A STUDY OF ACADEMIC STRESS IN RELATION TO ADJUSTMENT STYLES, STUDY HABITS AND MENTAL HEALTH OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Dr. D. Hassan¹ and SK. Nayab Rasool²

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Acharya Nagarjuna University Ongole Campus, Ongole
²Research Scholar, Department of Education, Acharya Nagarjuna University, Ongole Campus, Ongole

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INTRODUCTION

Academic stress is a cause for great concern among adolescents. Adolescents face a life full of stress in the fast mechanized and competitive world of today. Academic stress refers to the unpleasant psychological situations that occur due to the educational expectations from parents, teachers, peers and family members, pressure of parents for academic achievement, present educational and examination system, burden of Home work etc.

Adjustment Style

Man has an amazing tendency to be dissatisfied with things as they are. Therefore, he/she is involved in a constant struggle with physical, social and other forces for making them minister to his/her comforts and safety. In this process he/she comes to know new things which develop his/her power of adjustment. A person does not always get success to his/her desires and efforts. The reason for this is lies either in unfavorable situations or in the limited capacities of the individual. However a person makes efforts to adjust himself/herself somehow in his/her environment.

Study Habits

Study habit refers to the student ways of carrying out the task of studying by using various techniques and ways in the field of study to keep him afloat along with the wise use of his/her time in studying. Either the study habit is systematic or unsystematic there could always be an impact to student's academic performance.

Mental Health

Good mental health can enhance one’s life, while poor mental health can prevent someone from living a normal life. A person possessing sound mental health can adjust well to the environmental situations and inter personal relations. Such a person has a clear self-concept, accepts his limitations and does not blame others for his deficiencies.

Need and Importance of the Study

Identification of sources of academic stress, adjustment styles, study habits and mental health of the students assume enormous importance. Students have different personal characteristics. Similarly with differences in accumulated experience in the learning process over a period, they may be expected to differ in their perceptions and experiences of
academic stress. Adolescents who have emotional and social problems cannot fit into normal situations. If one is not able to fit into normal situations, he/she cannot achieve at the expected level. The main aim of schooling gets spoiled. They become a problem to themselves as well as to the home, school and community. So understanding of academic problems and adjustment problems of students is needed to help them to solve their problems. It is under this background, an attempt has been made to study the academic stress and adjustment styles to those problems of stress among boys and girls in relation to their study habits and mental health.

There are parents who want their children to opt for a particular professional course and pressure them to be in their footsteps; the results are exhaustion and stress leading to psychological disorders. Parent’s expectations are highly improbable and particular and they encumber the students. The push to get higher grades is a regular occurrence, particularly at pre-adolescence when children are susceptible to the imposition of subjects much against their interest and aptitude. Parents should inspire and educate children on the importance of learning new things and not set percentages as targets. It is argued that the study would help those concerned with academic stress and the mental health of the students in removing or minimizing the extent of stress from the identified sources. Knowledge of reactions to academic stress or adjustment / coping strategies resources of the students would provide a fund of information for counselors, parents and teachers to plan for strengthening the personnel resources. In a way the study would also help again feedback regarding academic stress of students compared to their counterparts in other parts of the world in the light of different educational climates. Accordingly, it has been planned to undertake a study of the sources of academic stress among the secondary school students, the method the student use to cope with and the factors associated with academic stress and coping.

The management of the problem of academic stress requires a study of all dimensions and implications in detail and the plan strategies for prevention of the problem initially at the school level and further manages at the individual level or in a group setting. We need to have school psychologists to handle usual psychological and academic problems in the school. As a preventive measure, the student must undergo stress management programmes especially during the vulnerable periods. They should be made dynamic, having better stress tolerance, problem solving abilities, proper self-evaluation and goal setting. High quality education is essential in developing human potential and maintaining mental health is also equally important. Hence, the researcher taken up the study on

**Academic Stress in relation to Adjustment Styles, Study Habits and Mental Health of Secondary School Students**

### Objective of the Study

1. To study the relationship between Academic Stress, Adjustment Styles, Study Habits and Mental Health of Secondary school students in Prakasam district.
2. To study the significant difference between the perception of boy and girl students towards Academic Stress, Adjustment Styles, Study Habits and Mental Health of Secondary School Students in Prakasam district of Andhra Pradesh.

### Hypothesis of the present Study

1. There would be no significant correlation between Academic Stress, Adjustment Styles, Study Habits and Mental Health of Secondary school students in Prakasam district.
2. There would be no significant difference between the perceptions of boy and girl students towards Academic Stress of Secondary school students in Prakasam district.
3. There would be no significant difference between the perceptions of boy and girl students towards Adjustment Styles of Secondary school students in Prakasam district.
4. There would be no significant difference between the perceptions of boy and girl students towards Study Habits of Secondary school students in Prakasam district.
5. There would be no significant difference between the perceptions of boy and girl students towards Mental Health of Secondary school students in Prakasam district.

### Review of Related Literature

**Khabirul Alam, and Ujjwal Kumar Halder (2018)** studied on “Academic Stress and Academic Performance among Higher Secondary Students: A Gender Analysis”. The present study was conducted to explore difference in academic stress and academic performance among the higher secondary students with respect to their gender and to estimate the relation between academic stress and academic performance of the students of class XI of Bengali medium higher secondary schools in Malda District, West Bengal. The present study found that there is a significant difference in academic stress and also revealed that there is a significant difference in academic performance due to the gender of the students of class XI. The present study explored negative correlation between the academic stress and academic performance of the students.

**Pooja Bhagat (2017)** studied on “Educational-Adjustment and Self-Efficacy of Secondary School Students in Relation to their Gender and type of School”. The present study was conducted with the purpose to see the Educational Adjustment and Self efficacy of secondary school students in relation to their Gender and Type of School. The results of the study showed that female students of secondary schools are found educationally less adjusted than male students of secondary schools. Govt. school students are found educationally less adjusted than private school students. No significant difference is found in the self-efficacy of secondary school students in relation to their gender and type of school.

**Ebele Uju F. and Olofu Paul A. (2017)** studied on “Study habit and its impact on secondary school students’ academic performance in biology in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja”. This study investigated the impact of study habits on secondary school students’ academic performance in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. The finding of the study revealed that there is significant relationship between study habits and students’ academic performance. It was recommended that teachers and school guidance counselors should collaboratively guide students on how to develop good study habits; thereby enhancing their academic success.
Amisha Singh and Sharmila Devi (2018) studied on “Mental Health of Secondary School Students in Relation to Family Climate”. The present study was aimed at finding out the relationship of family climate of secondary school students with their mental health. The data was analyzed statistically and was found that there exists a significant positive relationship of mental health with the family climate. The paper further revealed that mental health of male and female students from govt. and govt. aided schools have significant positive relationship with the family climate.

**Design of the Study**

The researcher followed the survey method of the descriptive research. For this investigation the questionnaire had been considered as a suitable tool for the collection of data.

**Research Tool**

The questionnaire was constructed and administered to find out the Academic Stress in relation to Adjustment Styles, Study Habits and Mental Health of Secondary School Students.

**Tool-1 : Academic Stress**

This tool was prepared and standardized by Kim (1970). This tool comprised of 40 statements relating to Academic Stress of students. This tool comprises of 40 items with five options (Five Point scale).

**Tool-2: Adjustment Styles Inventory**

This tool was developed by Perlin and Schooler (1978); Kendall and Hollon (1980); Lazarus (1961); Billings and Moore (1981). This tool comprised of 40 statements relating to Adjustment Styles of Students. This tool comprises of 40 items with five options (Five Point Scale).

**Tool-3: Study Habits Inventory**

This tool was developed by Wren (1941). This tool comprised of 25 statements relating to Study Habits of Students. This tool comprises of 25 items with three options (three Point Scale).

**Tool-4: Mental Health Inventory**

This tool was developed and standardized by Jagadesh and Srivastava (1988). This tool comprised of 54 statements relating to Mental Health of Students. This tool comprises of 54 items with four options.

**Sample**

According to the research, the survey will be conducted 200 students which are located in Prakasam district of Andhra Pradesh.

**Statistical Techniques Used**

The investigation has been carried out by the descriptive statistical analysis, such as calculating measures of central tendency like Mean and calculating measures of dispersion like Standard Deviation. For testing the null hypothesis, the correlation and ‘t’ test have been used by the investigator with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

### Table 1 Correlation between Academic Stress, Adjustment Styles, Study Habits and Mental Health of Secondary School Students in Prakasam District.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Adjustment Styles</th>
<th>Study Habits</th>
<th>Mental Health</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Stress</td>
<td>0.21**</td>
<td>0.23**</td>
<td>0.31**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjustment Styles</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.19**</td>
<td>0.26**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Habits</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.30**</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Significant at 0.01 level**

### Table 2 Significant difference between the perceptions of boy and girl students towards Academic Stress in Secondary Schools of Prakasam District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Stress</td>
<td>Boy</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>123.14</td>
<td>17.32</td>
<td>4.62**</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Girl</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>129.56</td>
<td>15.20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Significant at 0.01 level**

### Table 2 observed that, the mean perceptual score of students towards Academic Stress of Secondary School students. The mean perceptual score for boy category students was 123.14 with SD 17.32 (N=100), where as it was for the girl category students was 129.56 with SD 15.20 (N=100). The t value was 4.62 and the p-value was 0.00 which was statistically significant at 0.01 level. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. It shows that both boy and girl category students differed significantly and girl category students perceived high towards Academic Stress of Secondary School students in Prakasam district than that of boy category students.

### Table 3 Significant difference between the perceptions of boy and girl students towards Adjustment Styles of students in Secondary Schools of Prakasam District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adjustment Styles</td>
<td>Boy</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>109.54</td>
<td>14.56</td>
<td>2.80**</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Significant at 0.01 level**

### Table:3 observed that the mean perceptual score of students based on their gender towards Adjustment Styles of Secondary School students. The mean perceptual score for boy category students was 109.54 with SD 14.56 (N=100), where as it was for the girl category students was 114.68 with SD 15.14 (N=100). The t value was 2.80 and the p-value was 0.00 which was statistically significant at 0.01 level. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. It shows that both boy and girl category students differed significantly and girl category students perceived high towards Adjustment Styles of Secondary School students in Prakasam district than that of boy category students.
**Table 4** Significant difference between the perceptions of boy and girl students towards Study Habits of students in Secondary Schools of Prakasam District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Study Habits</td>
<td>Boy</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>43.32</td>
<td>5.02</td>
<td>2.75**</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Girl</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>47.50</td>
<td>4.99</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significant at 0.01 level

**Table 4** observed that, the mean perceptual score of students based on their gender towards Study Habits of Secondary School students. The mean perceptual score for boy category students was 43.32 with SD 5.02 (N=100), where as it was for the girl category students was 47.50 with SD 4.99 (N=100).

The t – value was 2.75 and the p-value was 0.00 which was statistically significant at 0.01 level. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. It shows that both boy and girl category students differed significantly and girl category students perceived high towards Study Habits of Secondary School students in Prakasam district than that of boy category students.

**Table 5** Significant difference between the perceptions of boy and girl students towards Mental Health of students in Secondary Schools of Prakasam District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mental</td>
<td>Boy</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>130.18</td>
<td>11.87</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Girl</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>135.46</td>
<td>10.44</td>
<td>3.86**</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Significant at 0.01 level

**Table 5** observed that, the mean perceptual score of students based on their gender towards Mental Health of Secondary School students. The mean perceptual score for boy category students was 130.18 with SD 11.87 (N=100), where as it was for the Girl category students was 135.46 with SD 10.44 (N=100). The t – value was 3.86 and the p-value was 0.00 which was statistically significant at 0.01 level. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. It shows that both boy and girl category students differed significantly and girl category students perceived high towards Mental Health of Secondary School students in Prakasam district than that of boy category students.

**FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY**

1. There is a positive and high significant correlation between the Academic Stress, Adjustment Styles, Study Habits and Mental Health of Secondary school students in Prakasam district.

2. There is a significant difference between boy and girl category students perceptions and girl category students perceived high towards Academic Stress of Secondary School students in Prakasam district than that of boy category students.

3. There is a significant difference between boy and girl category students perceptions and girl category students perceived high towards Adjustment Styles of Secondary School students in Prakasam district than that of boy category students.

4. There is a significant difference between boy and girl category students perceptions and girl category students perceived high towards Study Habits of Secondary School students in Prakasam district than that of boy category students.

5. There is a significant difference between boy and girl category students perceptions and girl category students perceived high towards Mental Health of Secondary School students in Prakasam district than that of boy category students.

**Recommendations**

- Teacher support is helpful for students facing stress, no matter how well they are adaptable to the stress.
- At school level provision should be made for the post of Counsellor / Psychiatrist/ Psychologist or Social worker to help the student, to adjust with the pressure and cope with physiological, emotional, mental and sociological needs and self confidence and self esteem can be enhanced among the students.
- Parents and teachers should take necessary steps to develop Adjustment and reduce the academic stress among students.
- Teachers and school guidance counselors should collaboratively guide students on how to develop good study habits, thereby enhancing their academic success.
- Parents should provide healthier environment to develop good study habits among children. It is very important to provide friendly family environment as it plays an important role in the process of their growth and development.

**References**