ACADEMIC STRESS AND COPING STRATEGIES AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

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Abstract: In present study researcher examined Academic stress and coping strategies (approach and avoidance) among first year and second year undergraduate students. Sample of the study consisted of 200 students (100 first year, 100 second year). Their age range between 17-21 year. The tools have been used for data collection are academic stress scale (Rao, 2013) and coping response inventory (Moss, 1993). Mann Whitney U test has been used to see the difference in the academic stress and coping strategies on first and second year students. Results indicate that there is significant difference in academic stress and approach coping among first year and second year students. It has been further seen that there is no significant difference in score of avoidance coping of first year and second year students.

Keywords: Academic stress, coping strategies

INTRODUCTION

Academic stress is the anxiety and stress that come from schooling and education. It comes mainly from with pursuing a degree and one's education i.e. studying, homework test, labs, reading and quizzes. Researchers have identified stressors as too many assignments, competitions with other students, failures and poor relationships with other students or lectures (Fairbrother & Warn, 2003). 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). McKean et. al., (2000) argue that undergraduate students experience higher stress at predictable times each semester because of the academic commitments, financial pressures and lack of time management skills. This can affect health, emotional state and academic performance, once stress has become perceived negatively or has become excessive, it is important that undergraduate students develop effective strategies in order to manage stressful situations.

As it is true that individual can remain in a continuous state of tension. Some strategy is always adopted by a person undergoing stress to deal with stress, these strategy are called as 'coping strategies'. Coping strategies to the specific efforts, both behavioural and psychological that people employ to master, tolerate, reduce or minimize stressful events. Two general coping strategies have been distinguished: Problem solving strategies are efforts to do something active to alleviate stressful circumstances whereas emotion – focused coping strategies involve efforts to regulate the emotional consequences of stressful event.

A value-based education seeks to promote an educational philosophy based on valuing self and others, through the consideration of a values vocabulary (principles that guide behavior) as the basis of good educational practice. Education is the vehicle of knowledge, self-preservation and success, a platform to succeed, but also the knowledge of social conduct, strength, character and self-respect. The greatest gift education gives is the knowledge of unconditional love and a set of values. These values include the simple difference between right and wrong, a belief in God, the importance of hard-work and self-respect. Value-

based education is a great success and is one of the fastest growing approaches in the world, endorsed by teachers, school leaders and governments. This is because it is based on the soundest principles of pedagogy, educational philosophy, brain research and common sense. It helps pupils to develop holistically, nurturing a sense of self, respect or self and others and supports the raining of academic standards. In the present study, researcher administered measure of academic stress and coping strategies to DEI students in the interests of exploring the difference in their coping strategies and the academic stress between first year and second year undergraduate students.

METHOD

Aim of the study

To compare the level of academic stress and coping strategies among first year and second year undergraduate students

Objectives

- To compare the level of academic stress among first year and second year undergraduate students.
- To compare the level of approach coping strategies among first year and second year undergraduate students.
- To compare the level of avoidance coping strategies among first year and second year undergraduate students.

Hypothesis

- There would be significant difference in the level of academic stress among first year and second year undergraduate students.
- There would be significant difference in approach coping strategies among first year and second year undergraduate students.
- There would be significant difference in avoidance coping strategies among first year and second year undergraduate students.

Sample

A sample of 200 female (100 first year & 100 second year) undergraduate students selected from Agra (D.E.I.)

Variables

- **Independent Variable** : Value Based Education
- **Dependent Variable** : Academic Stress
              Approach coping
              Avoidance coping
- **Control Variable:** Age :17-20
              Sex : Female

Tools:

- Academic Stress Scale:- Academic Stress scale developed by Rao (2013). This scale consists of 40 items and describes the various form of level of stresses in students and college life and measures academic problems.
- Coping Response Inventory:- The 48 items coping response inventory – youth developed by Moos (1953) measures coping strategies used by adolescents in response to stressful life circumstances. The first four of these subscales determine approach coping (Logical Analysis, Positive Reappraisal, Seeking Guidance & Support and Problem Solving) and the second set of four subscales measures avoidance coping (Cognitive Avoidance, Acceptance or Resignation, Seeking Alternative Rewards and Emotional Discharge).

Design:

To study the academic stress and coping strategies among undergraduate students double group design was used.

Result:

The present study aimed to see the difference in academic stress and coping strategies (approach and avoidance) of first year and second year undergraduate students. Man –Whitney U test was used to test the hypotheses.

Table- 1.1: Mean, SD & Zu value for Academic Stress

GROUPS	N	MEAN	SD	Zu	LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE
UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS (1st Year)	100	121.09	51.00		
				5.13	p<0.01
UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS (2nd Year)	**100**	99.66	20.367		

Figure- 1.1: Mean score of Academic Stress
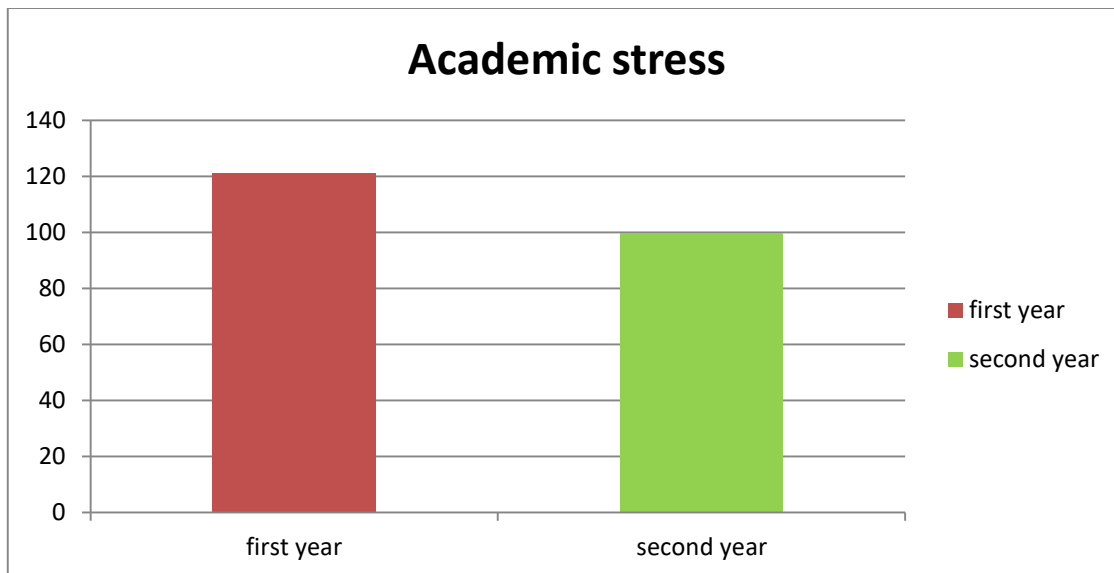
Table 1.1 shows the mean, S.D. Zu value of academic stress of first year and second year undergraduate students. The **fig.1.1** also shows the mean score of academic stress of first year and second year students. The obtained Zu value is 5.13 which is significant at 0.01 level.

Table -1.2: Mean, SD & Zu value for Approach Coping

GROUPS	N	MEAN	SD	Zu	LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE
UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS (1st Year)	100	15.1	2.993		
				2.80	p<0.05
UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS (2nd Year)	100	16.62	3.129		

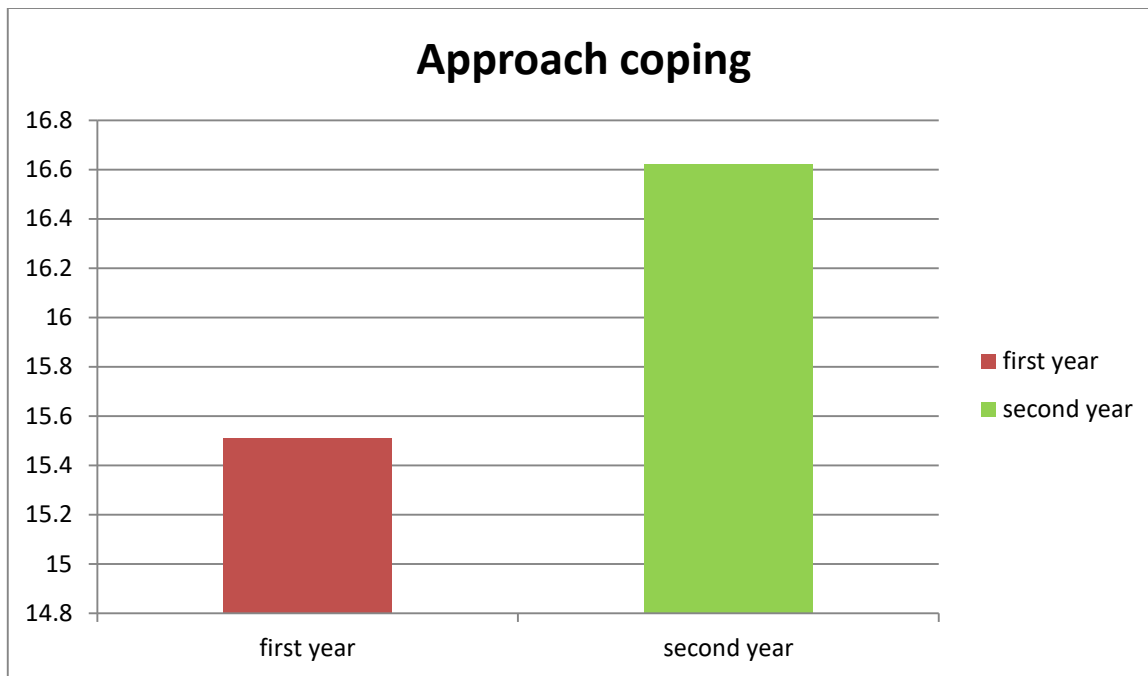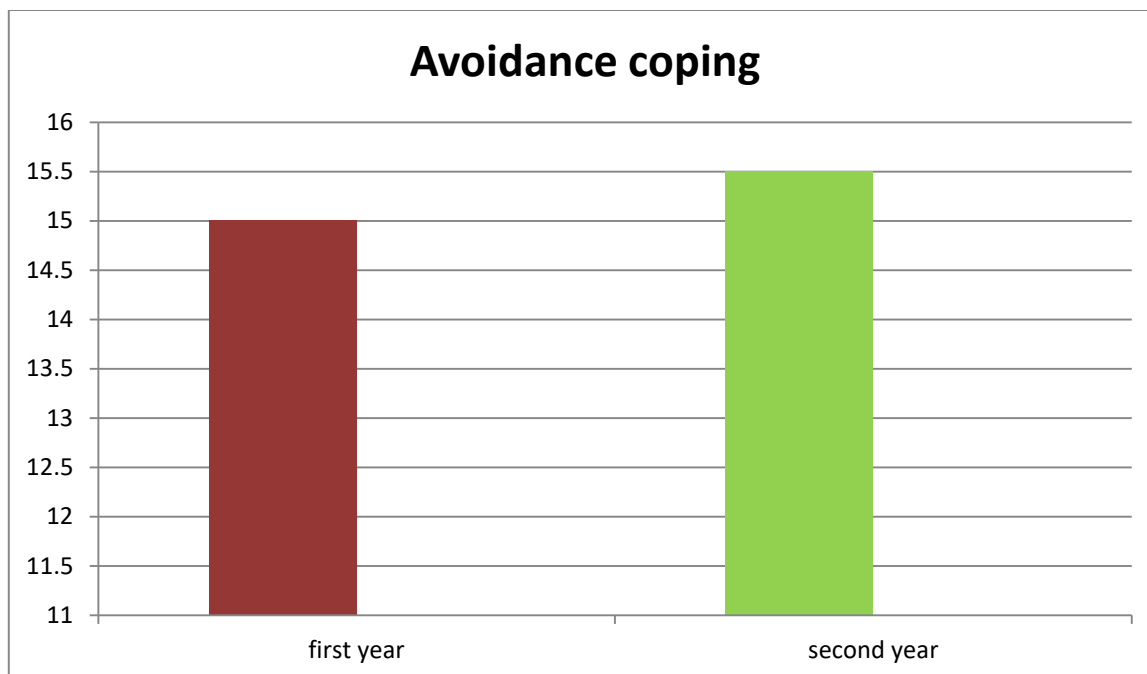**Figure -1.2: Mean score of Approach Coping**

Table 1.2 shows the mean, S.D. Zu value of approach coping of first year and second year undergraduate students. The **fig.1.2** also shows the mean score of approach coping of first year and second year students. The obtained Zu value is 2.80 which is significant at 0.05 level.

Table -1.3: Mean, SD & Zu value for Avoidance Coping

GROUPS	N	MEAN	SD	Zu	LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE
UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS (1st Year)	100	15.01	3.577		
				1.640	p>0.05
UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS (2nd Year)	**100**	16.50	3.614		

Figure -1.3: Mean score of approach coping

Table 1.3 shows the mean, S.D. Zu value of avoidance coping of first year and second year undergraduate students. The **fig.1.3** also shows the mean score of approach coping of first year and second year students. The obtained Zu value is 1.604 which is not significant at 0.05 level.

Findings

- There is significant difference between academic stress of first year and second year students. The result revealed that first year students have high level of academic stress as comparison to the second year students.
- There is significant difference between approach coping of first year and second year students. The results revealed that second year students have approach coping as compare to the first year students.
- There is no significant difference between avoidance coping of first year and second year students.

Discussion:

1. **Academic stress**

 The result of the present study leads to the acceptance of hypothesis that there is   significant difference between academic stress of first year and second year students. It was found in the study that first year students have high level of academic stress as comparison to the second year students. **Zeidner (1987)** reported that the first year undergraduate students were reporting higher levels of academic stress, due to major live changes and various types of academic and non-academic conflicts related to adaptation, and the lack of a strong social support networks. At the same time, the second year students reported low levels of stress, due to adaptation to new responsibilities, and changes, and getting access to academic social support network.

2. **Coping Strategies**

The result of the present study leads to the acceptance of hypothesis that there is significant difference between approach coping of first year and second year students. It shows that the high

approach coping in second year students in comparison to first year students. This finding is supported by the study done by **Kuncharin et al., (2014).** The study is related to the effectiveness of coping strategies among undergraduate students in Thailand. The result showed that 86% of the respondents agreed that social support coping strategy helped them to cope up with academic performance, 84.5% agreed that Avoidance Coping Strategy was useful, while 83.5% gave positive responses to Approach Coping Strategy value based education have a positive effect on their coping strategies. Value based education have a positive effect on their coping strategies.

Conclusion

Thus on the basis of above findings and discussions it can be concluded that there is significant difference in academic stress of first year and second year students and the result revealed that second year undergraduate students have high approach coping as compared to first year undergraduate students.

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