

ACADEMIC STRESS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF CBSE AND HPBSE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

DR. SHER SINGH

PRINCIPAL, HIMACHAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, NALAGARH, DISTT SOLAN, HP.

ABSTRACT

Background: There are multiple factors which influence stress among high students However, the causes and effect of stress on the performance of students has remained relatively unexplored. Considering that stress can either negatively or positively influence academic achievement, the aim of this study is to compare the level of stress among the high school students taking education in two different boards.

Method and Procedure: The present study was Non experimental study is designed to evaluate the extent of academic stress among high school students of CBSE and HPBSE. To collect the relevant data in the present study, one tool was used namely: Stress Inventory for School Students (SISS) was used to measure Academic Stress among the High School students which was developed and standardized by Seema Rani & Basant Bahadur Singh.

Statistical analysis: Data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for Window, version 15.0. Statistical methods included mean, SD and t test. The results were considered significant if p value was < 0.05 .

Major findings: The study revealed that: (i) no statistically significant result was found on academic stress for both the systems there was normal academic stress across both the Boards i.e. CBSE AND HPBSE. (ii). No significant difference between CBSE Males and HP Board males High school students group. (iii). No significant difference between CBSE females and HP Board females group (iv) There is significant difference in academic stress between male and female students of CBSE and HPBSE. The result signifies that the males students experience less stress compared to female students.

Conclusion: The Present study revealed that there is no significant difference among the Males high school students of CBSE and HPBSE, However a significant difference was found among the Male and Female high school students of CBSE and HPBSE.

KEYWORDS: Academic Stress, CBSE and HPBSE, High School students.

INTRODUCTION

School education is a very important part in an individual's life and is also a turning point in their academic life. At this stage, the academic performance of a student plays a crucial role in deciding the next stage of their education, which in turn shapes their career. An excess of academic stress during this stage can result in adverse effects that are far-reaching and prolonged. Excessive levels of academic stress can result in an increased prevalence of psychological and physical problems like depression, anxiety, nervousness and stress related disorders, which in turn can affect their academic results. It is also a reflection of an individual's academic frustration, academic conflict, academic anxiety and academic pressure. The four components of academic stress usually identifiable in a student are academic frustration, academic conflicts, academic anxieties and academic pressures.

The mental health of students, especially in terms of academic stress and its impact has become a serious issue among school and policymakers because of the increasing incidence of suicides among students across the globe. Due to the constant pushing of the student by the parents in order to perform better in both academics and extra-curricular activities, some children develop deep-rooted nervous disorders during their childhood. Academic and exam stress is found to be positively correlated with parental pressure and psychiatric problems. It is important to remember that the mental constitution or coping capacities vary from one child to another. Therefore, children with poor coping capacities become more prone to anxiety, depression and fear of academic failure and this shows us that one should not compare one student with another. Looking at these high levels of academic stress in students which can also lead to psychological disorders, there is an urgent need to develop suitable interventions and solutions to reduce this level of stress and psychiatric morbidity.

In today's highly competitive world, students face various academic problems including exam stress, disinterest in attending classes and the inability to understand a subject. Academic stress involves mental distress regarding anticipated academic challenges or failure or even the fear of the possibility of academic failure. Academic stressors show themselves in many aspects in the students' environment: at school, home, in their peer relations and even in their neighborhood. Stress and its manifestations, such as anxiety, depression, and burnout, have always been seen

as a common problem among people in different professions and occupations. In the last few decades, alarm has already been provoked by the proliferation of books, research reports, popular articles and the growing number of organized workshops, aiming to teach people how to cope with this phenomenon.

Now a day's stress has become an important subject matter in research studies in academic circle as well as in our society. This research was conducted to study the effect of academic stress on students' performance. Stress is considered to be a part of students' life and can impact the students coping strategies in accordance with the demands of academic life. This is so because academic work is always accomplished with stressful activities (Agolla & Ongori, 2009). Students reported their experience of high academic stress at predictable times in each semester which results from preparing and taking exams, class ranking competition, and mastering huge amount of syllabus in a comparatively very small amount of time .

Academic stress among students has long been a topic of research study and researchers have recognized different important stressors which include excessive assignments, unhealthy competition among class students, fear of failure in educational achievement and lack of pocket money poor interpersonal relationships in class or with lecturers, and family problems. Students experience stress due to different many factors including issues of time management, financial matters, interaction with lecturers, personal subjective goals, social behavior, adjustment in the academic culture lack of support system (Wilks, 2008), admission process, high expectation of parents, curriculum comprised of complex concepts, unsuitable school timings, unbalanced student-teacher ratio, physical environment of classroom, unhealthy student teacher interaction, hard and fast rules of discipline, too many or complex assignments, teaching methodology, unconcerned teacher's attitude and overemphasis on weaknesses rather than acknowledging strengths Academic stress arises when academic related demands exceeds to those available resources to an individual which he/she adapts. (Wilks, 2008). And this stress must not be overlooked as it negatively affects the general adjustment of the students.

CONCEPT OF STRESS

Stress refers to the "sum of physical, mental and emotional strains or tensions on a person" It is defined as a condition typically characterized by symptoms of mental and physical tension

or strain, as depression or hypertension, which can result from a reaction to a situation in which a person feels threatened or pressured or both .The stress which enhances function (physical or mental, such as through strength training or challenging work), is called Eustress, while persistent stress that is not resolved through coping or adaptation and, may lead to anxiety or withdrawal (depression) behavior is known as distress.

Stress is viewed as a negative emotional, cognitive, behavioral and physiological process that occurs as a person tries to adjust to or deal with stressors. It is perceived as events or situations that cause individuals to feel tension, pressure, or negative emotions including anxiety and anger. Moreover, other people define stress as the response to existing situations, which includes physiological changes (increased heart rate, and muscle tension), emotional and behavioral changes (Bernstein, et al 2008). Stress is regarded as a psychological process that involves an individual's personal interpretation and response to any threatening event. It is important to note that stress can have both positive and negative effects on people. It means that stress may be a normal, adaptive reaction to threat. Moreover, when a person is exposed to chronic stress, she or he is likely to experience both physical illness (including heart disease), and mental illness (e.g., anxiety disorders). The field of Health Psychology focuses in part, on how stress affects bodily functioning and on how people can use stress management techniques to prevent or minimize disease.

NEED OF STUDY

This study is intended to review stressful events in the life of high school students. Although there has been considerable research on the about stress and anxiety, With an objective of reducing the academic stress among the high school students, so it is necessary to find out if there is any change in the stress level of the students. As our society is dynamic and progressive there has been a considerable change in the socio-economic status, school environment and home environment of students. There is rapid increase in the prevalence rate of stressful and anxious behavior among students in India and all over the world, so there is a need to study in this field from time to time. The study is necessary not only to study the

behavior but also helps to know what intervention strategies should be used for the adjustment of stressful and anxious behavior in high school students taking education in the curriculum of two different boards.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

1. To Study and Compare the Academic Stress among the CBSE and HPBSE high school students.
2. To Study and Compare the Academic Stress among the Male high school students of CBSE and HPBSE.
3. To Study and Compare the Academic Stress among the Female high school students of CBSE and HPBSE.
4. To Study and Compare the Academic Stress among the Male and Female high school students of CBSE.
5. To Study and Compare the Academic Stress among the Male and Female high school students of HPBSE.

HYPOTHESES

1. There will be no significant difference among the high school students of CBSE and HPBSE.
2. There will be no significant difference among the Male high school students of CBSE and HPBSE.
3. There will be no significant difference among the Female high school students of CBSE and HPBSE.
4. There will be no significant difference among the Male and Female high school students of CBSE.
5. There will be no significant difference among the Male and Female high school students of HPBSE.

OPERATIONAL DEFFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

C.B.S.E: Central Board of Secondary Examination was founded in 1962 under the Aggies of Ministry of Human Resource Development and its Head Quarter is at New Delhi. It

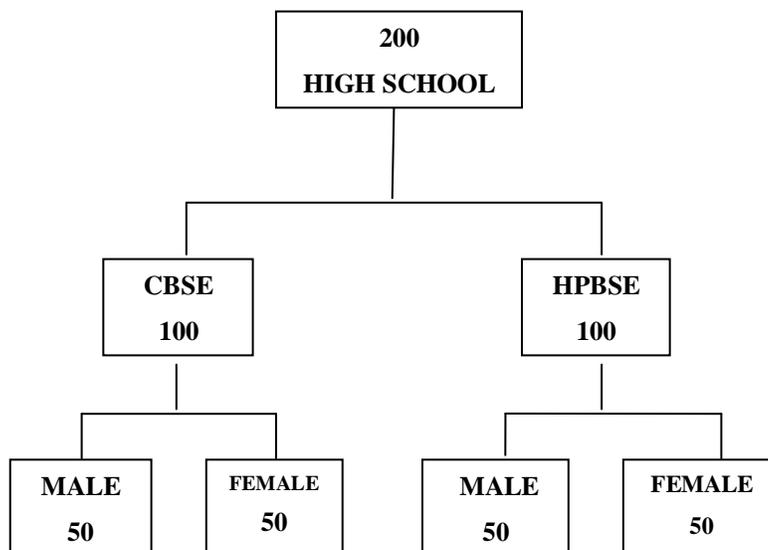
examination and conduct examinations of class 10th and 12th and to grant qualifying certificate to successful candidates of affiliated schools.

HPSEB: Himachal Pradesh Board of School Education functioning under the Government of Himachal Pradesh and having the Prescribed Curriculum to the high School and Senior Secondary students as per the guidelines of Ministry of HRD and NCERT. It came into existence in the year 1969 with an objective of conducting the examinations of the classes: 10th, 10+2, and JBT course.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

It may provide the insight and direction which may help to identify the problem. For any specific research project to occupy a place in the development of a discipline, the researcher must be thoroughly familiar with both previous theory and researches carried out in that field. To assure this familiarity, every research project in the behavioral science has one of its early stages a review of the theoretical and research literature.

SAMPLE OF STUDY:



SAMPLE: A sample is a small proportion of the population that is selected for observation and analysis. By observing the characteristics of the sample one can make certain inferences about which it is drawn.

In the present study a total of 200 students of high school were selected randomly from the Two Districts of Himachal Pradesh namely Distt Solan and Distt Sirmour Respectively. It consisted of class X students of age 13 to 17 yrs. Out of the total of 200 students 100 were from C.B.S.E 100 from HPBSE. Out of the total of 200 students there were 100 Males and 100 females and further 50 male and females each from CBSE and HPBSE respectively.

DESIGN: The present non experimental study is designed to evaluate the extent of academic stress among high school students of CBSE and HPBSE, In order to accomplish the objective a comparative study was proposed to investigate the academic stress level among high school students.

TOOLS USED:

To collect the relevant data in the present study, one tool was used namely:

Stress Inventory for School Students (SISS) was used to measure Academic Stress among the High School students which was **developed and standardized by Seema Rani & Basant Bahadur Singh.**

DESCRIPTION OF THE TOOL:

The SISS included 40 items on which students had to answer on a four point scale (1) very worried (2) worried (3) little worried (4) Not worried. The respondent had to describe the intensity of their response. There was no specified time limit to complete the questionnaire, but in general students took 40-45 minutes to complete both the questionnaire. In addition basic information concerning students Age & Sex were asked. Data was completed for the questionnaire and two sets of result were presented. First the difference in academic stress scores between two boards and between males and females

ADMINISTRATION OF TEST:

The researcher administered the questionnaire to 200 subjects individually. The instructions on the questionnaire were read aloud by the researcher to the subjects. There was no fixed time limit to

complete the questionnaire usually an individual took 30-40 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Scoring was done as per the scoring procedure mention in the test manual.

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES USED:

For the purpose of present study following statistical tools were used, Mean, SD and T –value was calculated to compare the academic stress among the high school students

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

In present non experimental study is designed with an objective to evaluate the extent of academic stress among high school students under CBSE and HPBSE Boards .In order to accomplish the objective a comparative study was proposed to investigate the academic stress among high school students.

As per the design of the study, two groups CBSE group and HPBSE Board group were made to compare academic stress. Mean scores and S.D of the raw scores were calculated and then 't' test was applied to test whether the difference between the mean is significant or not .The analysis and interpretation of the major findings and discussions of the results is as follows

TABLE -1

COMPARISON OF ACADEMIC STRESS AMONG THE CBSE AND HPBSE HIGH SCHOOL STUDETS

BOARD- GROUP	N	MEAN	S.D	T-VALUE	LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE
C.B.S.E	100	105.03	13.80	1.37	NOT SIGNIFICANT
HP BOARD	100	103.60	12.50		

The first hypothesis that there is no significant difference between two sets of students belonging to CBSE and HP Board group. As per the table -1 Mean and S.D of CBSE group is **105.03 and SD 13.80** while for HP Board group is **103.60 (12.50)**. The 't' calculated is 1.37 which is not found significant at .05 level of significance.

Hence the **hypothesis 1** is accepted that there is no significant difference between Academic stress among the high school students of CBSE and HPBSE. It makes clear that same problems are being faced by the all high school students of both Boards. And moreover the students of both boards have almost similar level and encounter of Academic Stress.

TABLE -2

COMPARISON OF ACADEMIC STRESS AMONG THE MALE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS OF CBSE AND HPBSE BOARD

BOARD-GROUP	N	MEAN	S.D	T-VALUE	LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE
CBSE MALE	50	107.11	12.96	1.44	NOT SIGNIFICANT
HPBSE MALE	50	104.88	12.14		

As per the table 2 the Mean and S.D of CBSE Male group is **107.11 (12.96)** and that of HPBSE Male group is **104.88 (12.14)**. The 't' calculated is 1.44 which is not significant at .05 level. Hence the hypothesis 2 is accepted that "there will be no significant difference among Male high school students of CBSE and HPBSE.

It is clear from the above interpretation that same problems are being faced by the Male high school students of both CBSE and HPBSE Boards. And moreover the males of both boards have almost similar level and encounter of Academic Stress.

TABLE -3

COMPARISON OF ACADEMIC STRESS AMONG THE FEMALE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS OF CBSE AND HPBSE

BOARD-GROUP	N	MEAN	S.D	T-VALUE	LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE
CBSE FEMALE	50	113.22	14.55	1.02	NOT SIGNIFICANT
HPBSE FEMALE	50	111.09	13.02		

Table-3 Indicate the Mean and S.D of CBSE Female group is **113.22 (14.55)** and that of HPBSE female group is **111.09 (13.02)**. The 't' calculated is **1.02**. Which is not significant at .05 level. Hence the Hypothesis is accepted that "there is no significant difference among the Female high school students of CBSE and HPBSE.

The result shows that the same level of problems are being faced by CBSE board Female students and HP Board female students while dealing with academic stress and the female students of both boards have to encounter similar stressors at school.

TABLE -4

COMPARISON OF ACADEMIC STRESS BETWEEN THE MALE AND FEMALE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS OF CBSE

GROUP	N	Mean	S.D	T-VALUE	LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE
C.B.S.E MALE	50	105.22	11.86	2.14*	SIGNIFICANT
C.B.S.E FEMALE	50	110.44	12.45		

According to the raw scores Mean, S.D and 't' values has been calculated which is presented in table 4. The mean and S.D of C.B.S.E board male group is 105.22 (11.86) and that of CBSE board females is 110.44 (12.45) and 't' calculated is 2.14* which is significant at .05 level of significance. Hence H₄ is rejected. So there is significant difference between male and female students under CBSE board.

The result testifies the previous research that females are more stressful as compared to males, males students experience less stress compared to female students; this might be a result from the fact that male students reach maturity later than female students. Another reason may be that females are more emotional and sensitive towards what is happening in their surroundings.

TABLE- 5

COMPARISON OF ACADEMIC STRESS BETWEEN MALE AND FEMALE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS OF HPBSE

GROUP	N	Mean	S.D	T-VALUE	LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE
HP BOARD MALE	50	104.88	12.24	2.57*	SIGNIFICANT
HP BOARD FEMALE	50	112.41	12.92		

It is clear from the table-5 the scores Mean, S.D and 't' values of HP Board male group is 104.88 (12.24) and that of females is 112.41 (12.92) and 't' calculated is 2.57* which is significant at .05 level of significance. Hence H_5 is rejected. So there is significant difference between male and female students under HP Board.

The result signifies that the females are more stressful as compared to males and males students experience less stress compared to female students, this might be a result from the fact that male students reach maturity later than female students. Another reason may be that females are more emotional and sensitive towards what is happening in their surroundings.

MAJOR FINDINGS

The main aim of the present study was to analyze the extent of academic stress school students CBSE and HPBSE. The following inferences have been found on the basis of the analysis of the data.

1. No statistically significant result was found on academic stress for both the systems there was normal academic stress across both the Boards i.e. CBSE AND HPBSE.
2. The study reveals that there is no significant difference between CBSE Males and HP Board males High school students group. The stress might not also be significant due to the fact that boys are defensive in declaring stressful symptoms.

3. The study indicates that there is no significant difference between CBSE females and HP Board females group. But over the mean scores of the female group in both the Boards were higher which shows that females showed a comparatively high academic stress in both the Boards.

4. The study also revealed that there is significant difference in academic stress between male and female students under CBSE. For the male students, their side problems are problems with getting involved in sports, recreation and also financial problems. Male students divert the immaturity with other activities and some withdraw themselves by not doing anything caused them to think less of what is going to happen to them and their surroundings. This caused less stress to male students compared to the female students.

5. The results of the study also reveal that there is significant difference between male and female students under HPBSE. The result signifies that the males students experience less stress compared to female students, this might be a result from the fact that male students reach maturity later than female students. Another reason may be that females are more emotional and sensitive towards what is happening in their surroundings.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

Study related to academic stress and examination anxiety between high school students belonging CBSE and HPBSE is not a new area of research for the field of education. Although lot of research has been conducted on academic stress and examination anxiety related with high school students, but as CBSE and HPBSE has introduced Grading system with an intention of reducing academic stress and examination anxiety, therefore it was necessary to testify that is there any significant difference between students under CBSE and HPBSE. The findings of such research can give new directions to establish the field of examination system which could really help in reducing the academic stress.

1. From the present study it was revealed that there was no significant difference in academic stress between CBSE and HPBSE high school students. The findings indicate that the cause for

this was that the students of both the boards encountered the similar problems as regard the academic stress is concerned

2. Present research has produced important information about academic stress according to factors such as gender of students. It is proposed that this information is to be looked by students in facing anything that are considered to them as stressful. This information shall also give benefit for parents and teachers in helping students to manage stress and coping anxiety in the right way.
3. The high school students in the study agreed that the work load in C.B.S.E and HP Board cause equal stress, Likewise, both males and females thought that striving for grades and test taking were stressful. The male respondents were more concerned with pressure from school and classroom rules than were the females in the study. Involvement in extracurricular programs is more stressful for males than females.
4. It is concluded that their teacher's attitudes and their classroom climates were the basis of stress at their schools. It is obvious that stress is a condition about which the students in the study have concern.
6. A well planned effort to provide assistance and support to students should include opportunities for meaningful and direct communication, professional counseling services.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

1. A larger sample size which would be helpful in drawing more valid and reliable conclusions.
2. Academic stress has direct relationship with other life stressors; another study can be conducted with major focus on multiple life stressors, and their relationship with academic stress.
3. Academic stress has direct relationship with achievement of the students, It can be taken as a variable and relationship between academic stress and achievement can be established
4. In the present study the locality factor was not considered. Research could be initiated with urban and rural high school students.
6. In present study only CBSE and HPBSE schools were selected as sample. Further research can be conducted by including I.C.S.E board as well.

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