

# ACADEMIC STRESS AND ADJUSTMENT STYLE AMONG HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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## Abstract

In the contemporary Intermediate academic climate, in the wake of mad rush for professional courses, parents, teachers, management and the vital component student community are facing a lot of problems. Therefore, the situation warrants empirical investigations to help all concerned to cope effectively with situation for better academic adjustment. But if student is let alone by the end of first year he would have achieved satisfaction and adjust to the natural course of events, provided if he has given adequate training and planning for realistic goals in life. Unfortunately, the situation is different in reality. Therefore, students' academic failures often result in failure to adjust themselves to the academic situations adequately. The main purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between academic stress and adjustment styles among higher secondary school students of Kannur District. The investigator adopted Normative Survey Method for the present study. Entire higher secondary school students studying under Kerala Board of Higher Secondary Education in Kannur are considered as population. The survey sample included 150 higher secondary school students coming under 10 higher secondary school of Kannur district. In the present study, two variables are taken into account. Adjustment Style is considered as the independent variable and Academic Stress as the dependent variable. Gender, Locale, Type of management of the school and subject background are the criterion variables used for the study. Academic Stress Scale (Rajendran and Kaliappan, 1990) and Adjustment Styles Inventory (Kumar (1988), Reddy '(1990) and Srinivas (1999)) were the standardised tools adopted for data collection. The analysis of the data was done with the help of appropriate statistical techniques.

Key Word: Academic stress, Adjustment Style, Higher Secondary School Students.

## Introduction

In a world, based on Science and Technology, it is education that determines the level of prosperity, welfare and security of the people. The entire social scenario of the whole world is turned into a global village but the social attitudes, value patterns, conduct and behavior of the people have been radically changed in the inverse direction. Today, we live in a money worshipping society which is full of competition with values of consumerism, individualism, materialism, hedonism, sadism and masochism have significantly increased and sensitivity towards others' suffering has considerably decreased. All these have created anxiety, frustration, stress and

tensions. Children and adolescents today face a plethora of stressful problems, including family and relationship conflict, death of close family members or friends, and academic and social pressures. Such problems have been found to contribute to an increased risk of various emotional-social-cognitive difficulties in adolescence. These include academic failure, social misbehavior, interpersonal problems, and depression.

Psychological stress is one of the most insidious phenomena of our time and it affects in all walks of life. Stress implies pressure, tension of worrying resulting in problems in life. Some amount of moderate stress is necessary and is always with us. The intensity of stress varies from person to person or in the same person depending on the situation. Stress acquires importance because of its damaging consequences. Thus, though stress causes both positive and negative effects, excessive stress produces not only psychological disturbances but also several harmful effects on the bio-system. Academic stress demands an effective adjustment not only on the part of students but also on the part of teachers and parents especially in the modern ever changing competitive world.

Education is a conscious purpose to train the responsibilities of adult life. Since the children have to enter a complicated society when they grow adults; education gives them training for adult life. It develops in them; thinking and reasoning power to fit them to rise to the occasion, when they are forced with the pressing problems of home, community and world. An individual needs training to use his own reason so that thereby he may learn to live orderly life or moral life. In short, education is the training of the intellect, body and spirit; it is training in co-operation, love and sympathy. It is training in correct responses to environmental conditions.

### **Significance/ Rationale of the study**

The aim of higher secondary education is to prepare the aspirants of higher studies and job seekers at the same time to pursue their goals in the way they wish. In the context of globalization, Kerala is facing serious issues in the Field of education arising from privatization of education, mushrooming of self-finance institutions and craze for mark-oriented courses. Globalization has also exerted its influence on environment, health and resource management. Likewise, a range of issues emanating from de humanization of society, religious intolerance, indifference towards democratic process, increasing inequalities; growing violence, mark oriented approach, disintegrating family ties, deteriorating gender relationship, accumulated wealth, craze for drugs among youths and a tendency to commercialize and communalize education and culture pose serious threats to democracy.

Continued stress on students affects their economic, social, physical and psychological status. The students should be trained to manage the stress. When students perform under stress, they tend to ignore their attitude and health, with the result they become a source of nuisance to others in the school. Students who are unable to get help or manage their stress ultimately commit suicide causing a permanent agony to both the parents and society. Therefore, it is necessary to undertake an in-depth research among the school children so as to design suitable methods to protect the children from the stressful life. Further a number of changes are made in the curriculum, text books used, and pedagogy at different points of time and so a periodical study of stress among students

would go a long way to evolve a system which brings down the 'stress and also helps the students to enjoy their life at school.

At this juncture, identification of the chief sources of academic stress and adjustment styles of the students assume enormous importance. Students have different personal characteristics. In addition to these, many studies have emphasized the inverse relation between academic stress and mental health and academic success. Hence, it has been felt that a study of academic stress and adjustment styles among a sample of higher secondary school students would be worthwhile to ensure an education of high quality to our young generation.

Hence, the present study is aimed to identify the various academic stress areas that are causing and different adjustment styles to cope with these problems of stress by the higher secondary school students of Kannur District. The other purpose of this study is to find out the effects of gender of the students, subjects studied and types of school management on the academic stress and the adjustment styles of the higher secondary school students.

### **Studies related to Academic stress and Adjustment style**

Aafreen, et.al. (2018). The objective of their study was to assess the stress among students of various professional colleges and its association with various academic, social, and health-related factors. A sample of 80 students were asked to answer a survey prepared in online. The results were presented graphically, inferentially, and descriptively. Students studying in science stream had stress more compared to students studying in other streams. It affects them mentally, physically, and emotionally. Students face anxiety and go in to depression which later leads to decreased performance in academics. Stress is the body's reaction to a challenge. This research can help us in finding the reason and the causes of stress thus helping the students in finding a solution to their problems and help them enjoy their schooling stress-free and tension-free.

Essel and Owusu (2017). They examined the impact of stress on students' academic performance and stress management among students of Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences. A quantitative method was used in gathering and analyzing the data. For this purpose, questionnaires were distributed to two students' groups, who consisted of Finnish and international students. The results showed the different factors that cause stress among students. The factors were grouped into four, namely Relationship factors, Environmental factors, Academic factors, and Personal factors.

### **Statement of the problem**

Academic Stress And Adjustment Style Among Higher Secondary School Students.

### **Objectives of the study**

1. To find out the relationship between academic stress and adjustment styles for the total sample

and the sub samples based on Gender and Locality.

2. To compare the mean scores of boys-girls and rural-urban students for the variables academic stress and adjustment style.

### **Hypotheses of the Study**

- There will be significant correlation between academic stress and adjustment style for the total sample and the sub samples based on Gender and Locality.
- There will be a significant difference in mean scores between boys- girls and rural-urban students for the variables academic stress and adjustment style.

### **Method adopted**

The present study is an attempt to investigate the Academic Stress and Adjustment Styles of higher secondary school students of Higher Secondary School Students. The investigator adopted Normative Survey Method for the present study.

### **Variables of the study**

In the present study, two variables are taken into account. One is Academic Stress and the other is Adjustment Styles. Adjustment Styles is considered as the independent variable and Academic Stress as the dependent variable. Gender, Locale, Type of management of the school and subject background are the criterion variables used for the study.

### **Tools used for the study**

Academic Stress Scale (Rajendran and Kaliappan, 1990)

Adjustment Style Scale ((Kumar, 1988, Reddy, 1994, Srinivas, 1999)

### **Sample selected for the study**

The sampling technique employed in drawing the sample was stratified random sampling to assure accurate representation. The sample for the study comprised of 150 higher secondary school students studying in the 12<sup>th</sup> standard schools of Kannur district in Kerala.

### **Statistical Techniques used for the study**

Measures of central tendency, measures of dispersion, Product moment correlation and T-test.

### **Result and Discussions**

The data for present study were collected using the tools, Academic Stress Scale and Adjustments Style Scale.

The data thus obtained was analysed so as to find out answers to the specific objectives taken up for the study. The details of the analysis are presented below under the following Sections.

## 1. Relationship between Adjustment style and Academic Stress among higher secondary school students

In order to investigate relationship of the independent variable adjustment style, with the dependent variable academic stress based on gender, locality, type of school management and subject background, product moment co-efficient of correlation( $r$ ) was computed and tested for significance.

### 1.1 Relationship between Adjustment style and Academic Stress among higher secondary school students for total sample.

**Table 1: Data and result of Correlation of adjustment style with the total academic stress**

Variable	Correlation Coefficient( $r$ )	CR	Level of Significance
Adjustment Styles and academic stress	0.38	5.16	0.01 level

The calculated correlation coefficient is 0.38, denotes low correlation present, but of slight. The calculated critical ratio, 5.16 is greater than the table value 2.58 at 0.01 level of significance. It is thus, implies that the obtained correlation is significant. This reveals that there is a significant slight positive correlation between adjustment style and academic stress among the higher secondary school students.

### 1.2 Relationship between Adjustment style and Academic Stress among higher secondary school students based on gender

**Table 2: Data and result of Correlation of adjustment style with the academic stress based on gender**

Gender	Correlation Coefficient( $r$ )	CR	Level of Significance
Boys	0.05	1.9	0.05 level
Girls	0.41	3.40	0.05level

The calculated correlation coefficient for boys is 0.05 denotes indifferent or negligible relationship. The calculated critical ratio, 1.9 is less than the table value 1.960 at 0.05 level of significance for boys. It is thus, implies that the obtained correlation is not significant. Also, the calculated correlation coefficient for girls is 0.41 denotes low correlation present, but of slight. The calculated critical ratio, 3.40 is greater than the table value for girls' sample. This implies that obtained correlation is significant. This reveals that there is a significant slight positive correlation between adjustment style and academic stress of the girls' higher secondary school students. But there is no significant correlation between adjustment style and academic stress of the boys' higher secondary school students.

### 1.3 Relationship between Adjustment style and Academic Stress among higher secondary school students based on locality.

**Table 3 Data and result of Correlation of adjustment style with the academic stress based on locality**

Locality	Correlation Coefficient(r)	CR	Level of Significance
Urban	0.51	2.69	0.05 level
Rural	0.60	3.72	0.05 level

The calculated correlation coefficient for urban sample is 0.51 denotes low correlation present, but of slight. The calculated correlation coefficient for rural sample is 0.60 denotes substantial or marked relationship. The calculated critical ratios are 2.69 for urban sample and 3.72 for rural sample, greater than the table value 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. It is thus, implies that the obtained correlation is significant. This reveals that there is a significant slight positive correlation between adjustment style and level of academic stress among the urban higher secondary school students. There is a significant marked positive correlation between adjustment style and level of academic stress among the rural higher secondary school students.

### 2 Comparison of mean scores of Academic Stress among higher secondary school students

Comparison of mean scores of Academic Stress among higher secondary school students can be calculated by testing the significance of mean difference for two groups. In the present study comparison of Academic Stress based on Gender and Locality are analysed.

## 2.1 Comparison of mean scores of Academic Stress among higher secondary school students based on Gender

Comparison of mean scores of academic stress of the boys and girls higher secondary school students can be calculated by testing the significance of mean difference for two groups. The result is shown in Table 4.

**Table 4: Data and result of test of significance in mean scores of Academic Stress among higher econdary school students based on Gender.**

Gender	N	M	SD	CR	Level of significance
Boys	75	68.31	11	0.488	0.05
Girls	75	70.03	8.34		

The table4 shows that the calculated value of critical ratio is less than the table value, 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. So, it can be inferred that there is no significant difference in mean score of academic stress of the higher secondary school students based on Gender.

## 2.2 Comparison of mean scores of Academic Stress among higher secondary school students based on Locality.

Comparison of mean scores of academic stress of the rural and urban areas of the higher secondary school students can be calculated by testing the significance of mean difference for two groups. The result is shown in Table

**Table 5 Data and result of test of significance in mean scores of Academic Stress of higher secondary school students based on Locality**

Locality	N	M	SD	CR	Level of significance
Rural	75	68.32	9.79	2.73	0.05
Urban	75	70.75	9		

The table 5 shows that the calculated value of critical ratio is greater than the table value at 0.05 level of significance. So, it can be inferred that there is a significant difference in academic stress between rural and urban students.

### 3 Comparison of mean scores of Adjustment Style among higher secondary school students.

Comparison of mean scores of Adjustment Style among higher secondary school students can be calculated by testing the significance of mean difference for two groups. In the present study comparison of Adjustment Style based on Gender, Locality, subject background and type of school management are analysed.

#### 3.1 Comparison of mean score of adjustment style among higher secondary school students based on Gender.

comparison of mean score of adjustment style between boys and girls can be calculated by testing the significance of mean difference for two groups.

The result is shown in table 6.

**Table 6: Data and result of test of significance in mean scores of Adjustment Style among higher secondary school students based on Gender.**

Gender	N	M	SD	CR	Level of significance
Boys	75	47.11	7.9	0.6	0.05
Girls	75	47.52	7.21		

The table 6 shows that the calculated value of critical ratio is less than table value at 0.05 level of significance. So, it can be inferred that there is no significant difference in Adjustment Style between boys and girls.

#### 3.2 Comparison of mean scores of Adjustment Style among higher secondary school students based on Locality

Comparison of mean score of adjustment style between the students from rural and urban area can be calculated by testing the significance of mean difference for two groups. The result is shown in Table 7.



**Table 7: Data and result of test of significance in mean scores of Adjustment Style among Higher secondary school students based on Locality.**

Locality	N	M	SD	CR	Level of significance
Rural	75	45.42	7.14	2.51	0.05
Urban	75	47.04	6.47		

The table 7 shows that the calculated value of critical ratio is greater than table value at 0.05 level of significance. So, it can be inferred that there is a significance difference in Adjustment Style between the students from rural and urban areas.

From the analysis it is clear that there is a significant positive correlation between adjustment style and academic stress among the higher secondary school students. And also there exists a significant difference in Academic stress and Adjustment style based on locality but in the case of gender there exist no significant difference.

### **Major Findings**

#### **Findings based on relationship between Adjustment style and Academic Stress among higher secondary school students**

There is a significant slight positive correlation between adjustment style and academic stress among the total higher secondary school students. There is a significant slight positive correlation between adjustment style and academic stress of the girls' higher secondary school students. But there is no significant correlation between adjustment style and academic stress of the boys' higher secondary school students.

There is a significant slight positive correlation between adjustment style and level of academic stress among the urban higher secondary school students. There is a significant marked positive significant marked positive correlation between adjustment style and level of academic stress among the rural higher secondary school students.

#### **Findings based on Comparison of mean scores of Academic Stress among higher secondary school students.**

There is no significant difference in mean scores of academic stress of the higher secondary school students based on Gender.

There is a significant difference in academic stress between rural and urban students.

### **Findings based on Comparison of mean scores of Adjustment Style among higher secondary school students.**

There is no significant difference in Adjustment Style between boys and girls.

There is a significance difference in Adjustment Style between the students from rural and urban areas.

### **Educational implications**

There is a gainsaying that the destiny of the Nation is shaped in the four walls of the classrooms, because it is in the classrooms that the future citizens acquire the required knowledge and skills to lead a useful and fruitful life and contribute their might to the welfare of the Nation. It is there that their personality characteristics and their value system are shaped. The pivot in this process is the adjustment problems that occur simultaneously along with their education. Therefore, the adjustment problems become a decisive role in estimating the character of the student. The adolescence period made the students with stress and strain, which leads them to frustration, and becomes less adjustable to the present situations. The academic stress and adjustment styles are important for the higher secondary school students not only to their education but also for lifelong education. They are the future promises in the developed society. Hence, it is essential to include the special methods to recognize the problems of the higher secondary school students at various levels and lower their burden on them. The percentage of high academic stress and the low level of adjustment in all the areas are almost same for boys and girls. Care may be taken to find the areas of stress and adjustment and make them adjust better suitable with the situations.

### **Conclusion**

While admitting the limitations the investigator hopes that the findings will be of great help in extending knowledge in the present era. It is found that Academic Stress and Adjustment Styles are significantly correlated in many cases. So, care must be given to reduce Academic Stress and to provide adequate guidance to develop adjustment styles in student life. To conclude, it is essential to identify the styles of learning and thinking of children in order to facilitate the process of learning and teaching. Knowledge of the child's information processing styles would enhance teaching and make the exercise fruitful

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