

A Study on Academic Stress Among College Students in Thiruvallur District

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Abstract- Academic stress has become one of the major challenges faced by college students in recent years. The increasing academic workload, examination pressure, competition, parental expectations, and uncertainty about future careers contribute significantly to students' stress levels. The present study aims to examine the level of academic stress among college students in Thiruvallur district and to identify whether there are differences based on gender, type of institution, and year of study. The research used a descriptive survey method. Data were collected from a selected 939 sample of college students using a standardized Academic Stress Scale. Statistical techniques such as mean, standard deviation, t-test, and ANOVA were used for analysis. The findings of the study are expected to help educators and institutions understand the extent of academic stress and take appropriate measures to support students' mental well-being and academic success.

Keywords: Academic Stress, College Students, Higher Education, Examination Pressure, Mental Well-being.

I. INTRODUCTION

Individuals' futures are significantly shaped by their education. However, the journey through higher education is not always smooth. College students often experience stress due to academic demands, tight schedules, examinations, assignments, and expectations from parents and teachers. Academic stress refers to the mental and emotional strain experienced by students when they feel unable to cope with academic requirements. In today's competitive environment, students are constantly striving for high grades and better career opportunities. Along with academic responsibilities, many students also deal with personal, social, and financial challenges. If academic stress is not properly managed, it can lead to anxiety, depression, low academic performance, and reduced self-confidence. Therefore, it becomes

important to study the level of academic stress among college students, especially in specific regions like Thiruvallur district, to understand their situation better.

II. NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

A study on academic stress among college students is essential to address the high prevalence of anxiety, depression and burnout of students which negatively impacts academic performance and mental health. This research identifies stressors like exam pressure and workload, guiding institutions to develop effective coping strategies and supportive environments.

Need of the Study

- High Prevalence of Mental Health Issues:

Studies indicate that a significant number of college students experience moderate to severe levels of academic stress, leading to anxiety, depression and burnout.

- Impact on Academic Performance:

High stress levels are directly correlated with reduced academic engagement, lower grades, and a higher likelihood of dropping out, according to National Institutes of Health.

- Societal and Physical Consequences:

Continued stress impacts students physical health, causes social discomfort, and in extreme cases, leads to severe consequences like suicidal ideation, say IJCRT and IJPRA.

- Need for Intervention Strategies:

Research is needed to help institutions understand the sources of stress such as excessive homework, assessment pressure and financial concerns to implement effective counseling and support systems.

Significance of the Study:

- **Identifies Key Stressors:** Identifies specific academic, familial and social stressors causing burnout, such as competitive environments and high parental expectations, note Dristikon and International Journal of Pharmaceutical Research and Applications.
- **Informs Pedagogical Changes:** Findings can guide educators in updating curricula, modifying teaching method and balancing workloads, as argued in Dristikon.
- **Promotes Mental Well-being:** Aids in developing mental health programs, such as mindfulness training and emotional regulation techniques.
- **Highlights Vulnerable Groups:** Identifies that specific groups may experience higher stress, allowing for targeted support, based on National Institutes of Health.

III. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Misra, R., & Castillo, L. G. (2004). Academic Stress Among College Students: Comparison of American and International Students. The sample consisted of 392 international and American students from 2 Midwestern universities. The findings emphasize the need to recognize cultural differences in stress management. Implications for mental health providers in the university arena are discussed.

Menon K. R, Thattil A (2018). Academic Stress and its Sources Among University Students. The study employed a quantitative research design where participants were screened using Academic Stress Scale (Rajendran& Kaliappan,1991 from four streams namely, commerce, management, humanities, and basic sciences. The five dimensions of sources such as personal inadequacy, fear of failure, interpersonal difficulties with teachers, teacher pupil relationship and inadequate study facilities were further analysed

and gender differences were also obtained. Understanding the sources of stress would facilitate the development of effective counselling modules and intervention strategies by school psychologists and counsellors in order to help students alleviate stress.

Bhujade, Vijay Mahadeorao (2017) Depression, anxiety and academic stress among college students: A brief review. Emphasizing how counseling will help students with emotional problems and also suggested preventive measures to be taken by colleges such as setting up student counseling centers, create awareness among college students in seeking help with counseling centers. It is also suggested to have mentor-mentee programme compulsorily on all colleges. A student health committee should be formed in each college with mental health professionals as its members. There should be regular seminar and workshop for teachers and college students on various issues of psychological problems and its coping mechanisms.

Narasappa Kumaraswamy (2023). Academic Stress, Anxiety and Depression among College Students- A Brief Review. This paper briefly describes the research carried out in the last 3 decades especially regarding stress, anxiety & depression. It focuses stress among college students, nature of psychiatric morbidity, emotional problems and adjustment, psychological problems of college students. Emphasising how counselling will help students with emotional problems and also suggested preventive measures to be taken by colleges such as setting up student counselling centres, create awareness among college students in seeking help with counselling centres. It is also suggested to have mentor mentee programme compulsorily on all colleges. A student health committee should be formed in each college with mental health professionals as its members. There should be regular seminar & workshop for teachers & college students on various issues of psychological problems and its coping mechanisms.

IV OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To find whether there is any significant differences in academic stress among college students with respect to

- ❖ Gender.
- ❖ Locality.
- ❖ Age.
- ❖ Nature of College.
- ❖ Types of Management.

- ❖ There is no significant difference in academic stress between nature of colleges (boys / girls / co-education) college students in thiruvallur district.
- ❖ There is no significant difference in academic stress between type of management (government / government-aided / private) college students in thiruvallur district.

V. HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

- ❖ There is no significant difference in academic stress between male and female college students in thiruvallur district..
- ❖ There is no significant difference in academic stress between rural and urban college students in thiruvallur district.
- ❖ There is no significant difference in academic stress between age groups (below 20yrs / 20-23yrs / above 23yrs) college students in thiruvallur district

VI. METHODOLOGY

The investigator adopted the descriptive survey method of study and selected the stratified random sampling technique. Data were collected from a sample of 939 college students were randomly selected following the random sampling technique. Tools used from Academic Stress Scale constructed and standardized by Rajendran and kaliappan (1991). The formulated hypotheses and objectives were tested using appropriate statistical technique t-test and F-Test Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

VII. TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS

HYPOTHESIS – 1:

There is no significant difference in academic stress between male and female college students in thiruvallur district.

Table 1 Details of t-Test Result for Gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-Value	Remark
Male	370	24.92	6.973	0.810	Not Significant
Female	569	24.96	6.950		

It is inferred from the Table 1 that the calculated 't' value is found to be 0.810 is less than table value 1.96 at 0.05 level of significant. Hence, the framed null hypothesis 1 is accepted and it is concluded that there is no significant difference between male and female college students in thiruvallur district in respect of their academic stress.

HYPOTHESIS – 2:

There is no significant difference in academic stress between rural and urban college students in thiruvallur district.

Table 2 Details of t-Test Result for Locality

Locality	N	Mean	SD	t-Value	Remark
Rural	352	25.14	6.912	0.676	Not Significant
Urban	587	24.83	6.985		

It is evident from the Table 2 that the calculated 't' value is found to be 0.676 is less than table value 1.96 at 0.05 level of significant. Hence, the framed null hypothesis 2 is accepted and it is concluded that there is no significant difference between rural and urban college students in thiruvallur district in respect of their academic stress.

HYPOTHESIS – 3:

There is no significant difference in academic stress between age groups (below 20yrs / 20- 23yrs / above 23yrs) college students in thiruvallur district

Table 3 Result of One-Way ANOVA for Age Group

Demographic Variable	Nature	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Remark
Age Group	Between Groups	00618.536	206.179	4.306	Significant
	With in Groups	44768.112	47.880		
		Df	3,935		

According to Table 3, it is inferred that the calculated 'f' value 4.306 is greater than table value 2.61 at 0.05, level of significance. Hence, the framed null hypothesis 3 is rejected and it is concluded that there is significant difference in academic stress between age groups (below 20yrs / 20- 23yrs / above 23yrs) college students in thiruvallur district.

HYPOTHESIS – 4:

There is no significant difference in academic stress between nature of colleges (boys / girls / co-education) college students in thiruvallur district.

Table 4 Result of One-Way ANOVA for Nature of Colleges

Demographic Variable	Nature	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Remark
Nature of the Colleges	Between Groups	110.230	55.115	1.139	Not Significant
	With in Groups	45276.417	48.372		
	Df	3,935			

According to Table 4, it is inferred that the calculated 'f' value 1.139 is less than table value 2.61 at 0.05, level of significance. Hence, the framed null hypothesis 4 is accepted and it is concluded that there is no significant difference in the academic stress of college students with regard to nature of the colleges.

HYPOTHESIS – 5:

There is no significant difference in academic stress between type of management (government / government-aided / private) college students in thiruvallur district.

Table 5 Result of One-Way ANOVA for Types of Management

Demographic Variable	Nature	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Remark
Types of Management	Between Groups	342.140	171.070	3.555	Significant
	With in Groups	45044.508	48.124		
	Df	3,935			

According to Table 5, it is inferred that the calculated 'f' value 3.555 is greater than table value 2.61 at 0.05, level of significance. Hence, the framed null hypothesis 5 is rejected and it is concluded that there is significant difference in academic stress between type of management (government / government-aided / private) college students in thiruvallur district.

VIII. EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

Educational implications emphasize implementing comprehensive mental health support, reforming assessment methods, promoting teacher-student interaction and training in time management.

- Institutional Support Systems: Colleges must create robust mental health programs, offering easy access to counseling and early screening for distress to prevent burnout.
- Alternative Assessment Reforms: Move away from high-stakes testing towards continuous assessment, project-based learning, and portfolio assessments to reduce fear of failure.
- Improved Teacher-Pupil Interaction: Fostering supportive relationships with faculty can mitigate students stress caused by perceived “impersonal” or “boring” teaching methods.
- Curriculum and Time Management Training: Institutions should incorporate workshops that teach study techniques, time management and coping strategies rather than focusing solely on academic content.
- Contextualized intervention: Developing specific support for high-risk groups, including first-year students transitioning to campus life and students from high-pressure environments.

IX. CONCLUSION

Academic stress is a common issue faced by college students in Thiruvallur district. The pressure to succeed academically and meet expectations often affects students’ mental well-being. The present study highlights the importance of identifying stress levels and understanding group differences. With proper institutional support, counseling services, and awareness, academic stress can be managed effectively. Reducing academic stress will ultimately contribute to improved academic performance and overall student development. Academic stress among college students is a prevalent, multifaceted issue stemming from high expectations, heavy workloads and intense competition, resulting in significant mental and physical health consequences, including depression, anxiety and burnout.

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