



# ACADEMIC STRESS IN RELATION TO RESILIENCE AMONG VISUALLY IMPAIRED SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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## **Abstract**

*Academic stress permeates the life of students and tends to impact adversely on their mental and physical health. To perform well in academics, visually impaired students face an enormous amount of pressure from their families and schools. The thing that can release the pressure and foster easily within the school environment is resilience. It is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress. The present study examined academic stress in relation to resilience among visually impaired secondary school students. The purpose of the study was to study the academic stress and resilience among visually impaired secondary school students, to investigate the relationship between academic stress and resilience among visually impaired secondary school students and to study the difference in academic stress and resilience between male and female visually impaired secondary school students. A total of 120 secondary school students from Union territory Chandigarh, Panipat District of Haryana and Dehradun of Uttarakhand were selected randomly. Scale of Academic Stress (SAS) originally developed and standardized by Kim (1970) and adopted to Indian conditions by Rajendran & Kaliappan (1990) and Rao (2012) and Resilience Assessment Scale (RAS) developed and standardized by Kukreja (2014) were used for the collection of the data. The data were analysed using both descriptive (Mean, Frequency and Percentage) and parametric (Product moment coefficient of correlation 'r' and t-test) statistics. It was found that 70.00% and 15.83% of students were having an average and high level of academic stress respectively and 72.50% and 11.67% students were having an average and high level of resilience respectively. Results indicated that a negative and significant relationship was found between academic stress and resilience among visually impaired students. Further results revealed that a significant difference was found in academic stress between male and female visually impaired students and no significant difference was found in resilience between male and female visually impaired students.*

**Key-words:** - *Academic Stress, Resilience and Visually Impaired Students*

## INTRODUCTION

Students in India are highly competitive and focused on gaining educational excellence. They are under a great deal of pressure from their families and institutions to do well in schools. They must learn and gain the required knowledge and abilities to reduced their pressure. Students who perform well in the class have a good self-evaluation of their academic status and a sense of control over their academic success and failure. These students have a high level of resilience and thrive academically in the face of adversity.

Academic stress is becoming increasingly common and widespread among adolescents. According to a study, students have reported issues related to school like heavy academic workloads and pressure for success as one of the major sources of pressure (Feld, 2011). Studies indicate that from the various types of stress a student faces, academic stress leads to major mental health problems (Rangaswamy, 1995). Common problems faced by students suffering from academic stress are weak performance, depression, sleep disorder, somatic complaints and lack of concentration which are due to without knowing how to deal with them (Sinha, 2000). Stress is a physiological and psychological imbalance. Academic stress pervades the life of students and tends to impact adversely their mental and physical health.

Resilience is a successful outcome of healthy adaptations during stressful life events (Rutter, 1990). Resilience is often viewed in the psychological context in so much as it refers to the cognitive capacity to avoid psychopathology despite difficulties (Tugade, Fredrickson, & Barrett, 2004). It is a psychological phenomenon as it is a perception of inner strength that allows for the physical manifestation of that strength, i.e., the quick recovery from disruptions in functioning and return to the previous level of functioning (Carver, 1998; Steinhardt & Dolbier, 2008). Individuals who are highly resilient exhibit adaptive coping skills and often convert stressors into opportunities for learning and development. Therefore, a student's level of resilience and the manifestations of that resilience are related to effective adaptive resources to academic stress.

Researchers have viewed resilience as a protective buffer that protects individuals against adversity (Jackson, Firtko & Edenborough, 2007). Several decades of research documented that secondary school students experience academic problems that manifest themselves in the form of poor academic performance (Ajayi, 1999; Akinboye, 1980; Aremu, 2000; Fasanmi, 1986; Kagu, 2000; Salami, 2002). Adolescence involves several developmental tasks and challenges. To deal with the demands that confront them, adolescents draw on their resilience.

Although several studies have been conducted on academic stress as an independent dimension, there are still many aspects of these that need and deserve more intensive and extensive studies to bring out the relevance and worth of studying academic stress in recent times. With these, the investigator has selected another significant variable, namely, resilience for the present study because the survey of the literature reveals a smaller number of researches carried out in this area. Keeping in view the above certain facts and review of studies, the investigator has tried to carry out more intensive research to explore the relationship between academic stress and resilience.

Review of related literature reveals that academic stress is affected by different variables in general and resilience in particular with them are visible in different studies conducted abroad. Although scanty numbers of researches have been conducted on both the variables separately, literature review reveals that researchers are yet to explore the variable in relation to each other. Thus, further investigation into relationship between academic stress and resilience is warranted.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Academic stress in relation to resilience among visually impaired secondary school students

### **Operational Definitions of the Key Terms Used**

#### **Academic Stress**

In the present study, academic stress refers to the scores obtained by the students through Students' Academic Stress Scale (SASS), originally developed by Kim (1970) and adapted by Rajendran and Kaliappan (1990) and Rao (2012).

#### **Resilience**

In the present study resilience is defined as achieving or maintaining positive developmental outcomes in the face of adversity or stress. It was assessed through Resilience Assessment Scale developed and standardized by Kukreja (2014)

**Visually Impaired Students:** Visually Impaired students are those who have significant loss of or defects in vision due to impairment in one or both eyes. There are two types of visual impairment- partially sighted/low vision and blind.

#### **Secondary School Students**

Secondary school students are those who are studying in Class IX<sup>th</sup> to XII<sup>th</sup> in different secondary school.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To study the Academic Stress of Visually Impaired Secondary School Students.
2. To study the Resilience of Visually Impaired Secondary School Students.
3. To find out the relationship between Academic Stress and Resilience among Visually Impaired Secondary School Students.
4. To compare the Academic Stress between male and female Visually Impaired Secondary School Students.
5. To compare the Resilience between male and female Visually Impaired Secondary School Students

## **HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY**

1. There exists no significant relationship between Academic Stress and Resilience among Visually Impaired Secondary School Students.
2. There exists no significant difference in Academic Stress between male and female Visually Impaired Secondary School Students.
3. There exists no significant difference in Resilience between male and female Visually Impaired Secondary School Students.

## **MATERIAL AND METHOD**

In view of the nature of the study descriptive survey method was used.

The sample of the present study constituted 120 secondary school students from Union territory Chandigarh, Panipat District of Haryana and Dehradun of Uttarakhand. Schools were selected purposively and simple random sampling technique was used to select the sample.

### Scale of Academic Stress (SAS)

For measuring academic stress of students, 40 items composite scale was used. The scale was originally developed and standardized by Kim (1970). The scale was adopted to Indian conditions by Rajendran & Kaliappan (1990) and Rao (2012). The scale includes five components i.e., Personal Inadequacy, Fear of Failure, Interpersonal difficulties with teachers, Teacher-pupil relationship / Teaching methods, Inadequate study facilities. It is a five-point Likert-type scale in which option ranges from 'No Stress' to 'Extreme Stress'. Weightage of each response carries a score of '0', '1', '2', '3' and '4' respectively. Each factor has an equal number of items. The higher the value of the score, the more academic stress and vice-versa. It was determined to have a reliability of .82 drawn by test-retest method.

### Resilience Assessment Scale (RAS)

Resilience Assessment Scale (RAS) developed and standardized by Kukreja (2014) was used to measure the resilience of the students. The scale consists of 32 statements related to nine dimensions of resilience i.e., Self-concept, Personal Competencies, Adaptability, Organized, Problem solver, Interpersonal Competencies, Socially Connected, Active and Defense Mechanism. It was a five-point Likert-type rating scale with a weightage of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 for all the positive statements ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. The maximum and minimum overall Resilience Assessment Scale (RAS) score was 160 and 20 respectively. It was determined to have a reliability of .80 and .88 drawn by split-half and test-retest method respectively. To analyse the data, statistical techniques like Mean, Standard Deviation, Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation and t-test were applied.

## RESULTS

**Table-1**

*Categorization of Academic Stress of Visually Impaired Secondary School Students*

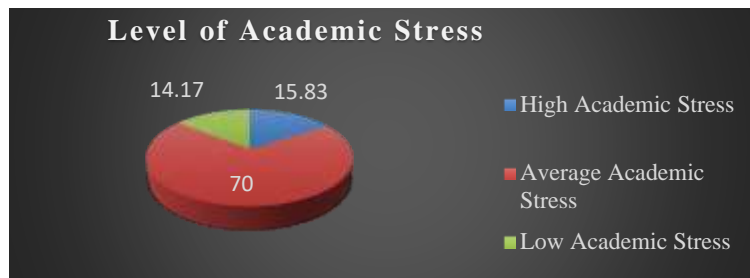
| Scores        | Number of Students | Classification          |
|---------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| 91 & Above    | 19 (15.83%)        | High Academic Stress    |
| From 38 to 90 | 84 (70.00%)        | Average Academic Stress |
| 37 & Below    | 17 (14.17%)        | Low Academic Stress     |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>120</b>         |                         |

It is observed from Table 1 that, out of 120 visually impaired secondary school students 17 i.e., 14.17% students have 'low academic stress' as they scored 37 & below. 84 i.e., 70.00% students have 'average academic stress', as they scored between 38 to 90 and 19 i.e., 15.83% students have 'high academic stress', because they scored 91 & above.



**Figure 1**

*Graphical presentation of Academic Stress of Visually Impaired Secondary School Students*



**Table 2**

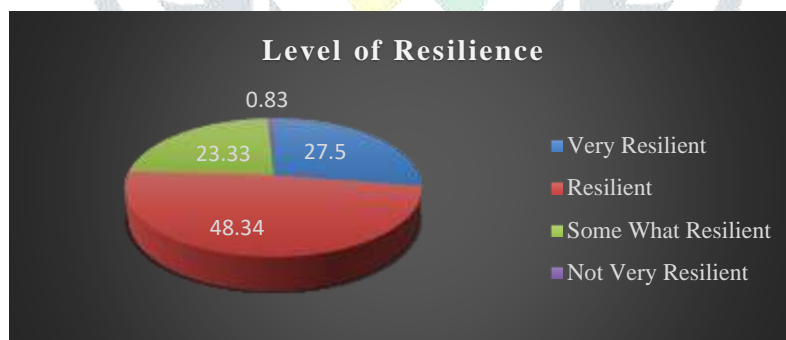
*Categorization of Resilience of Visually Impaired Secondary School Students*

| Scores          | Number of Students | Classification      |
|-----------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| From 141 to 160 | 33 (27.50%)        | Very Resilient      |
| From 116 to 140 | 58 (48.34%)        | Resilient           |
| From 61 to 115  | 28 (23.33%)        | Some What Resilient |
| From 32 to 60   | 01 (0.83%)         | Not Very Resilient  |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>120</b>         |                     |

It is observed from Table 2 that, out of 120 visually impaired secondary school students 01 i.e., 0.83% students have ‘not very resilient’, as they have scored in between 32 to 60. 28 i.e., 23.33% students have ‘somewhat resilient’, as they have scored in between 61 to 115. 58 i.e., 48.34 % students have ‘resilient’, as they scored between 116 to 140 and 33 i.e., 27.50 % students have ‘very resilient’, because they scored between 141 to 160.

**Figure 2**

*Graphical presentation of Resilience of Visually Impaired Secondary School Students*



**Table 3**

*Relationship between Academic Stress and Resilience scores of Visually Impaired Secondary School Students (N=120)*

| Variable        | Coefficient of correlation | Level of significance                     |
|-----------------|----------------------------|---|
| Academic Stress | -0.315                     | Significant at 0.01 level of Significance |
| Resilience      |                            |   |

Table 3 indicates a significant negative relationship between Academic Stress and Resilience of visually impaired secondary school students, which suggests, with the increase in Academic Stress scores, the Resilience scores of visually impaired secondary school students decreases to some extent and with the decrease in Academic Stress scores, the Resilience scores of visually impaired secondary school students increases to some extent. Thus, the earlier stated null hypothesis (Ho) i.e., there exists no significant relationship between Academic Stress and Resilience of visually impaired secondary school students was rejected.

**Table 4**

*Significance of difference between Academic Stress score of male and female Visually Impaired Secondary School Students*

| Variable        | Group  | N  | Mean  | S. D. | SEd. | t-value | Level of Significance                    |
|-----------------|--------|----|-------|-------|------|---------|--|
| Academic Stress | Male   | 68 | 73.91 | 25.95 | 4.43 | 4.93    | Significant at .01 level of Significance |
|                 | Female | 52 | 52.03 | 21.36 |      |         |  |

Table 4 shows significant difference between the mean scores of Academic Stress of male and female visually impaired secondary school students. Male students were found to be more academically stressed than their counterparts. Therefore, the result does not support null hypothesis (Ho) “there exists no significant difference in Academic Stress between male and female visually impaired secondary school students” and it stands rejected.

**Table 5**

*Significance of difference between Resilience score of male and female Visually Impaired Secondary School Students*

| Variable   | Group  | N  | Mean   | S. D. | SEd. | t-value | Level of Significance                        |
|------------|--------|----|--------|-------|------|---------|--|
| Resilience | Male   | 68 | 127.25 | 22.00 | 4.02 | 0.29    | Not significant at .05 level of Significance |
|            | Female | 52 | 126.07 | 21.59 |      |         |  |

Table 5 reveals no significant difference between the mean scores of Resilience of male and female visually impaired secondary school students. It means both the groups are equally resilient. Hence, earlier stated null hypothesis (Ho) “there exists no significant difference in Resilience between male and female visually impaired secondary school students” was retained.

## DISCUSSION

Consistent with recent research Marhamah and Hamzah (2016) and wilks (2008), the current sample of visually impaired secondary school students reported a moderate level of academic stress i.e., 70% students have average level of Academic stress. It was also supported by Prabhu (2015) and Kaushal, Koreti and Gaur (2018), they have also found out moderate level of academic stress among students. In this study it was found that 48.34% students have resilient, which supported the results of Banerjee et. al. (2018) and Manijeh (2016). In the study of Banerjee, et. al. (2018), 37.7% of the adolescent school children were resilient and the findings

of the study conducted by Manijeh et al. (2016) in Tehran where 46.6% participants were resilient. The finding revealed a negative and significant relationship between academic stress and resilience. This finding consistent with the results of other studies. Most of the study showed negative and significant relationship between resilience and academic stress (Wilks, 2008, Mathur & Sharma, 2015). Finding revealed significant difference in academic stress between male and female visually impaired secondary school students. Male students were found to be more academically stressed than their counterparts. This may be due to the fact that males were sensitive and sincere by nature and take everything very seriously whereas females are generally easy going. This finding is in line of the finding of (Dhull & Kumari, 2015) that a significant difference was found between male and female adolescents on academic stress but female students were found to be under more academic stress as compared to their male counterparts. This finding also similar with the finding of (Pathrose & Ramaa, 2020) who also revealed significant difference between girls and boys visually impaired students but the girls visually impaired students have higher level of academic stress than boys visually impaired. Further result revealed no significant difference in resilience between male and female visually impaired students, means both are equally resilient. This result was similar with the result of (Latif & Amirullah, 2020) who revealed that there was no significant difference in academic resilience between female and male students. Kim and Yoo (2010) also found that there was no difference in resilience in children with cancer in Seoul, Korea, based on gender. The results of this study are also consistent with research conducted by Martin and Marsh (2006) in Australia, which showed that boys and girls do not differ substantially in academic resilience. On the other hand, the result contradicts with the result of (Erdogana, Ozdoganb and Erdoganc, 2015) who depicted that male students showed significantly higher resilience level than did female students and results of a study by Lees (2009) indicated that the females in the study were more resilient than the males and had a slightly higher overall mean resilience score of 3.62 over the males who had an overall score of 3.44. The finding was also contradicting with the findings of (Ratoran & Phlainoi, 2014) who examined the process of resilience promotion for secondary school students in urban slums in Bangkok. An analysis of the results by gender found that females showed a significantly higher level of resilience than male and further contradicting to the findings of (Kyuper, 2014) who indicated that females tend to behave more resiliently than their male counterparts.

## CONCLUSION

This study contributes to a better understanding of the relationship between academic stress and resilience among visually impaired secondary school students. By examining the relationship between academic stress and resilience, the study helped to future research. The results warrant implementing academic stress reducing and resilience-enhancing programs in schools. The information gathered from this study should help to improve services provided by social workers, educators and psychologists who work with adolescents by providing insight into how resiliency may affect adolescent's success. The findings of the study had its implication for parents, students, policymakers, curriculum framers and so many.

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