



ACADEMIC STRESS AMONG NURSING STUDENTS

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Abstract : This study has been undertaken to investigate the level of academic stress among nursing students and to explore the factors contributing to Academic Stress. Analytical Cross-sectional design was used in the study. 110 nursing students were selected using census method. Data was collected using self administered questionnaire to assess the level of academic stress and factors contributing to academic stress among nursing students. The result showed that most of the nursing students had low level 57.3% of academic stress. There was no association with level of stress and selected demographic variables like age, course of study, education status of father, monthly family income, type of family and area of residence. The study concludes that most of the nursing students had low level academic stress. Hence the study recommends it is very important to arrange some relaxation techniques at the beginning of every semester where the students will be able to learn how to overcome the stress and perform well in the studies.

IndexTerms - Academic stress, Nursing students, Academic indicators

I. INTRODUCTION

“Education Prepares You for the Future. ...Be Patient and Take Small Steps”

Becoming a nurse is hard work; It can be overwhelming, challenging, and stressful. But it's these challenges that help to learn how to balance, prioritize, and problem-solve, so one can go on to provide high-quality health care to the community—and beyond. Nursing colleges are now recognized as a stressful environment. Nursing students are reported to have four times the stress of those in other academic specialties, as well as lower levels of life satisfaction and subjective happiness. Academic source of stress are examination, long hours of study assignments, grade, lack of free time, lack of timely feed -back after their performance, special elements of the academic program like arrangement and conduction of workshop. Clinical sources of stress are like taking care of ill patients, inter personal conflicts with peer group, insecurity about personal clinical competence, fear to complete clinical requirement, dealing with uncooperative patients, work load, prolonged standing, learning psycho motor skills e.g.-bed making, bed bath and vital signs monitoring have also being associated with high level of stress. The reaction of parents and friends to the results weigh upon the student to create exam stress, lack of interest to study and inability to follow the professor cause disinterest in attending classes. Nursing profession is a disciplined profession involved in the delivery of health to the society also it is a helping profession, service oriented to maintain health and well- being of people, an art and science. But the nursing profession comes with stress both mentally and physically because of its fast- paced and emotional nature.

Nursing is a dignified line of work and the students are posted in clinical areas to render services, it is essential to have healthy mind set to deal with sick patients. It was noticed that during theory class most of the students showed disinterest due to stress and was proved by their academic results. ²

Abhishek Singh, et al. used a descriptive cross-sectional study to analyze the perceived stress among 282 North Indian undergraduate nursing students in Haryana. The perceived stress scale was used to measure the stress level and was 28.67 (SD = 5.32), with a median of 26 (IQR = 22-34). The level of stress was more among female students (31.33) compared to male students (26.01). The second year students presented with greatest level of stress (29.66) while, third year students showed least stress score (26.28). This indicated the need for stress relieving measures in the nursing colleges [4].

Farias Mota, conducted a transversal and quantitative study on stress among nursing students with the aim of the study was to estimate the level of stress and symptomatology reported in nursing students. Sample size involving 151 nursing students selected from a draw based on the list of students enrolled. Result of the study was 49.7% of students showed symptoms of the stress, and most students were attending the 8th and 9th periods. Psychological symptoms were more present (50.7%). The conclusion of the study was the implementation of lightweight care technology tools, at low cost and high resolute power, such as providing information on stress, prevention and control, relaxation sessions, integrated community therapy, spaces for physical activity guided by trained

professionals [5]. There is strong evidence of an inverse relationship between stress and lack of professional knowledge among nursing students AkuZaheya et al.[6].

Based on the above findings related to level of academic stress in nursing students, the researcher felt that academic stress in nursing students have a common problem everywhere and it is most vital to guide them in proper way. The academic stress in nursing students may be due to many factors. Nursing students experience multiple stressors as they are expected to apply theoretical learning and develop critical thinking skills while in the professional environment. Perceived overwhelming negative stressors can lead to absenteeism, job dissatisfaction and a high employment turnover rate. Therefore, the researchers want to know the students perception of academic stress and how they cope with it on daily basis, as they are struggling to reduce the negative effects on their health, and their academic performance. In our opinion, it is very important for nursing students to learn how to manage academic stress, if it cannot be eliminated. At this point, it is essential to find the level of academic stress in nursing students and rectify the problems. Hence the researchers are motivated to assess the level of academic stress among nursing students.

3.1 Population and Sample

Analytical Cross-sectional design was used in the study. An analytical cross-sectional study is a type of quantitative, non-experimental research design. One hundred and ten (110) nursing students were selected using census method from IInd & IIIrd Year undergraduates. Nature and purpose of the study was explained and informed, consent obtained from the participants before collecting data. Data was collected using self administered questionnaire to assess the level of academic stress and factors contributing to academic stress among nursing students.

3.2 Data and Sources of Data

For this study primary data has been collected.

3.3 Theoretical framework

Variables of the study contains study variable and socio demographic variables. The study variable was Academic stress. The socio demographic variables were Age, year of study, gender, religion, occupation of the father and mother, area of residence, family income and type of family.

3.4 Statistical tools and econometric models

This section elaborates the proper statistical/econometric/financial models which are being used to forward the study from data towards inferences. The detail of methodology is given as follows.

3.4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statics has been used to find the maximum, minimum, standard deviation, mean and normally distribution of the data of all the socio demographic variables of the study.

3.4.2 Inferential Statistics

Spearman rank correlation coefficient test was used to find correlation of different stressors on Academic performance Mann Whitney test was used for comparison of stress and number of stress factors between selected categorical variables

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Results of Descriptive Statics of Study Variables

Table 4.1: Descriptive Statics

Table 1: Distribution of Nursing Students According to Socio Demographic Variables.

Sl. No	Variables	Frequency(f)	Percentage (%)
1	Age in Yrs		
	18-21	105	95
	22-25	3	3
	>25	2	2
2	Year of Study		
	II	57	52
	III	53	48
3	Gender		
	Male	21	19
	Female	89	81
4	Religion		
	Christian	37	33.6
	Hindu	71	64.6
	Muslim	2	1.8
5	Occupation of Father		
	Daily wages	20	18.2
	Business	37	33.6
	Government sector	15	13.6
	Private sector	33	30.0
6	Occupation of Mother		
	Daily wages	2	1.8

	Business	21	19.1
	Government sector	11	10.0
	Private sector	25	22.7
7	Family income (per month)		
	<10000	27	24.5
	10000-30000	65	59.1
	31000-50000	8	7.3
	>50000	10	9.1
8	Area of residence		
	Rural	40	36.4
	Urban	70	63.6
9	Type of family		
	Nuclear family	100	90.9
	Joint family	10	9.1

Table 4.1 shows that Most of the participants were females (81%) in the age group of 18-21 years (95%) from urban residence (63.6%) in nuclear family (90.9%). Most of their parents were either doing business (33.6%) or employee in private sector with a family income of Rs 10000 - 30,000/ month (59.1%). 33.6% of them had not paid their tuition fee. Most of them have one sibling atleast (75.5%) and they prefer to do self study (80.9%).

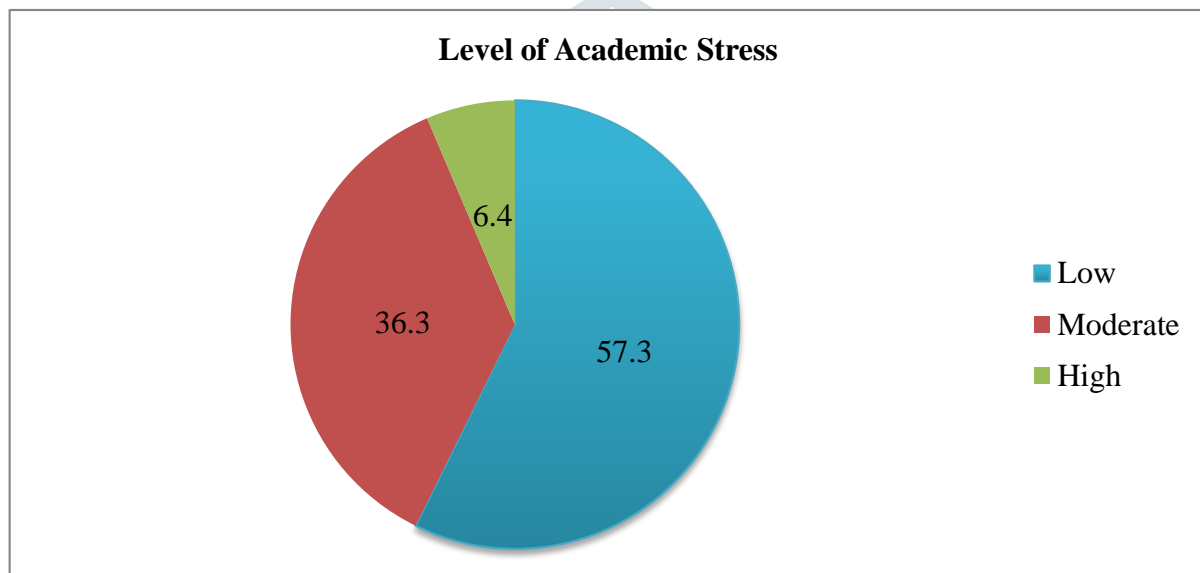


Figure 1: Level of Academic Stress among Nursing Students.

Fig.1 shows that Most of the participants (57.3%) had mild level of academic stress and 6.4% of them had high level of academic stress, 36.3% nursing students had moderate level of academic stress.

Table 2: Indicators of Academic Stress among Nursing Students

Sl. No	Factors	Mean	SD
1	Cognitive Indicators	19.78	2.223
2	Affective Indicators	6.7727	3.09678
3	Physical Indicators	6.1091	3.53578
4	Social Indicators	4.1727	2.55529
5	Motivational Indicators	3.9545	2.66608

Table 2 shows that the level of cognitive indicators is high ($x=19.78$, $SD=2.22$) compared to level of motivational indicators which is low ($x=3.95$, $SD=2.66$). Whereas the level of physical ($x=6.109$, $SD=3.53$) and affective ($x=6.772$, $SD=3.09$) indicators are moderate.

Table 3: Factors contributing to Academic Stress among Nursing Students.

n=110			
Sl. No	Factors	Mean	SD
1	Interpersonal Factors	1.8000	1.54326
2	Academic Factors	6.7818	2.81667
3	Environmental Factors	1.6182	1.35445
4	Intrapersonal Factors	2.8091	1.77390

Table 3 shows that the contribution of academic factors towards academic stress among nursing students is more ($x=6.78$, $SD=2.8$) followed by intrapersonal factors ($x=2.8$, $SD=1.7$) interpersonal factors ($x=1.8$, $SD=1.54$) and environmental factors ($x=1.6$, $SD=1.35$)

Table 4: Correlation between different stressors on academic performance

Stressors	Cognitive Indicators	Affective Indicators	Physical Indicators	Social Indicators	Motivational Indicators
Cognitive Indicators	-	*0.723	*0.348	*0.355	*0.610
Affective Indicators	*0.723	-	*0.595	*0.485	*0.587
Physical Indicators	*0.348	*0.595	-	*0.394	*0.399
Social Indicators	*0.355	*0.485	*0.394	-	*0.522
Motivational Indicators	*0.610	*0.587	*0.399	*0.522	-

Table 4 depicts that there is significant correlation between Cognitive, Affective, Physical, Social and Motivational indicators at $p=0.05$ level.

Discussion:

The current narrative review highlights the students commonly reports mild level of academic related stress which impact their mental and physical health and leads to a range of academic related problems. Good stress management skills have the potential to benefit students in an ongoing manner throughout their lives. The findings of the present study were discussed in accordance with the objectives of the study.

Objective 1: To assess the level of academic stress among nursing students.

The findings show that Most of the participants (57.3%) had mild level of academic stress and 6.4% of them had high level of academic stress, 36.3% nursing students had moderate level of academic stress,

With regard to cognitive indicators 35 (32%) had forgetfulness, 21 (19%) had Difficulty in problem solving and fear of not answering, 24 (21.8%) had Doubt on their abilities, 38 (34.5%) are stressed due to hesitation in asking doubts, 42 (38%). In Affective indicators 32 (29%) have Lack of confidence, 31 (28%) felt academic pressure, 44 (40%) were worried about high parents expectation. According to physical indicators majority 30 (27%) Gets head ache often, 27(24.5%) were nervous, and 22 (20%) had complaints of Loss of sleep often. With regard to social / interpersonal indicators 34(31%) don't like talking to anyone and 22 (20%) Like to stay alone most of the time. According to motivational indicators 36(32.7%) often felt lack of interest, 40(36.3%) had difficulty in completing lessons, and 36(32.7%) feel sleepy.

Most of the nursing students (84%) revealed that the syllabus is too vast and worried about examination. Around 50% of the participants stated that the stress is due to the discrepancy between theory and practical classes. About 40% expressed that teacher makes too many extra demands on them.

The study was similar with findings of Kavaline K in her study on stress and coping among the under graduate nursing students. The aim of this research study was to assess the stress and coping level among the B.Sc. nursing students. The results showed the overall stress level among nursing students were under mild stress 27%, moderate 65%, high stress 8% and also the coping level among nursing students had poor coping 4%, mild coping 43%, moderate coping 45% and good coping 8% [7].

Objective 2: To explore the factors contributing to academic stress

- Academic factors contributing to stress were over burden with study (83%), Inability to balance study and leisure time (77%), Inability to concentrate on study (60%), Getting lower grade than anticipation (59%) and Class presentations (51%).
- 42% expressed Absence of calm and quiet environment, 64% felt Financial problems, as environmental and intrapersonal factors contributing to stress.
- Inter personal factors contributing to stress were Lack of cooperation from friends 48% and Conflict with roommate 18%.

Objective 3: To determine the association of level of academic stress among nursing students with selected socio personal variables.

The study findings revealed that there was no association between religion, residential area, type of family, education status of mother, stress and other socio personal variables.

The present study findings are not similar with findings of Acta Paul Enferm study on stress in nursing students, sociodemographic and academic vulnerabilities. Among all students, 64% presented stress with the following associated factors: sex ($p < 0.010$), age group ($p < 0.029$), marital status ($p < 0.001$), children ($p < 0.001$), occupational status ($p < 0.001$), cost of education ($p < 0.009$) and current study period ($p < 0.001$). In the final model these factors remained: sex, marital status and current study period.

Conclusion

Academic stress becomes a pervasive problem among nursing students across the country. The present study brought into light that academic stress still continues to be a destructive problem affecting the students' academic performance, mental health and wellbeing. Hence the study recommends it is very important to arrange some workshops at the beginning of every semester. Thus the students will be facilitated to overcome the stress and perform well in the studies. Institutions should arrange classes for yoga, meditation and other stress relieving therapy to practice in class rooms. Counsellors and psychologist should be arranged for effective counselling so that the students can overcome the stress. Increasing students stress management skills and abilities is an important target for change.

Key Message:

The Nursing students experience various levels of academic stress during their course of study which includes Cognitive, Affective, Physical, Social and Motivational stressors. It is important for the stake holders in nursing education to identify and intervene to reduce the level of stress and support them in coping with different strategies.

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