels, Stress can lead to:

- ✚ Burnout: A state of physical and emotional exhaustion caused by prolonged Stress. It can lead to reduced motivation, absenteeism, and lower academic performance.
- ✚ Procrastination: The overwhelming Stress can cause students to delay tasks, increasing anxiety as deadlines approach.
- ✚ Decreased cognitive function: High-stress levels can impair memory, concentration, and decision-making, directly impacting academic performance.

### SOCIAL AND PEER PRESSURE

In secondary school, students often face Stress related to social acceptance and peer relationships. Bullying, peer comparison, and the desire to fit in can add layers of Stress to a student's life. In higher education, this evolves into Stress related to building new social networks, adapting to diverse cultural settings, and dealing with the independence that comes with university life. With the involvement of peer pressure, lots of teenagers can develop unhealthy habits to fit in with a group of friends. They may even go as far as making compromises and conforming to those of their peers to feel connected and be a part of their community.

### FINANCIAL PRESSURE

Financial Stress can significantly burden students in higher education. Tuition fees, accommodation, and other living expenses often weigh heavily on students, particularly those from lower-income backgrounds. The requirement to manage finances or work part-time jobs while studying can add to the already high proportion of Stress. Financial Stress

can manifest in Poor academic performance, Dropout rates, and Chronic Stress.

### PERSONAL AND FAMILY-RELATED STRESS

Students often bring Stress from their personal lives into their academic environments. For secondary school students, issues at home, such as family conflicts, divorce, or parental pressure, can significantly impact their emotional and psychological well-being. In higher education, students may struggle with personal relationships, long-distance family dynamics, or even homesickness. Family-related Stress can lead to Emotional distress, Lower academic engagement, and Coping challenges.

### PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH CONSEQUENCES

Chronic Stress among students can result in severe physical and mental health consequences. Physical symptoms of Stress include headaches, fatigue, sleep disturbances, and gastrointestinal problems. Mentally, Stress can lead to anxiety, depression, and, in extreme cases, suicidal ideation.

Health consequences of Stress include:

- Physical health deterioration: Prolonged Stress can weaken the immune system, making students more susceptible to illnesses.
- Mental health issues: anxiety disorders, depression, and panic attacks are expected mental health outcomes linked to academic and social Stress.
- Poor lifestyle choices: Students under Stress may resort to unhealthy coping mechanisms such as overeating, substance abuse, or neglecting physical activity.
- Coping Mechanisms and Interventions: While Stress is present daily in student life, implementing effective thinking patterns can reduce its impact. Schools can and do play a vital role in supporting students through counseling services, stress management workshops, and mental health resources.

### CONCLUSION

The impact of Stress on students in secondary school and higher education is multifaceted, affecting academic performance, physical health, emotional well-being, and social relationships. Addressing Stress effectively requires a comprehensive approach that includes developing coping strategies,

promoting healthy lifestyles, and utilizing available support systems. Schools and higher education institutions are crucial in providing resources and fostering an environment that supports students' mental health and academic success. By understanding and addressing the various dimensions of Stress, educators, parents, and students can work together to mitigate its impact and promote a healthier, more supportive educational experience.

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