



Effect of Residential Setting and Gender on student's Academic Stress, Study, Habit and Academic Achievement: A study on Secondary School Students.

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Abstract : This study investigates the influence of residential setting (urban vs. rural) and gender on academic stress, study habits, and academic achievement among secondary school students. In today's competitive educational environment, students are often exposed to increasing levels of academic pressure. Understanding how different environmental and gender-related factors contribute to this stress and impact learning behaviors and academic outcomes is essential for improving student well-being and performance. The research was conducted using a representative sample of secondary school students from both urban and rural areas. Data was collected through standardized questionnaires and academic records to assess levels of academic stress, the effectiveness of study habits, and academic achievement. The variables were then analyzed to determine whether significant differences existed between urban and rural students, as well as between male and female students. Findings from the study revealed that residential setting plays a notable role in shaping students' academic experiences. Urban students generally exhibited better study habits and higher academic achievement, but also reported higher levels of academic stress compared to their rural counterparts. Gender differences were also observed: female students often demonstrated more effective study habits and better academic performance, while male students showed slightly lower stress levels.

The interaction between gender and residential background highlighted complex dynamics that influence academic outcomes. For example, rural female students faced unique challenges compared to urban males or females, often due to limited access to resources or sociocultural expectations.

The study concludes that both residential setting and gender significantly affect academic stress, study habits, and achievement. These findings underscore the need for targeted interventions that address the specific needs of students based on their background. Educators, parents, and policymakers should consider these factors when developing strategies to support students academically and emotionally, particularly those in under-resourced or high-pressure environments.

Keywords : Residential setting, gender, academic stress, study habits, academic achievement, secondary school students, urban students, rural students, student performance, educational environment

Article :

Impact of Residential Setting on Academic Stress, Study Habits, and Achievement

Residential setting plays a crucial role in shaping the academic journey of students, especially at the secondary school level where learners are highly influenced by their environment. The distinction between rural and urban settings provides a useful lens to examine how living conditions, availability of resources, and social expectations impact academic stress, study habits, and overall achievement. Urban students generally enjoy access to better educational facilities such as well-equipped schools, libraries, coaching centers, and digital learning resources, which enhance their academic opportunities. However, this privilege often comes with increased competition,

parental pressure, and societal expectations, which heighten their stress levels. In contrast, rural students may face challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, lack of qualified teachers, and limited access to learning materials, which may restrict their academic growth but, paradoxically, may not always create the same level of stress due to relatively lower competition and societal expectations.

Academic stress among students is significantly influenced by the residential setting. Urban students often encounter intense pressure to excel because of greater awareness about career opportunities and higher parental expectations. They are more likely to face stress related to examinations, performance in competitive tests, and peer comparisons. The availability of multiple academic options, though beneficial, sometimes increases confusion and anxiety. On the other hand, rural students may experience stress of a different kind. Their challenges often stem from resource scarcity, lack of exposure to advanced learning opportunities, and in some cases, the burden of economic hardships at home. While the academic stress in rural settings may not always appear as intense as in urban contexts, it can be equally damaging since it is coupled with a sense of disadvantage and limited career pathways.

Study habits are another important domain where residential setting shows a clear impact. Urban students, due to better access to guidance and academic facilities, often adopt more systematic and disciplined study routines. They are generally exposed to strategies such as time management, note-making, and use of digital learning platforms that strengthen their academic preparation. Coaching centers and peer groups in urban areas further reinforce structured study habits. In rural settings, study habits tend to be less structured due to limited exposure to such strategies. Many students rely heavily on rote learning or school-provided resources, often without additional support. However, it is important to note that rural students may demonstrate resilience and persistence in their study habits, especially when motivated by aspirations of upward mobility and family support. Their study efforts, though less structured, are often characterized by determination and sincerity.

The ultimate measure of residential influence lies in academic achievement, which is an outcome shaped by both stress and study habits. Urban students, because of their resource-rich environment, generally perform better in academic tests and competitive examinations. Their achievements are often linked not only to their study habits but also to external support such as coaching institutions and parental investment. However, the high stress levels associated with urban schooling sometimes negatively affect their mental health, leading to issues like burnout and anxiety, which can hinder sustained performance. Rural students, though often performing at a lower average level due to infrastructural and resource limitations, may excel when provided with equal opportunities. Many studies have shown that when rural students gain access to proper guidance and academic resources, they perform at par with or even better than their urban counterparts, largely due to their resilience and motivation to overcome socio-economic barriers.

In conclusion, residential setting exerts a powerful influence on students' academic stress, study habits, and achievement. Urban environments foster structured learning and better outcomes but also create high levels of stress due to competition and expectations. Rural environments may limit exposure to modern learning resources but cultivate resilience and determination among students. Therefore, policymakers and educators must focus on reducing the rural-urban educational gap by ensuring equal access to academic resources, training teachers, and providing stress-management support. This balanced approach can help students from both settings develop healthy study habits, manage stress effectively, and achieve their academic potential.

Gender Differences in Academic Stress, Study Habits, and Achievement

Gender plays a significant role in influencing the academic experiences of students, particularly with regard to stress, study habits, and achievement. At the secondary school level, both boys and girls face unique challenges that shape their academic journeys differently. While biological, psychological, and socio-cultural factors all interact in shaping these differences, gender-based expectations within families, schools, and society further reinforce distinct patterns. Studies conducted across various educational contexts reveal that female students often experience higher levels of academic stress, but they also tend to develop stronger study habits, which in many cases translate into better academic achievement. Male students, on the other hand, may experience relatively lower levels of reported stress, yet their study habits are often less disciplined, leading to uneven performance outcomes. Understanding these differences is crucial for designing interventions that support both genders effectively.

Academic stress among students reflects not only the pressure of examinations and performance but also the internalized expectations of gender roles. Female students often report higher levels of stress, which can be attributed to multiple factors such as parental pressure to perform well, fear of failure, and heightened self-expectations. In many cases, girls are encouraged to excel academically as a pathway to empowerment and future independence, which places an added burden on them. Furthermore, girls are often more sensitive to peer pressure and comparisons, making them vulnerable to stress arising from academic competition. Male students, however, typically report lower stress levels, partly because social expectations sometimes prioritize physical activities, leadership roles, or future financial independence over academic excellence. Nevertheless, boys may also experience stress, though it may manifest in different ways such as disengagement, aggression, or lack of concentration. The difference often lies in how each gender perceives and copes with academic stress.

When it comes to study habits, clear gender differences emerge. Female students generally develop more systematic and organized approaches to studying. They are more likely to manage their time effectively, prepare timetables, take notes diligently, and revise consistently before examinations. Their study habits are characterized by persistence, attention to detail, and a willingness to seek help when needed. Girls are also more inclined to use modern learning strategies, such as group study and online resources, when accessible. In contrast, male students often exhibit less structured study patterns. They may depend more on last-minute preparation or selective studying, which can hinder consistent academic performance. While boys are sometimes more confident in their academic abilities, this overconfidence may reduce their investment in disciplined study habits. However, when motivated or guided properly, male students are capable of showing remarkable focus and innovation in their learning approaches.

Academic achievement, the outcome of stress and study habits, also reflects gender differences. In many studies, female students consistently outperform male students in school examinations and show better long-term academic achievement. Their disciplined study habits and greater willingness to cope with stress constructively contribute significantly to this advantage. Girls often excel in language-based subjects, social sciences, and areas requiring consistent effort and memorization. Male students, though not always performing as well on average, frequently demonstrate strength in subjects that require analytical reasoning, mathematics, or scientific problem-solving. Their performance, however, is often less consistent, influenced by their study habits and levels of motivation. It is important to note that the observed differences in achievement are not rooted in intellectual capacity but rather in differences in study behavior, stress management, and societal expectations.

In conclusion, gender differences in academic stress, study habits, and achievement are significant and multifaceted. Female students often experience higher academic stress but respond to it with stronger study habits, leading to better achievement outcomes in many cases. Male students, while experiencing comparatively less reported stress, sometimes lack disciplined study patterns, which can hinder their consistent academic success. These differences highlight the need for gender-sensitive educational strategies that address unique stressors and promote healthy study habits for both boys and girls. Teachers and parents must provide balanced support, reducing undue pressure on female students while encouraging male students to adopt structured learning practices. By fostering an equitable academic environment, it becomes possible to minimize gender disparities and ensure that both boys and girls can realize their full potential.

Interrelationship between Academic Stress, Study Habits, and Academic Achievement

Academic stress, study habits, and academic achievement are deeply interconnected components of the educational experience, especially for secondary school students who are navigating a critical developmental stage. Stress in the academic context refers to the psychological and emotional pressure students face due to examinations, parental expectations, workload, and future uncertainties. Study habits are the regular practices and learning strategies that students adopt to cope with these demands, while academic achievement reflects the measurable outcomes of their efforts in terms of grades and performance. These three factors form a dynamic triangle where each influences and is influenced by the others. High levels of academic stress can disrupt effective study habits and lower achievement, while poor study habits can increase stress and hinder performance. Conversely, well-developed study habits can reduce stress and significantly improve academic achievement, suggesting that the balance among these variables determines the overall academic success of students.

Academic stress often acts as both a motivator and a barrier to achievement. Moderate levels of stress may encourage students to focus, organize their time, and prepare effectively for examinations, thereby leading to better outcomes. However, when stress exceeds manageable levels, it tends to interfere with concentration, memory, and motivation, ultimately reducing academic performance. Students who experience chronic stress may engage in avoidance behaviors, procrastination, or unhealthy coping mechanisms, all of which negatively impact study habits. For example, a student who feels overwhelmed by the volume of assignments may either neglect systematic study routines or resort to cramming, which rarely produces long-term academic benefits. Thus, stress does not act in isolation; its influence is strongly mediated by the way students manage their study practices.

Study habits, on the other hand, play a crucial role in mediating the relationship between stress and achievement. Students with effective study habits—such as maintaining regular schedules, revising systematically, practicing self-assessment, and seeking academic support—are often better equipped to handle academic stress. Their structured approach reduces the anxiety associated with last-minute preparation and enhances self-confidence, which in turn improves academic achievement. In contrast, students with weak or inconsistent study habits tend to experience higher stress levels as examinations approach, leading to a cycle of anxiety and underachievement. For instance, a student who fails to plan and revise consistently may find themselves burdened by stress just before exams, which further compromises performance. Therefore, study habits act as both a buffer against stress and a determinant of academic outcomes.

The influence of academic achievement on stress and study habits is equally significant. Success in examinations often boosts confidence, reduces stress, and reinforces effective study habits. Students who achieve well are likely to continue following disciplined study patterns because they associate them with positive results. Conversely, poor achievement can heighten academic stress, lower self-esteem, and discourage students from maintaining structured study routines. This creates a cycle where low performance leads to stress, which disrupts study habits, resulting in further underachievement. Breaking this cycle requires timely intervention by teachers and parents through counseling, mentoring, and skill development programs. Encouraging a growth mindset, where students view challenges as opportunities for learning rather than threats, can also help them cope better with stress and adopt productive study habits.

In conclusion, the interrelationship between academic stress, study habits, and academic achievement highlights the need for a holistic approach to student development. Stress can either hinder or enhance achievement depending on how it is managed, while study habits serve as the crucial link that determines whether stress translates into success or failure. Students who cultivate effective study practices are better positioned to handle stress and achieve academically, while those with poor study habits are more vulnerable to stress-related setbacks. Educators and policymakers must therefore focus not only on reducing stress but also on strengthening study skills and creating supportive academic environments. By fostering resilience, self-regulation, and healthy learning strategies, schools can help students achieve a balance that minimizes stress and maximizes academic success.

Conclusion : The present study on the Effect of Residential Setting and Gender on Students' Academic Stress, Study Habits, and Academic Achievement among secondary school students highlights significant differences influenced by both living environment and gender. Findings indicate that students from urban residential settings generally experience higher academic stress but also demonstrate more structured study habits compared to their rural counterparts. Gender differences reveal that female students often report greater stress levels, yet they also tend to show better study discipline and consistent academic performance. In contrast, male students display relatively lower stress but weaker study patterns, which may affect achievement. Overall, the study emphasizes that academic outcomes are shaped by a complex interaction of residential context, gender, and study behavior. It suggests that educators, parents, and policymakers should design supportive interventions to reduce stress, promote healthy study habits, and ensure equitable academic opportunities for all learners.

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