

Influence of Demographical Variables on the Academic Stress of College Students of UT Ladakh

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Abstract:

The current study aims to study the level of academic stress of college students of UT Ladakh due to location of college and variation in their medium of study. Data was collected through the Academic Stress Rating Scale from 150 college students of Leh district, selected by using simple random sampling technique. The study shows that college students differ in their academic stress. Location of college has also influenced the academic stress of college students. The study reveals that the students of EJM college experience high level of academic stress than other colleges of Leh district.

Introduction

Tension and stress have been a part and parcel of life. The 20th century has been branded as the age of stress and anxiety. Stress in academic institution can have both positive and negative outcomes if not well managed (Stevenson and Harper, 2006). Some amount of academic stress is normal for students. If a student is unable to cope effectively with academic stress, then serious psychological and emotional health consequences may result (Scott, 2008). New stressor may arise because of exposure to new educational concepts adjusting to new social setting or change in medium of instruction, changing of residence, migration, peer pressure and shifting from one school to another. In the view of Deden (2008) too much academic stress can contribute to depression, anxiety and physical illness including headache, stomach pain, ulcer etc. which can in turn negatively affect academic achievement. Therefore, stress is the body's reaction to a change that requires a physical, mental or emotional adjustment to responses.

Examination stress is an essential component of academic life of a student. Like any other form of stress, examination stress seems to have a beneficial and a detrimental component since it rests on continuums of frequency, intensity, duration, and situation. All of these components vary with individual personalities and the way they are appraised (Anamika, 2015). The academic institutions today do not show a motivating atmosphere. Students are often subjected to various stress related tests, examinations, homework (in the form of punishment), teachers (biased attitude inefficient), peer group (self-oriented) etc. The major challenges of students are poor retention and recall, lack of appreciation from their parents (loss of motivation), school environment, personal anxieties, fear of teachers, exam phobia, perpetual insecurity, conflicting expectations from the parents and the society, the growing competition, fear of failure or success and parental attitudes (Balaji Rao, 2012). An optimum stress is productive and it facilitates the growing performance of the individuals. Academic stress plays an important role in the student's life and it accounts for variation in performance, achievement or success.

Objectives of the Study

1. To find out the significant difference, if any, in the academic stress of college students due to variations in their location of college (rural/urban).
2. To find out the significant difference, if any, in the academic stress of college students due to variations in the medium of study they are studying-in (Ladakhi/English).

Hypotheses of the Study

1. There exists significant difference in the academic stress of college students due to variations in the location of college.
2. There exists significant difference in the academic stress of college students due to variations

in their medium of study they are studying in.

Methodology used

In the present study survey method was used.

Tool used

In the present study, the researcher had used the Rating Scale developed by P.V. Giri & Reddy (1917) to assess the Academic Stress of college Students.

The Academic Stress Rating Scale consists of six dimensions with 98 statements i.e. Physical health and Personal Aspects (AS1), College Environment Aspects (AS2), Teacher Student- Peer related Aspects (AS3), Academic related Issues (AS4), Home and College Interface (AS5), and Academic Stress due to Examinations (AS6). The validity of the tool was established by obtaining the opinion and suggestions of psychologists, educational experts, professionals working in stress related aspects. Based on the discussions, some statements were deleted and few statements were re-modified to avoid ambiguity and repetition of items in the rating scale. In view of the procedure adopted for development of the rating scale, it is said that the research tool possesses face validity, content validity and construct validity. A pilot study was carried to find out the reliability of the rating scales developed for the study with 15 college students (10% of the total sample) studying in a college, randomly selected from the college. The reliability value of split method is 0.89 and whole test reliability is 0.94. The intrinsic validity of academic stress rating scale as a whole is (0.97). The reliability and intrinsic validity of the research tool is very high and hence the tool possesses high reliability.

Locale and Sample

There are 7 government colleges functioning in both rural and urban areas in the UT Leh, Ladakh. In the first stage, the investigator has randomly selected 2 government colleges by using simple random sampling technique. In the second stage, 10 percent i.e., 150 students were taken as the sample of the study by using stratified random sampling technique.

Data Collection and Statistical Techniques

The developed tool was administered to the college students. The students were directed to go through the instructions before rating the statements in the respective tools. The collected data was analysed by using mean, SD and t- test.

Results and Discussion

Urban colleges mostly offering English medium of instruction. Keeping the future career of their children and ignoring the interests and abilities of their children, many parents are interested to join them in urban colleges. Not only the English medium background students but also the students who have studies lower education in Ladakhi medium are joining in urban colleges so they are unable to cope with the English medium. This study also reveals the same. The calculated t-values in table-1, for college environment aspects (2.67), academic related issues (3.06), home and college interface (4.11) and academic stress due to examinations (3.33) are significant at 0.01 levels respectively. Hence, the stated hypothesis 'there exist significant difference in the academic stress of students due to variations in their medium of study' is accepted for the above said dimensions. It indicates that English and Ladakhi medium students significantly differ in their academic stress due to college environment aspects, academic related issues, home and college interface and academic stress due to examinations. Further, mean values indicate that English medium students (AS2- 38.48, AS4 and AS6-38.03) are experiencing more academic stress than Ladakhi medium students (AS2- 36.52, AS4-54.21 and AS6-35.69) due to college environment aspects, academic stress related issues and stress due to examinations. This finding is in tune with the finding of Anuradha (2015) and Siva Giri and Reddy (2017). On the other hand, the students studying in Ladakhi medium (AS5: 34.30) are with more academic stress than the English medium students (AS5: 31.12) due to home and college interface. This finding is supported by the study of Eswaran (2016).

Table-1: Mean and S.D. of Academic Stress Scores of college students studying in the different medium of study in the colleges and the calculate t- values.

Dimensions (Academic Stress Dimensions)	Medium of Study				Calculated t-value
	Ladakhi Medium N=75		English Medium N=75		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Physical, Health and Personal Aspects	34.03	7.31	33.95	6.24	0.16 (NS)
College Environment Aspects	36.52	9.69	38.48	9.52	2.67 (S)
Teacher-Student- Peer Related Aspects	38.48	9.52	51.87	13.74	1.15 (NS)
Academic Related issues	54.21	14.63	57.43	13.20	3.06 (S)
Home and College interface	34.30	10.14	31.12	10.10	4.11 (S)
Academic Stress due to Examinations	35.69	9.15	38.03	9.22	3.33 (S)
Academic Stress dimension as a Whole	246.60	53.68	252.07	48.21	1.42 (NS)
<i>Note: NS= Not significant, S=Significant, (at 0.05 &0.01 levels)</i>					

Contrary to the above, physical health and personal aspects (0.16), teacher- student peer related aspects (1.15) and academic stress as a whole (1.42) are not significant at 0.05 level indicating that the medium of study has no significant influence on the academic stress caused due to physical health and personal aspects, teacher- student -peer related aspects and academic stress as a whole.

The mean and SD scores of the academic stress dimensions of intermediate junior college students belonging to different type of colleges and the calculated t-values are presented in table-2.

Table-2 Mean and S.D. of Academic Stress Scores of students studying in the Rural and Urban areas in UT Leh Ladakh and the calculate t-values.

Dimensions (Academic Stress Dimensions)	Location of college				Calculated t-value
	Rural N=75		Urban N=75		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Physical, Health and Personal Aspects	34.00	6.89	33.95	6.39	0.10 (NS)
College Environment Aspects	36.65	9.31	39.04	9.82	3.41 (S)
Teacher-Student- Peer Related Aspects	51.84	13.68	53.52	13.61	1.67 (NS)
Academic Related issues	55.28	13.93	57.39	13.60	2.08 (S)
Home and College interface	32.91	10.12	31.53	10.29	1.83 (NS)
Academic Stress due to Examinations	36.43	8.86	38.04	9.62	2.36 (S)

Academic Stress dimension as a Whole	247.10	51.01	253.48	49.30	1.73 (NS)
<i>Note: NS= Not significant, S=Significant, (at 0.05 &0.01 levels)</i>					

The colleges located in urban areas are not maintaining the rules and regulations with respect to student- teacher ratio, conducting classes in small rooms with crowded strength without having any recreational activities causing academic stress in students. In this study, the table- 2 illustrates that the variable location of college has significant influence on the academic stress of students causing due to college environmental aspects (AS2: 3.41), academic related issues (AS4: 2.08) and stress due to examinations (AS6: 2.36), as their t-values are significant at 0.05 level. Hence, the corresponding hypothesis 'there exist significant difference in the academic stress of college students due to variations in their type of college is accepted for the above said dimensions. This indicates that the rural and urban college students differ in their academic stress causing due to college environmental aspects academic related issues and academic stress due to examinations. These results are consistent with the studies of Balaji Rao (2012) and Sumalatha (2013).

The mean values indicates that urban area college students are undergone more academic stress (AS: 39.04, AS, 57.39 and AS: 38.09) than rural area college students (ASA 39 65, AS 55.28 and AS 36.43) due to college environment aspects, academic related issues and stress due to examinations. The findings are in line with the findings of Prabhu (2015) and Sumalatha (2013) that rural students have less academic stress than urban area students. They results are not fall in line with the findings of Siva Giri and Reddy (2017) that rural students have high academic stress than urban students. This may be due to the rural area students are not facilitated with proper guidance in academics and the colleges located in rural area may not have expert teachers and adequate infrastructure facilities. These things might have aggravated with the poor socio economic and literacy status of the parents. The Study by Reddy and Siva Giri (2017) reveals that the students with parents having lower educational status experience less stress than the students having parents with better academic background. The parents of higher educational background normally give much attention of their children's education and insist on academic standards in line with the educational trends of the world. This may cause much stress in students.

On the other hand, the t-values for physical health and personal aspects (ASE 0.10), teacher- student-peer related aspects (AS3: 1.67), home and college interface (AS: 1.83) and academic stress as a whole (ASW: 1.73) are not significant at 0.05 level, indicating that the type of college has no significant influence on the academic stress of students due to the above said dimensions. These findings are supported by the findings of Nirmala (2013) and Silpa (2009).

The mean and SD scores of the academic stress dimensions of intermediate junior college students belonging to different type of colleges and the calculated t-values are presented in table-3.

The obtained t-values in table-3 clearly shows that the home and college interface (ASS: 2.93) and stress due to examinations (AS6: 3.19) are significant at 0.01 level. Hence, the stated hypothesis there exist significant difference in the academic stress of college students due to variations in their type college the students are studying-in is accepted for the above said dimensions. The mean values indicate that urban college students are facing higher level of academic stress (AS6: 37.75) than the rural college students (AS: 35.45) due to examinations. On other hand, urban college students (ASs: 35.43) have more academic stress than the rural college students (ASs: 31.22), due to home and college interface. These results are supported with the findings of Amandeep (2014), Singh (2014) and Siva Giri and Reddy (2017). Urban college students are engaged with tight schedule of frequent examination in the name of daily tests, weekly tests and extra hours of teaching and so on. This may be the reason that the urban college students are experiencing high level of stress than their counterparts studying in rural colleges.

Implications of the study

1. It is now confirmed that much of the stress in students can be minimized through coping strategies such as support, problem solving, persistence, active decision making and planning, organizational adaptability and developing self-confidence and maintaining good human relations.
2. It is important that stress intervention programmes be designed to address stress of college students. However, in order to design an effective intervention, the stressors specific to

college students must be determined.

3. There should be awareness among the functionaries in the education field in bringing about radical changes in school/college programme altogether.
4. Teachers should follow right methods of teaching, use better motivational techniques, come down to the level of the students in their presentation of subject matter and create a pleasant atmosphere in the classroom.
5. Similarly, the students should get acquaintance with the learning procedures, pay attention to what the teacher explains and retain the concepts in their minds for longer periods.
6. The academics should prepare the curriculum keeping in view the age and the mental calibre of the students.
7. Parents should not impose their own ideas on their children in selecting a course or taking medium of instruction for their study.
8. Both urban and rural colleges should provide good infrastructural facilities to students and co-curricular activities should be part and parcel of the curriculum. The school/college programmes should include cultural and recreational activities, games and sports, training in critical and creative thinking and proactive in yoga and meditation. These activities help the students overcome the ubiquitous academic stress among the students.

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