

## Analyzing Interactions among Academic Stress, Academic Self-Concept & Academic Grades

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The present study attempts to assess and analyze interactions as well as observe gender differences among three psychological variables, namely; academic stress, academic self concept and academic grades. The participants consist of 135 Std. IX students, 72 boys and 63 girls, age range of 14 – 16 years, selected by simple random sampling, from four co-ed schools in Goa. Educational stress scale, Academic self-concept questionnaire and records of school grades were used as appropriate tools for data collection. The study involves the survey method and factor analysis design, wherein the research tools were administered to participants in the classroom after seeking necessary permissions. The results revealed a significant moderate negative correlation (Pearson's  $r = -0.45$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) between academic stress and academic self concept. One- way- ANOVA indicated a significant difference on academic stress [ $F(4,130) = 7.466$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ] as a function of academic grades and significant difference on academic self concept [ $F(4,130) = 10.064$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ] with respect to academic grades. Logistic Ordinal Regression model revealed that academic stress and academic self concept significantly predict variance on academic grades. Significant Gender differences were found on academic stress ( $t = 2.012$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) with girls experiencing higher level of academic stress as compared to boys, and on academic self concept ( $t = 2.37$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) wherein girls showed higher scores on academic self concept as compared to boys. No significant gender differences were found on academic grades. The study results reviews the significant interconnections among the variables selected in the study and stresses on the importance of interventions to reduce academic stress, implement exercises and workshops to nourish academic self-concept and provide opportunities for earning higher academic grades.

**Keywords:** Academic stress, Academic self concept, Academic grades, Gender differences.

A big share of child and adolescence life involves acquiring knowledge in a formal educational process. The Ecological Systems Theory by Bronfenbrenner (1979) identifies school as a significant system that has a direct influence on students. Academic learning is among the most important source of stress among young students worldwide and appears to be quite severe in Asian countries (Brown, Teufel, Birch, & Kancherla, 2006). Asian students usually have higher academic burden (Lee & Larson, 2000), and may suffer more academic stress (Ang & Huan, 2006; Ang, Huan, & Braman, 2007) than their counterparts in English speaking countries. National survey conducted in China (Youth Social Service Center, 2008) found

that most children and adolescents (66.7%) considered academic pressure as the biggest stress in their lives.

Academic stress is a significant contributor to a variety of mental and behavioral disorders, such as depression, anxiety and suicidal behavior (Ang, Huan, 2006; Bjorkman, 2007). Study done by Liu and Tein (2005) states that academic stress can be one of the correlates of adolescent Suicidality. A study done in Kerala-India (Dinesh & Syamakumari, 2010) revealed that more than 90% of school children of the state are facing above normal levels of stress and tension, with severe stress seen in both genders between the ages of 12 – 16 years. Rebellow & Asir (2015) conducted a study on