Academic stress in relation to self-efficacy and peer relations among college students

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The current study examined relation in academic stress, self-efficacy and peer relations among college students. The sample of 400 students (200 boys and 200 girls) was collected from various colleges of Hisar and Delhi. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Method was used to analyze the results. The findings indicated that academic stress was significantly negatively related with self-efficacy (r=0.-48, p<.01), and peer relations (r= -0.26, p<.01). Thus, the findings have important implications in understanding increasing rate of academic stress among students.

The ultimate goal of any scientific research is to arrive at a final solution of the problem or an answer to the research question. Such a solution is in the nature of summary and conclusion. From conclusion, implications are drawn and some recommendations are made to the future researches in the area concerned. The present chapter provides conclusions drawn from analysis and interpretation of data, the implications based on obtained findings, and suggestions for future researches.

Academic stress is the product of a combination of academic related demands that exceed the adaptive resources available to an individual. If a student is unable to cope effectively with academic stress, then serious psycho-social-emotional health consequences may result (Arthur, 1998; MacGeorge, Samter, & Gillikan, 2005; Tennant, 2002).

Academic stress, conceptualized as a disturbance induced by a student's appraisal of academic stressors, is common in children, and often leads to psychological and somatic distress (Lee & Larson 2000; Lou & Chi 2000). Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory holds that a child's development can be understood within the context of relationships in his or her environment (Bronfenbrenner, 2005).

Academic stressors include the student's perception of the extensive knowledge base required and the perception of an inadequate time to develop it (Carveth et al., 1996). Students report experiencing academic stress at predictable times each semester with the greatest sources of academic stress resulting from taking and studying for exams, grade competition, and the large amount of content to master in a small amount of time (Abouserie, 1994). When stress is perceived negatively or becomes excessive, students experience physical and psychological impairment.

Objectives of the study

● To study the relation in academic stress and self-efficacy among students.
● To study the relation in academic stress and peer relations among students.
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Method

Participants

The participants was compared of 400 students (200 boys and 200

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girls) studying at college level in the age group of 19-23 years.

Instrument

Student Academic Stress Scale (SASS) (A. O. Busari): The SASS was used within the current study for an exploratory factor analysis. It is a measure of stress response developed specifically for quantifying stress in university students in the stress response domains: Physiological, Behavioural, Cognitive, and Affective. Respondents rate how much of the time they experience symptoms on a 5-point Likert scale with the anchors None of the Time (1), A Little of the Time (2), Some of the Time (3), Most of the Time (4), and All of the Time (5). Items are summed for subscale scores and subscales are summed for a total SASS stress response score. Higher scores indicate a greater stress response. Items for the SASS were generated from a review of the general stress and academic stress literature. These 50 items became the SASS as used in the present study to measure student responses to academic stress. This analysis generally supported the hypothesised 4-factor structure of the SASS, with affective (factor1), behavioural (factor 2), physiological (factor 3), and cognitive (factor 4) stress evident.

General Self-efficacy: The GSE scale includes 10 items. It was originally developed in Germany over the course of two decades, and in the meantime has been adapted to 28 languages (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995). A typical item is, "Thanks to my resourcefulness, I can handle unforeseen situations." Possible responses are not at all true (1), hardly true (2), moderately true (3), and exactly true (4), yielding a total score between 10 and 40. Bilingual native speakers adapted the self-efficacy items to foreign languages based on the German and English versions of the GSE scale (Scholz, Gutiérrez-Doña, Sud, & Schwarzer, 2002). The adaptations followed the "group consensus model," including back translations and group discussions (Brislin, 1970).

Peer Pressure Scale (Singh & Saini, 2010): (Singh & Saini, 2010): The PPS is a 29-item self-report scale that assesses peer influences in everyday life situations. It is a 5-point Lickert scale with 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The scale consists of five subscales and high score on each subscale indicates higher peer pressure in that form.

Research Design

Correlational Research design and t-test were be used to analyse the data

Procedure

The data was collected in a single setting with the prior consent of the participants. Scoring shall be done as per the respective manner of each scale and data was analysed using SPSS.

Results and Discussion

The results as shown in table 1.1 indicates that academic stress was significantly negatively related with self-efficacy (r=0.-48, p<.01), and peer relations (r= -0.26, p<.01).). The findings indicate that students with high self-esteem are less likely to be stressed as compared to their counterpart. The results are in accordance with previous studies.

Table 1: Inter-correlations Matrix of academic stress, self-efficacy, and peer relations

Variables	Academic Stress	Self-efficacy	Peer Relations
Academic Stress	1.00	-0.48**	-0.26**
Self-efficacy	-	1.00	-0.34**
Peer relations	-	-	1.00

Lent and Brown (1984) examined the relationship between self-efficacy, academic achievement, and persistence in college students pursuing careers in science and engineering. Forty-two undergraduates (28 male and 14 female) enrolled in a 10week career/educational planning course designed for students interested in science and engineering occupations. Self-efficacy assessments were given to the students at the beginning and end of the 10-week course, with an additional follow-up assessment two months following the end of the course. Self-efficacy expectations measured the students' perceived ability to complete educational requirements and occupational duties associated with careers in science, engineering, and technology. Level of self-efficacy was assessed by asking participants whether they believed they could complete job expectations and educational requirements in 15 different science and engineering fields. Strength of self-efficacy was assessed by the participants' confidence in their ability to complete the above mentioned tasks. Additional data was collected from university records, including Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) scores, high school ranks, college grades, and declared major following participation in the study/course. Results indicated that individuals reporting high-strength self-efficacy persisted longer and achieved higher grades than those with relatively lower ratings. Similar results were observed for those reporting high verses low ratings on level of self-efficacy. Of particular interest, all students reporting high-level and high-strength self-efficacy were enrolled in the technical college for all four years following the initial assessments. However, only 58% of low-level and 50% of low-strength groups persisted in the science and engineering fields. Additionally, measures of academic ability were moderately and positively correlated with self-efficacy scores.

Choudhury et al. (1997) carried a study on "academic achievement of the peer accepted and peer rejected children" on a sample of 136 children of 4th, 5th and 6th grades. Data were obtained using group socio-metric method and school records. Results of the study indicated that peer accepted children were found to be academically competent than peer rejected children.

Chetana et al. (1997) carried a study on "academic achievement of sociometrically high and low status children" on a sample of 200 school children in the age group of 10-13 years. Data were obtained using peer nomination socio-metric test (Coir et al., 1982) and school examination records. Results of the study indicated that popular group children had higher academic achievement than the rejected group as revealed in the school examination of the academic year 1993-94.

Peer groups are constantly evolving and many factors play a role in how peer groups function. Ide et al. (1981) conducted a meta-analysis of studies published from 1966 to 1978 which examined similarity of best friends and students lists of close friends in the academic realm. Across the ten studies reviewed, friends were similar in regards to academic achievement. An individual and his or her friend's grades and test scores were moderately correlated. In addition, friends were similar regarding college aspirations. Landau (2002) supported this conclusion by stating that students who care about learning are more likely to associate with peers who share this interest in academics than those who have less interest in learning.

Conclusion

Thus, it is concluded that all the results are in hypothesized direction and are in accordance with the previous studies. In some case, no significant difference was found; this might be due to the cultural factors and socio-economic status. The findings have important implications in understanding underlying causal factors of increasing academic stress among students, which leads to suicidal ideation and attempts among teenagers. On the basis of the current findings, parents, teachers and policy makers can decrease the academic stress among their children.

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