

Examination Stress and Academic Achievement in English of Ninth Standard Students in Pudukottai Educational District

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Abstract The study investigated the relationship between examination stress and academic achievement of high school students. More people feel stress during exam time. It usually occurs during the revision period before exams and immediately before the exams themselves. Stress is defined as an individual's response to pressure. When stress is perceived negatively or becomes excessive, it leads to anxiety before and during examinations and ultimately affects their academic achievement. The present study was conducted to know the examinations stress felt by high school students of Tamilnadu. A total of 300 high school students randomly selected from nine schools of Pudukkottai educational district, Tamilnadu, India have participated in this study. Examination stress among high school students has been a topic of interest for many years. High school students experience high stress due to various reasons such as lack of preparation, nature of their study and lack of needed information.

Keywords: examination stress, academic achievement and anxiety

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1. Introduction

Exam stress is a feeling of pressure that many young people feel at the time of exam time. It usually occurs during the revision period before exams and immediately before the exams. Stress is defined as an individual's response to pressure. Stress causes pressure, It depends upon an individual response. However, for some students, when they experience too much pressure for a long period of time, it becomes stressful. Secondary school education is an important turning point in the academic life of the individual. It is similar to SSLC (Secondary School Leaving Certificate), a level of schooling in the countries like Great Britain. At this stage, the academic performance of the youth/adolescents plays a crucial role in deciding about next higher stage of education, and probably career too [1]. Therefore, excessive stress during this stage could result in increased prevalence of psychological problems like depression and nervousness, which could ultimately have negative impact on the outcome of the achievements [2]. Academic stress is mental distress with respect to some anticipated frustration associated with academic failure/medium of instruction or even unawareness to the possibility of such failure. Students have to face many academic burden/load, for example, school examination, answering questions in the class, showing progress in

school subjects, students are demanded of understanding what the teacher is teaching, competing with other class mates, fulfilling teachers and parents academic expectations [3]. As a consequence, they can be under stress, since the demand is related to achievement of an academic goal. Academic Stress is an important factor accounting for variation in academic achievement. It also contributes to major mental health hazards, problems both physical and mental stress related diseases. Stress makes a significant contribution to the prediction of subsequent student performance and act as a negative predictor of academic achievements of student.

2. Need and Significance of the Study

Examination stress and academic achievement may affect student psychologically, which hinder their expressions and their communication skills that is most important for proceeding their life. So teacher educators, administrators should think of ways and means of increasing the level of academic achievement. So that they can perform still better to improve their qualities. Though stress is a matter of concern among ninth standard students, no organized study has been carried out. Therefore the investigator confined to assess examination stress and academic achievement in Pudukottai educational district.

3. Statement of the Problem

The investigator, who studied in three different types of management at different area with varied environment. He had experienced examination stress and academic achievement among himself and peer group from the students' points of view. It is in this context the investigator took up the problem and entitled it "Examination Stress and Academic Achievement in English of Ninth Standard Students in Pudukottai Educational District".

4. Operational Definition of the Key Terms

4.1. Examination Stress

Examination stress is a state of psychological condition in which people experience extreme distress and anxiety in testing situations. Many people experience some degree of stress and anxiety before and during exams and examination stress can actually impair learning and hurt test performance. It is measured from a scale that explain the statuses of students.

4.2. Academic Achievement

It becomes necessary to measure and evaluate the continuously progressing abilities so as to motivate students further on the path of progress. The attainment of knowledge of students in a given period is defined of the academic achievement of the student.

5. Objectives of the Study

- To find out whether in gender, locality of school, locality of residence, type of family, medium of instruction, type of management, father's educational qualification, mother's educational qualification, parent's occupation and parents income of ninth standard students associate with their examination stress.
- To find out whether in gender, locality of school, locality of residence, type of family, medium of instruction, type of management, father's educational qualification, mother's educational qualification, parent's occupation and parents income of ninth standard students associate with their academic achievement.

- To find out the relationship between examination stress and academic achievement of ninth standard students

6. Null Hypotheses

- There is no significant difference in gender, locality of school, locality of residence, type of family, medium of instruction, type of management, father's educational qualification, mother's educational qualification, parent's occupation and parents income of ninth standard students in respect to their examination stress.
- There is no significant difference in gender, locality of school, locality of residence, type of family, medium of instruction, type of management, father's educational qualification, mother's educational qualification, parent's occupation and parents income of ninth standard students in respect to their academic achievement.
- There is no significant relationship between examination stress and academic achievement of ninth standard students

7. Variables

The present investigation is an attempt to study the 'examination stress and academic achievement of high school students in pudukottai educational district. The variables involved are: 1.Examination Stress 2.Academic Achievement in English

Intervening variables used in this study are

- Gender
- Locality of School
- Locality of Residence
- Type of Family
- Medium of Instruction
- Type of Management
- Fathers Educational Qualification
- Mothers Educational Qualification
- Parents Occupation
- Parents Income

8. Sample and Sampling Techniques

The sample for the present study consisted of 300 ninth standard students in Pudukottai Educational District. The students of both gender coming from both rural and urban areas were included in the study. The sampling technique employed in the present study is Simple Random Sampling.

Table 1. School wise Distribution of Sample

S.No	Name of the School	Type of Management	Sample
1	S.K.T. Gandhi High School, Rayavaram	Government Aided	108
2	Ulagappan High School, Kadiyappatti		
3	Ramanathan Chettiar Hr.Sec.School, Natachanthuppatti		
4	Govt. Boys Hr.Sec.School, Thirumayam	Government	79
5	Govt. Girls Hr.Sec.School, Thirumayam		
6	Govt. High School, Lembalakudi		
7	King Jesus Matric. School, Thirumayam	Matriculation	113
8	St.Joseph Matric. Hr.Sec.School, Thirumayam		
9	St.Sebastiar Matric. School, kattu pallivasal		
TOTAL			300

Table 2. Variable wise Distribution of Sample

S.NO	Type of Sample	Sub Samples	Size of the Sample	%
1	Gender	Male	160	53
		Female	140	47
2	Locality of School	Rural	114	38
		Urban	186	62
3	Locality of Residence	Rural	189	63
		Urban	111	37
4	Type of Family	Nuclear	148	49
		Joint	152	51
5	Medium of Instruction	Tamil	205	68
		English	95	32
6	Type of Management	Government	79	26
		Govt. Aided	108	36
		Self – Finance	113	38
7	Fathers Educational Qualification	Illiterate	74	25
		School Level.	160	53
		Hr. Education	66	22
8	Fathers Educational Qualification	Illiterate	105	35
		School Level.	144	48
		Hr. Education	51	17
9	Parents Occupation	Farmer	155	52
		Business	91	30
		Government	54	18
10	Parents Income	Below Rs.50000	106	35
		Rs.50000 – Rs.100000	122	41
		Above Rs.100000	72	24
Total			300	

9. Delimitation of the Study

- The present study has selected only the variables examination stress and academic achievement in English of ninth standard students.
- For this study the investigator collected data from 300 ninth standard students only.

10. Method of the Study

The present study attempts to find out the examination stress and academic achievement of high school students. The investigator has selected the survey method for conducting the study. The word 'survey' indicates the gathering of the data regarding current conditions. The word "normative" is used because surveys are frequently made for the purpose of ascertaining which is the normal or typical condition or practice. "Normative Survey" is applied in order to suggest the two closely related aspects of study. The descriptive or normative survey method of educational research is very common. It is that method of investigation which attempts to describe and interpret what exists at present in the form of conditions, practices, processes in the form of conditions, practices, processes, attitudes, beliefs etc. It is concerned with the phenomena that are typical of the normal conditions. It is an organized attempt to analyze, interpret, and report the present status of social institution, group or area.

11. Construction of the Tool

The data are essential for carrying out research investigation. The data are collected with the help of the special apparatus called as tools. The success of a research must be received by selecting a proper tool for the research. The investigator collected resource materials from Journals, Newspaper, Clippings and recently

published books on Educational problems and academic issues and constructed the Research tool for the present study. So, the investigator used the examination stress scale and Academic Achievement test.

12. Pilot Study

The pilot study is a rudimentary study conducted by the investigator in order to get primary information. The primary information was used by the investigator to plan the entire work of the research. In the pilot study the investigator preferred two schools which are located nearest to his residence and collected 50 samples from the schools of Governments Girls High School, Thirumyam and Government Boys High School, Thirumyam. While administering the research tool, the investigator offered detailed instruction, to the respondents, regarding the mode of giving responses to all the items that are given in a questionnaire and allowed the respondents to fill up responses on their own. Few students raised their doubts and asked more classification. The investigator gave them enough clarification and solved all of their doubts. After giving responses to all the questions by the respondents, the investigator corrected all the samples from the students. The investigator gave scores for the responses of the respondents and those scores were tabulated and used to find out the reliability.

13. Reliability and Validity

13.1 Examination Stress Scale

13.1.1. Reliability

Reliability of the examination stress scale was established by the investigator using Cronbach's Alpha method method,

the reliability of the tool to measure examination stress is found to be 0.84.

13.1.2. Validity

The investigator established content and face validity of the research tool. The items in the questionnaire were given to experts in the field of Educational psychology to seek their opinion in relation to its objectivity and worthiness of items. Further the experts review each and every items of the questionnaire and provided some suggestions to modify the items that are present in the questionnaire. Based on their opinions some of the items are eliminated and some of them are modified. The above process brought a sufficient content and face validity to the research questionnaire of this study.

13.1.3. Scoring Procedure

Examination stress tool consists of as many as 30 statements. Each statement has three responses i.e. Agree, Slightly Agree and Disagree. The maximum score for this scale is 90 and 30 is the minimum score. There is no time limit to complete the research tool but most of the students completed within 30 minutes.

13.2. Academic Achievement Test

13.2.1. Reliability

Reliability of the academic achievement scale was established by the investigator using Cronbach's Alpha method method, The reliability of the tool to measure academic achievement scale is found to be 0.84.

13.2.2. Validity

The investigator established content and face validity of the research tool. The items in the questionnaire were given to experts in the field of English Language teaching to seek their opinion in relation to its objectivity and worthiness of items. Further the experts review each and every items of the questionnaire and provided some suggestions to modify the items that are present in the

questionnaire. Based on their opinions some of the items are eliminated and some of them are modified. The above process brought a sufficient content and face validity to the research questionnaire of this study.

13.2.3. Scoring Procedure

Academic Achievement tool consist of as many as 30 questions. Each statement has only one response i.e. either right or wrong. The maximum score for this scale is 30 and 0 is the minimum score. There is no time limit to complete the research tool but most of the students completed within 30 minutes.

14. Data Collection

In Pudukottai educational district, the investigator selected three government schools, three government aided schools and three matriculation schools using random sampling technique. A group of students from each school was selected in a random manner. Thus the researcher used simple random sampling technique for collection of data from the vast area of Pudukottai educational district. The investigator himself went to various schools located in and around Pudukottai educational district and collected 300 samples from the students who are studying at ninth standard. The investigator gave assurance to the students that the collected information will be kept utmost confidential and it will be used for purpose of research. The investigator read the instructions that are given in the questionnaire in front of all students and asked them to give their responses for each and every item that are given in the questionnaire. The responses of the respondents are recorded and the students' personal particulars are collected through questionnaire. The collected data are used for analysis of data.

15. Results and Findings

Table 3. Mean, SD and 't' scores on examination stress of high school students

S.No.	Variables	N	Mean	SD	't' Value
1.	Male	160	64.40	5.83	0.83*
2.	Female	140	63.81	6.25	
1.	Rural Locality of School	114	63.11	6.60	2.20**
2.	Urban Locality of School	186	64.75	5.57	
1.	Rural Locality of Residence	189	63.71	6.43	1.65*
2.	Urban Locality of Residence	111	64.84	5.22	
1.	Nuclear Family	148	63.55	6.17	1.65*
2.	Joint Family	152	64.70	5.86	
1.	Tamil Medium of Instruction	205	64.10	5.98	0.10*
2.	English Medium of Instruction	95	64.18	6.16	
1.	Illiterate Mothers	105	65.65	6.35	2.39**
2.	School Level Educational Qualification Mothers	144	63.78	5.73	
1.	Illiterate Mothers	105	65.65	6.35	3.73**
2.	Higher Education Educational Qualification Mothers	51	61.98	5.44	
1.	School Level Educational Qualification Mothers	144	63.78	5.73	2.00**
2.	Higher Education Educational Qualification Mothers	51	61.98	5.44	

(* Not Significant, ** Significant).

From the above table, it is found that, there is significant difference between rural and urban locality of school, illiterate mothers and school level educational qualification mothers, illiterate mothers and higher education educational qualification mothers, school level educational qualification mothers and higher education educational qualification mothers high school students in respect to their examination stress.

Stress is necessary to challenge students to learn. Approaches are needed that reduce the negative aspects of stress (distress) which lessen students' learning and performance. The key to reducing distress is providing students with a feeling of control over their education, information about what to expect, and feedback regarding what can be done to improve their performance. Students who do not feel helpless will adopt their own coping strategies. There are several remedial measures in second language English teaching and learning and stress management interventions that can be used to cope with stress. There are varieties of coping skills that can be introduced to help students to cope with stress. In order to eliminate the negative stressor examination stress that they have, they need to identify the source of the stressor(s). The coping skills that are selected by the student need to be techniques that fit their personal needs. "The widespread prevalence and negative impact of stress on students necessitates the development of effective, efficient programs for stress management" [4]. [5,6] offers even more specific suggestions to counselors and psychiatrist for helping students reduce their levels of examination stress: teach students that stress can be more manageable if it is distributed across the academic year, engage students in solving stress by examining which situations have been stressful for them in the past, help students deal with the everyday problems of time management that lead them to procrastinate, and help students develop and maintain the motivation and appropriate behavior to reach long-term goals [7].

Table 4. Mean, SD and 't' scores on Academic achievement of high school students

S.No.	Variables	N	Mean	SD	't' Value
1.	Male	160	26.47	2.61	4.91**
2.	Female	140	24.76	3.32	
1.	Rural Locality of School	114	25.14	3.43	2.24**
2.	Urban Locality of School	186	25.99	2.80	
1.	Rural Locality of Residence	189	25.35	3.24	2.48**
2.	Urban Locality of Residence	111	26.22	2.70	
1.	Nuclear Family	148	25.50	3.19	0.84*
2.	Joint Family	152	25.80	2.95	
1.	Tamil Medium of Instruction	205	25.35	3.30	3.03**
2.	English Medium of Instruction	95	26.37	2.40	
1.	Illiterate Mothers	105	26.03	2.90	2.03**
2.	School Level Educational Qualification Mothers	144	25.22	3.32	
1.	Illiterate Mothers	105	26.03	2.90	0.36*
2.	Higher Education Educational Qualification Mothers	51	26.20	2.55	
1.	School Level	144	25.22	3.32	2.13**
2.	Higher Education	51	26.20	2.55	

(* Not Significant, ** Significant).

From the above table, it is found that, there is significant difference between male and female, rural and urban locality of school, rural and urban locality of residence, Tamil and English medium of instruction, illiterate mothers and school level educational qualification mothers, illiterate mothers and higher education educational qualification mothers, school level educational qualification mothers and higher education educational qualification mothers high school students in respect to their academic achievement. The high school students as well as students should be made aware of the negative consequences of examination stress faced during teaching, learning and, evaluation and an efficient English teaching and learning remedial programmes as well as counseling services should be provided to such stressed students to enhance their academic performance. Education system needs to develop better evaluation techniques which cause less distress among students and educators, and it needs to develop and promote better support programs for struggling students for their well being.

16. Implications

The present investigation clearly indicates the level of examination stress and academic achievement of ninth standard students in Pudukottai educational district. Though the examination stress and academic achievement among the variables selected for the study like locality of school, mothers educational qualification in examination stress and gender, locality of school, locality of residence, medium of instruction differ from one another, so considerably effective efforts should be taken by the parents and school authorities to increase the level of learning style in English language and academic achievement on further more in students. This aspect can be given more importance in all learning situations.

In today's highly competitive world, students face various academic problems including exam stress, disinterest in attending classes and inability to understand the subject. Examination stress is the feeling of anxiety or apprehension over one's performance in the exams. It can lead to students being unable to perform to the best of their abilities in exams. Second language English acquisition is the major source of stress among high school students in rural areas of south tamilnadu and it may lead to low self-esteem. Many psychological problems such as depression and suicide occur as a result of low self-esteem [8]. The involvement of adolescents in getting instant gratification of needs has led to lot of stress in them and in their relationships with family and peers.

The students coming from joint families have slightly higher mean of academic anxiety score than their counterparts coming from nuclear families but this difference is not significant statistically. IQ and demographic factors are not key factor in examination stress among high school students. In order to overcome deviant behaviors, the parents play a constructive role in channelizing energies of the adolescents. Proper care should be taken in helping to take the right decisions

which may affect their future. Anxiety reduction and time management in conjunction with leisure activities may be an effective strategy for reducing examination stress in high school students. Students should have the aspiration/expectation about their study, not beyond their capacities and abilities, Students need also proper counseling while selecting their courses at intermediate level.

The parents should also consider the child's interest and aptitude and not impose on selecting the courses. The family environment should be congenial and the learning process should be made pleasurable and parents should avoid making it as a stressful event for high school students.

17. Conclusion

Overall the present study concluded that, there is a significant relationship between examination stress and academic achievement of ninth standard students. The findings of the present study indicate that High and low academic performing students differed significantly on parent's educational status, student's residence, and location of schools and in overall sources of examination stress. Tamil and English medium of students differ significantly on stress. Gender differs on sources of stress. There is a need to address these stressors by Educational institution as well as by psychologists. The amount of stress experienced may be influenced by the individual's ability to effectively cope with stressful events and situations [9]. If stress is not dealt effectively, feelings of loneliness and nervousness, as well as sleeplessness and excessive worrying may result. A student can be stressed due to so many stressors, such as academic reason, medium of instruction, financial problem, illiterate parents, health problem or loss of close family member or friend, etc. The main stressor identified in this study was academic related. There was no negative correlation between stress level and academic performances of the students. Higher academic performance can be achieved even with a higher level of stress, if the students are able to manage their stress well. It is the person's ability to face the everyday challenges that will determine whether he/she will be stressed or not. In order to promote and produce stress free holistic confident practitioners. This paper focuses the schools and academic planners a window or guideline for a comprehensive use of personal and professional development activities of the students to cope with the academic related matters and also to develop confidence among students for better adjustment in classroom, group and society.

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