



Stress, Perceived Social support and Academic Achievement among Students.

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Abstract

The present study intended to study stress and perceived social support among the low and high academic achiever students and the relation of stress and perceived social support of adolescent students of Imphal West, Manipur. The study was conducted on a sample of 120 students selected from two schools for the purpose of investigation. Perceive Stress Scale consisted of 10 items developed by S Cohen (1994), Multidimensional Scale of Perceived social support (MSPSS), 12 items scale of Zimet et.al (1988) and the teacher's reports and score obtained by the students in the last two years examination was used for the study. For the purpose of the analysis of the collected data, Mean, standard deviation (SD), Pearson correlation method (r) and independent t-test were used. The present study found there was no significant difference between the low and high academic achiever students with respect to stress and a high significant difference was found between the low and high academic achiever students with respect to Perceived social support. Results also found a low degree of negative correlation between stress and perceived social support of students.

Keywords: Stress, Perceived Social support, Academic achievement, High and low academic achiever students.

Introduction

Students are in the race to own high academic achievement as having high academic achievement help them to show their potentialities and capabilities. Academic achievement is the ability is students' abilities to perform well in a general or specific subject matter in school indicating their intelligence, hard work, perseverance and learning outcome. Good 1973, defined "Academic achievement as knowledge attitude or skill developed in the school subject usually designed by test scores or by marks assigned by the teacher or by both". Psychological and physical stability of students is a very important indicator within the overall performance and academic achievement of a student as psychologically and physically sound students' perform better as expected compared to those students who are not stable psychologically and physically.

Stress is one of the important factors that can have an impact on the psychological and physical health of an individual and as stress is a part of students academic life it is seen that students experience stress during the time of examination when they compete for grade, the need to perform, fear of failure and when they attempt to finish their syllabus in a short period. Stress is the state of an individual where they experience negative thoughts or feeling when faced with a situation that is too demanding or threatening to them which can be physical and may also involve emotions. Hans Selye was the first to introduce the concept (coined the term stress) of stress in the year 1936. Stress is a Latin word 'Stringere' which means to be drawn tight. Hans defined "stress as the non-specific response of the body to any demand for change" In the Oxford Dictionary, the word 'stress' is defined as 'a state of affair involving demand on physical or mental energy'. According to Person Environmental model which is useful in understanding stress among students, explained that individual can appraise stressful events as challenging or threatening. Stress can bring a sense of competence and an

increased capacity/ability to learn when students perceived their education as challenging. However, stress can also elicit a feeling of helplessness and foreboding sense of loss when students perceived their education as threatening. So stress among students can hamper learning which in turn affect students' academic performance. Though a moderate amount of stress helps students to excel in academics, excessive or high stress leads to poor academic performance. Thus, the higher the stress level, the lower is the academic achievement. The most common source of stress among students is an academic problem. Schafer (1996) reported that school-related stressors were found to be the most irritating daily hassles in a student's life. Academic stress among students arises due to their expectation to excel as well as parents and teachers expectation (Ang and Huan, 2006). Kaplan et al., (2005) also reported that early adolescent school-related stress both independently and in interaction with high academic expectations negatively affected academic performance. The correlation between academic achievement and all the type of stress was found to be significant except existential stress, which was found to be insignificant (Malik and Balda, 2006). Sohail (2013) concluded that higher the level of stress experienced by the students poorer is academic performance.

Social support has a significant impact on student's academic achievement as the support received and perceived by the students could help them maintain their psychological health as they feel that someone is there to rely on, thus helping them to perform well in academic life. Social support refers to the experience of being valued, respected, cared regarding, and loved by others who are present in one's life. Sources of social support can vary as it can be from family, friends, teachers or any social groups to which one belonged. Perceived social support is how the person perceives the support available to them from friend family and significant others and considering the history of relationship with the individual who provided the supportive behavior and the context of the environment. It is one of the most used measures of social support. The perceived social support is a cognitive and subjective appraisal that gives a person confidence to depend on someone else under given circumstances (Barrera, 1986). Researchers stress the importance of perceived social support instead of received social support from an individual. (Antonucci & Israel, 1986). The study conducted by Wethington and Kessler (1986) confirmed that on stressful situations, perceived social support was more relevant than the social support received.

Study on stress and social support claimed social support structure moderate the effects of stress among students' academic life. Keeping in view the above selected problem on several research studies among students the present study was to study the relationship between stress and perceived social support among high and low achiever students of Manipur, specifically on the students of Imphal West.

Objectives of the Study

The following were the objectives of the present study: ^

- To study stress among the low and high academic achiever students.
- To study perceived social support among the low and high academic achiever students.
- To study about the relation of stress and perceived social support of adolescent students.

Hypotheses of the Study

The hypotheses framed for the present study were as follows:

- There will be no significant difference between the mean scores of stress of low and high academic achievers students.
- There will be no significant difference between the mean scores of perceived social support of low and high academic achievers students.[^]
- There will be no significant relationship between stress and perceived social support of students.

Materials and Methods

The study was conducted in two different schools in Imphal West, Manipur. Two high schools one Government and one private school were selected at random. From the selected schools the students of above classes were to be divided into two strata (high achievers & low achievers) separately. From each strata of each class, 10 students were to be selected. The sample comprises 120 students of which 60 were high academic achievers, and another 60 were low academic achievers. Students within the range of 14 to 17 years willing to give informed consent were selected for the study. Prior permission was taken from the school authorities and the purpose of the study was thoroughly explained.

Tool used for the study

Perceive Stress Scale by S Cohen (1994) was used to measure stress consisting of 10-item, self report questionnaire was used to measure the stress of the students. Multidimensional Scale of Perceived social support (MSPSS), 12 item, 7-point Likert scale of Zimet et.al (1988) was also used to measure the perceived social support of the students. No standardized test was used to measure students' academic achievement, for the purpose of the study teacher's report and score obtained by the students in the last two years examination was used.

Statistical techniques used:

For the purpose of the analysis of the collected data, Mean, standard deviation (SD), Pearson correlation method (r) and independent t-test were used.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

Table 1- Mean, S.D., t-value, p-vale of stress and social support of high and low academic achievers adolescent students

Variable	Academic achievement	Mean	SD	t-value	P-value
Stress	Low	19.82	7.92	1.82	0.07
	High	17.73	3.95		
Perceived Social Support	Low	55.37	8.18	12.05	0.00
	High	71.87	6.74		

Table 1 showed the comparison of high and low academic achievers with respect to stress. The t-value derived from the stress scores of high and low academic achievers students was 0.07 which was less than the table value. So our hypothesis "There will be no significant difference between the mean scores of stress of low and high academic achievers students" was not rejected and hence there was no significant difference between the mean scores of the stress of high and low academic achiever adolescent students. It revealed that the level of the

stress experienced by both the low and high academic achievers adolescent students is more or less the same.

From the mean value of stress of high and low academic achievers adolescent students (mean for low achiever students – 19.82 & mean for high achiever students – 17.73), it can be said that low academic achiever students experience a little bit more stress as compared to high academic achievers.

Table 1 also showed the comparison of high and low academic achievers with respect to social support perceived. The t-value derived from the perceived social support scores of low and high academic achievers students was 0.00 which was significant. So our hypothesis “There will be no significant difference between the mean scores of perceived social support of high and low academic achievers adolescent students” was rejected indicating highly significant difference among the low and high academic achievers in respect to total social support. The high achiever students got more social support from the family, friends and significant others than that of the low academic achiever students. The high achievers’ group has fared a much higher mean value score (Mean – 71.87) as compared to low academic achiever students (Mean – 55.37)

Table 2: Mean, correlation (r) of adolescent students.

	No.of students	Mean	r-value
Stress	60	28.68	-0.18
Perceived Social Support	60	91.30	

Table 2 showed the coefficient of correlation between scores of stress and social support of adolescent students. Coefficient of correlation i.e. r-value derived from the scores of stress and perceived social support of adolescent students was -0.18 which shows there is a low degree of negative correlation between stress and perceived social support of adolescent students.

Major Findings of the Study

Major findings of the study on the basis of data analysis and interpretation of data were as follows:

- There is no significant difference between the low and high academic achiever students with respect to stress. All the students experience more or less the same level of stress.
- There is a high significant difference between the low and high academic achiever students with respect to perceived social support. The high achiever students got more perceived social support as compared to low academic achiever students.
- There is a low degree of negative correlation between stress and perceived social support of students.

Discussion

The findings of the study yield no significant differences in the level of stress among the low and high academic achievers, and also inferred there is no dependency between the stress and academic achievements among the students, conforming to similar findings in the previous studies, where the level of stress show no correlation with the academic success or achievement (Brrne 1996 & Lackovic-Girgin 2003). Many studies also contradict with the current findings where it reported a strong relationship between perceived stress and academic

achievement (Md Yasin & Mariam Adawaih2009, Struthers, Perry & Menec 2000) this could be due to the fact the students are accustomed to the system which makes students indifference with the level of stress experienced. The findings also indicate that students with high academic achievements get more perceived social support as compare to that of the low achieving students, which means the level of perceived social support between the low and high achievers, is highly significantly different. Research on social support and academic achievement reported a significant positive relationship between social support perceived and academic achievement that high social support students likely to perform in their academic (Safree and Adawiah 2009). The above findings are found as consistent with the present finding stating that the high academic achiever students got more social support as compared to low academic achiever students. Nahid and Sarkis (1994) reported that high level of stress is associated with the low level of social support among the students which contradict with the current findings which yield there is low or no relationship between stress and perceived social support.

Some of the limitations are sample is not representative of the entire students' population as the sample size is small therefore generalization cannot be made, the study sample was limited to only two schools and student's age 14 to 17 years so it cannot be a generalized study for both the gender and the duration of the study period was short.

Conclusion

This study concluded that the level of stress between the low and high academic achiever students is more or less the same that all the students experience the same level of stress. The high achiever students got more social support as compared to low academic achiever students as high significant difference was found between the low and high academic achiever students.

There is a low degree of negative correlation between stress and social support of students showing a weak relation indicating that social support doesn't reduce the level of stress among adolescent students or it can also be said that there is no significant relationship between the stress experienced by students and the social support perceived by them.

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