

Academic Stress Mental Health of Student Teachers at Secondary Level

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Abstract

The study is descriptive survey in nature. The study purports to assess the level of Academic Stress and Mental Health of student teachers at secondary level. The study also purports to compare the academic stress of student teachers with reference to different background variables like gender and locality. It also compares the mental health of student teachers and the relationship between the academic stress and mental health. The finding of the study shows that the 75% and 70% of student teachers found to possess average level of academic stress and mental health respectively. A significant relationship was found between academic stress and mental health.

KEYWORDS: Academic Stress, Mental Health, Student Teachers, Secondary level.

1.Introduction

The empowered teachers are essential to lead the community and nation in the march of progress. They are the role model and facilitators in revealing and attaining higher values in life. No nation can even marginally slacken its efforts in giving necessary professional inputs to its teachers and along with that due status to their stature and profession. In performing effective role the teacher should be enough competent not only in the academic area, but with respect to all the dimensions of his/her personality. In preparing such teachers the teacher education institutions play important role. But the present competitive world has put lot of pressure on students leading mental disturbances affecting the personality of students. Stress is one among them leading to mental ill health.

The concept of stress was first introduced in the discipline of life sciences by Selye (1956). It was derived from the Latin word "Stringere". Stress was popularly used in 17th century to mean hardship, strain, adversity or affliction. It was used in 18th and 19th centuries to denote force, pressure, strain or strong effort with reference to an object or person.

Academic stress is mental distress associated with frustration and academic failure or even unawareness to the possibility of such failure (Gupta and Khan, 1987). In the present technological world students are facing heavy academic load, school examination, special classes, extra coaching, parent's expectations, and competition in showing progress in school subjects. The research studies showed that Academic stress affects the psychological and physical health of the students and their academic performance (Clark & Rieker, 1986; Felsten & Wilcox, 1992). In the fast moving digitalized world the Stress has been seen tightening its grip on the students, as they have to compete at every step of their academic success.

Individual difference is observed in the Academic stress as the individual's experiences and feelings are different when they are under stress. Apart from balancing the physical and socio-emotional development, students have to fulfill the

expectations of the parents and teachers, build up their academic performance and challenges of competitive world make them to experience stress which negatively affects the student's mental health and academic performance.

The causes of stress among children range from parental divorce and separation, to academic and social failure. The stressful experiences of adolescent period also considered to be increasing in intensity, as prominent stressors involving family dysfunction, peer demands and academic concerns are faced by adolescents.

Attending college is the positive experience for many, yet many students also Experience College as chronically stressful due to academic requirements i.e., tests, papers, presentations (Murphy & Archer, 1996). Academic problems have been reported to be the most common source of stress for students (Aldwin & Greenberger, 1987). Constant pressure of studying, too little time, writing term papers, taking tests, future plans, and boring instructors were found to be most irritating daily factors of stress (Schafer, 1996).

Academic Track, admissions to renowned professional College, Adjustment to new schools or colleges, board exams, entrance exams, expectations of parents and teachers, institutions, assessment methods, comparison with others are also responsible for stress.

Stress as cause of emotional disturbance, affects the students' general performance, and disrupts healthy relationships. It is also causes depression and disorganized behavior, anxiety attacks, tension, nervousness leading to mental ill health.

Mental health includes emotional, psychological, and social well-being of an individual. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps to determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood to adolescence through adulthood.

WHO defines mental health as, mental health is the condition where a person can identify his or her ability, can cope with natural pressures of life which is beneficial to society. In general, person is able to make decision and participate collectively. Mental health is based on welfare and well-being of individuals and for society. (World Health Organization, 2004). According to World Health Organization (WHO) mental health includes "subjective well-being, perceived self-efficacy, autonomy, competence, intergenerational dependence, and self-actualization of one's intellectual and emotional potential, among others.

2. Need and significance of the study.

The present competitive world is exerting lot of pressure on the children leading to imbalance in the physical and mental development in turn affecting their mental health. Research studies also support the view that stress has become one the impediment in the development. The New York University publication affirms that the biggest factor of stress is academic in nature. The study of Dusselier (2015) revealed that most of the emotional and physical disturbances among student population is because of stress.

As leaders in the march of progress of nation the teachers play important role. In performing the role of national construction they should be competent not only in the academically and psychologically. In preparing such teachers the teacher education institutions play important role.

But the academic stress among student teachers leads to the problems of adjustment in their future career of teaching. It is essential to acquire enough knowledge of stress causing factors in the academic environment in turn enabling to perform the multiple tasks in the classroom and in the community.

The knowledge of the stressors can make a significant contribution to the field of teacher education to prepare effective and balanced prospective teachers in order to build the nation.

In this background the researcher made an attempt to study the level of academic stress and mental health among the student teachers at secondary level.

3. Statement of the Problem: The study purports to assess the level of Academic Stress and mental health of student teachers at secondary level and entitled as,

“A study on Academic Stress and mental health of Student Teachers at secondary level”.

4. Objectives of the Study:

The study was undertaken with the following objectives.

- To assess the level of Academic Stress of Student Teachers.
- To assess the level of Mental Health of Student Teachers
- To compare the Academic Stress of Student Teachers with reference to the following categories.
 - Gender
 - Locality
- To compare the Mental Health of Student Teachers with reference to the following categories.
 - Gender
 - Locality
- To find out whether there is a significant correlation between academic stress and mental health of student teachers.

5. Methodology.

5.1 Method of the study.

The study is descriptive survey in nature.

5.2 Sample of the study.

150 student teachers studying in Aided and Unaided B.Ed colleges affiliated to the University of Mysore were selected randomly as sample.

5.3 Variables of the Study.

Main Variables.

- Academic Stress
- Mental Health

Background Variables

- Gender
- Locality

5.4 Operational definition of terms.

Stress is internal response of the individual to pressure which is accountable for individual's success and failures.

Academic stress In the present study the Academic Stress Scale will assess the academic stress of student teachers with respect to the components of personal inadequacy, fear of failure, interpersonal difficulties with teachers, inadequate study facilities and academic environment of the colleges.

In the present study the academic stress of student teachers is represented by the scores obtained by the student teachers on the Academic Stress Scale constructed by the investigator.

Mental Health: Mental health is the person's ability to make positive self evaluation, to perceive the reality, to integrate the personality, autonomy, group oriented attitude and environmental mastery.

In the present study the mental health of teachers are represented by the scores obtained by the teacher trainees on the Mental Health Inventory constructed by Jagadish. S and Srivastava A.K., (1995).

5.6 Hypotheses.

To achieve the objectives of the study the following hypotheses were formulated.

- There is no significant difference between the following categories of Student teachers with respect to Academic Stress.
 - Male and Female
 - Rural and Urban
- There is no significant difference between the following categories of Student teachers with respect to Mental Health.
 - Male and Female
 - Rural and Urban
- There is no significant relationship between Academic Stress and Mental Health of Student teachers.

5.7 Research tools.

Academic Stress Scale

To measure the academic stress, Academic Stress Scale constructed by the researcher was utilized.

The Academic Stress scale consists of 36 items having five alternatives strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree. The scale found to possess face validity and reliability coefficient of 0.88.

Mental Health Inventory - Mental Health Inventory constructed by Jagadish. S and Srivastava A.K., (1995) was utilized.

The scale consists of 72 items distributed over six areas viz., positive self evaluation, perception of reality, integration of personality, authority, group oriented attitude and environmental mastery. It is a four point scale always, often, rarely and never.

The scale found to possess construct validity and split half reliability of 0.73.

5.8 Statistical Techniques.

To analyze the data Percentage Analysis, t-test and ANOVA techniques were utilized.

6. Analysis and interpretation.

1. Level of Academic Stress of student teachers.

| Sl.No | Level | N | % |
|-------|---------|-----|----|
| 1 | High | 17 | 11 |
| 2 | Average | 112 | 75 |
| 3 | Low | 21 | 14 |

The above table reveals the following points.

11% of student teachers possess high level of academic stress, 75% of student teachers possess average level of academic stress and 14% of teachers possess low level academic stress.

It inferred that most of student teachers possess average level of academic stress.

2. Level of Mental Health of student teachers.

| Sl.No | Level | N | % |
|-------|---------|-----|----|
| 1 | High | 21 | 14 |
| 2 | Average | 105 | 70 |
| 3 | Low | 24 | 16 |

The above table reveals the following points.

14% of student teachers possess high level of mental health, 70% of student teachers possess average level of mental health and 16% of teachers possess low level mental health.

It inferred that most of student teachers possess average level of mental health.

6.2 Comparison of Academic Stress of student teachers at secondary level with reference to different categories of background variables viz., gender, locality.

In order to test the formulated null hypotheses the t-test was applied and the results are tabulated and interpreted as follows.

H 1: There is no significant difference between mean scores of Academic Stress of male and female student teachers.

Table 3 Details of t-test for difference between means of Academic Stress of male and female student teachers.

| Sl. No | Gender | N | Mean | SD | df | t-value | Remark |
|--------|--------|-----|--------|-------|-----|---------|-----------------|
| 1 | Male | 16 | 111.94 | 10.58 | 148 | 1.466 | Not Significant |
| 2 | Female | 134 | 105.04 | 18.41 | | | |

As it is shown in the table 3, the obtained t-values for the means of academic stress of male and female student teachers is not significant at 0.01 level. Hence the null hypothesis was accepted and concluded that there is no significant difference in the academic stress of Male and Female with student teachers. This implies that the male and female student teachers found to have same level of academic stress.

H 2: There is no significant difference between Academic Stress of student teachers from rural and urban area.

Table 4 Details of t-test for difference of means of Academic Stress of student teachers from rural and urban area.

| Sl. No | Gender | N | Mean | SD | df | t-value | Remark |
|--------|--------|----|--------|-------|-----|---------|--------------------------|
| 1 | Rural | 92 | 109.40 | 16.15 | 148 | 3.228 | Significant @ 0.01 level |
| 2 | Urban | 58 | 100.03 | 18.99 | | | |

As it is shown in the table 4, the obtained t-values for the means of academic stress of rural and urban student teachers is significant at 0.01 level. Hence the null hypothesis was rejected and concluded that there is a significant difference in the academic stress of student teachers from rural and urban background. This implies that the student teachers from rural area found to have higher level of academic stress.

H 3: There is no significant difference between male and female student teacher's Mental Health.

Table 5 Details of t-test for difference of means of Mental Health of male and female student teachers.

| Sl. No | Gender | N | Mean | SD | df | t-value | Remark |
|--------|--------|-----|--------|-------|-----|---------|-----------------|
| 1 | Male | 16 | 133.75 | 15.93 | 148 | 0.258 | Not Significant |
| 2 | Female | 134 | 132.51 | 18.45 | | | |

As it is shown in the table 5, the obtained t-value for the means of mental health of male and female student teachers is not significant at 0.01 level. Hence the null hypothesis was accepted and concluded that there is no significant difference in the mental health of Male and Female student teachers. This implies that the male and female student teachers found to have same level of mental health.

H 4: There is no significant difference between mean scores of mental health of student teachers from rural and urban area.

Table 6 Details of t-test for difference between means of mental health of student teachers from rural and urban area.

| Sl. No | Gender | N | Mean | SD | Df | t-value | Remark |
|--------|--------|----|--------|-------|-----|---------|-----------------|
| 1 | Rural | 92 | 134.41 | 16.66 | 148 | 1.512 | Not Significant |
| 2 | Urban | 58 | 129.83 | 20.13 | | | |

As it is shown in the table 6, the obtained t-values for the means of mental health of student teachers from rural and urban area is not significant at 0.01 level. Hence the null hypothesis was accepted and concluded that there is no significant difference in the mental health of student teachers from rural and urban area. This implies that the student teachers from rural and urban area found to have same level of mental health.

6.3 Relationship of the academic stress and mental health.

Table 7: Correlation between academic stress and mental health.

| Sl No. | Variables | N | r –value | Remark |
|--------|-----------------|-----|----------|----------------------|
| 1 | Academic stress | 150 | 0.378 | Moderate correlation |
| 2 | Mental health | | | |

The above table reveals that there is a significant moderate correlation between academic stress and mental health.

It implies that the academic stress affects the mental health leading to insecure feeling, loss of self confidence, anxiety.

7. Findings of the study.

Major findings of the study are as follows.

- 11% , 75% and 14% of student teachers possess high, average and low level of academic stress respectively.
- 14%,16%,and 70% student teachers possess high, average and low level of mental health respectively.

- There is no significant difference between academic stress of male and female student teachers.
- There is a significant difference in the academic stress of student teachers from rural and urban area. Rural student teachers found to possess higher level of academic stress in comparison to urban area student teachers.
- There is no significant difference in the mental health of Male and Female student teachers.
- There is no significant difference in the mental health of student teachers from rural and urban area.
- There is a significant relationship between academic stress and mental health.

8. Implications.

Based on the results of the following implications were drawn to reduce the stress level from high and average level to lower level and enhance mental health.

Organization of Guidance and counselling sessions, workshops and training programmes related coping up of stress, identification of causes of stress.

The institutions should organize guidance and counselling sessions to guide the student teachers to discuss their problems.

Organize parent teacher associations discuss and making them to understand the effects of academic stress.

Provide essential measures to adjust with the new environment and special classes to overcome the problems related with learning.

Create mentorship with lady teacher educators as mentors to guide female student teachers and discuss their problems.

Teacher educators and institutions should take necessary steps to remove academic stress generating factors from learning environment.

Hence these measures can be taken up at the institution level, to reduce the academic stress and enhance the mental health.

9. Conclusion.

Hence, in realizing the goal of quality education to lead the nation towards progress effective teachers are essential. By providing stress free academic environment well balanced teachers can be produced to achieve the aim of national development.

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