



Effect of Emotional Maturity and Academic Streams on Academic Stress

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Abstract

Emotional maturity plays a significant role in the academic journey of every student. It plays a vital role in the life of a student and influences various aspects, including time management, stress coping mechanisms, motivation, interpersonal relationships, decision-making, adaptability, communication skills, goal setting etc. In terms of academic stress management, emotional maturity equips students with the tools to cope with pressure effectively. They can recognize and manage stress triggers, employ healthy stress-reduction strategies, and seek support when needed. The students of different academic streams may also exhibit distinct patterns in their approach to studies. Emotionally mature students are less likely to succumb to the negative effects of stress, such as burnout or anxiety, and instead, they remain resilient, adapt to academic challenges, and do better adjustment in their lives. Thus the aim of the present study is to investigate the effect of emotional maturity and academic streams on academic stress of students. For this purpose a 2x3 factorial design is adopted where one independent variable was emotional maturity which was varied at two levels of emotional maturity i.e. high and low level of emotional maturity and the other independent variable was academic streams i.e. science, commerce and arts. A sample of 360 students selected from different private schools of Haryana State with the age range of 15-18 years. Emotional Maturity Scale by Singh and Bhargava and a Scale for assessing Academic Stress by Sinha and Singh were used. Results revealed significant difference on academic stress between high and low emotionally matured students and different academic streams students.

Key Words: Emotional Maturity, Academic Streams, Academic Stress, Students

Adolescence is a transformative stage of human development marked by significant physical, psychological, and social changes. Typically spanning from ages 10 to 19, adolescence is characterized by the onset of puberty, leading to rapid growth spurts. Beyond the biological transformations, adolescents grapple with the formation of identity, self-discovery, and the quest for independence. Adolescence is the period of transition between childhood and adulthood that involves biological, cognitive and socio-emotional changes (Hurlock , 1981). This period often involves intense emotional experiences, as individuals navigate complex social dynamics, peer relationships, and family interactions. Cognitive abilities also mature during adolescence, fostering critical thinking and decision-making skills. Adolescence is considered as that period of life during which maturity is being attained. Singh and Bhargava (1990) stated that the emotionally mature is not one who has resolved all conditions that aroused anxiety and hostility but it is continuously in process of seeing himself in clearer perspective involved in a struggle to gain healthy integration of feeling, thinking and action.

Education also plays a paramount role in the life of a student, serving as the cornerstone for personal and intellectual development. Adolescence is a critical juncture in the academic journey, where the intersection of cognitive development and evolving personal identity significantly influences study habits. During this period, students experience heightened emotional upheavals which affect their various aspects of life including academics which create anxiety and academic stress. Academic stress is a mental distress with



respect to some anticipated frustration associated with academic failure or even awareness of the possibility of such failure (Gupta & Khan, 1987). Academic stress is the term used to describe the unpleasant circumstances that arise from the numerous demands placed on students or learners, such as exams, maintaining a healthy and academic life, peer competition, and satisfying the expectations of parents and teachers in terms of academic performance (Barker, Howard, Villemare- Krajden, & Galambos, 2018). Emotional maturity plays an important role in mitigating academic stress by enabling students to navigate challenges with resilience and self-awareness. Individuals with higher emotional maturity levels tend to cope more effectively with academic pressures, demonstrating better stress management skills. Srinivasan and Pugalenti (2019) found that a mature individual is capable of handling stressful life circumstances. The ability to regulate emotions and maintain a balanced perspective contributes to a healthier approach to academic challenges, fostering a conducive environment for learning and personal growth. Stephens (2013) that students who have reached a mature emotional state are able to handle pressure and difficult situations that comes with learning. The student may bounce back to a prior level of normal functioning as a result of this coping strategy, or they may just show no negative effects.

Students often grapple with the pervasive challenge of academic stress, a phenomenon intricately woven into the fabric of educational pursuits. The pressure to excel in examinations, meet stringent deadlines, and juggle multiple responsibilities can create a potent cocktail of stressors. Academic stress manifests not only from external expectations but also from internal aspirations and the desire for success. Patil (2003) reported that adolescence is accompanied by some stress, related to school, family and peers, and this stress can at times be difficult to control. The fear of failure, coupled with the competitive nature of academic environments, can lead to heightened anxiety levels and, in some cases, adversely impact mental well-being. Understanding the importance of emotional maturity in the life of students is very crucial. Emotional maturity can influence stress levels differently across streams, impacting how students handle the rigor of science or the complexity of commerce. Thus the purpose of study was to study the effect of emotional maturity and academic streams in academic stress.

Problem

To study the effect of emotional maturity and academic streams in academic stress.

Objectives

1. To identify the levels of emotional maturity among students of different academic streams.
2. To assess and compare the academic stress of high and low emotionally matured students of different academic streams i.e. science, commerce and arts.

Hypothesis

1. There would be a significant difference in academic stress of high and low emotionally matured students of different academic streams i.e. science, commerce and arts.

Method

Design

A 2X3 factorial design was adopted where one independent variable was emotional maturity and the other independent variable was academic streams.

Sample

The study was conducted on 360 students studying in class XI and XII in the age group of 15 to 18 years from different private schools of Haryana. Initially a sample of 518 students was taken, out of which finally 360 students



were selected on the basis of high emotional maturity. Out of these 360 students at least 180 students both male and female were included in each level of emotional maturity i.e. high emotional maturity and low emotional maturity which were equally distributed from three different academic streams i.e. Science (N=60), Commerce (N=60) and Arts (N=60).

Tools

Following tools have been used for the present study.

1. Emotional Maturity Scale (Singh and Bhargava, 1990)
2. Scale for Assessing Academic Stress (Sinha, Sharma and Nepal, 2001)

Procedure

For this purpose, 518 adolescents from various schools affiliated to CBSE were contacted from 11th and 12th classes within the age range of 15 to 18 years on the basis of their availability. Initially a sample of 518 students was taken, out of which 360 students were selected on the basis of emotional maturity (high and low) and different types of stream (science, commerce and arts) and then study habits, academic stress and school adjustment were given to them. After the completion of the questionnaires, they were taken back, and the participants were thanked for the cooperation. The scoring was done as per the respective manuals.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results are as follows

Table 1

Mean scores and standard deviations of high and low emotionally matured students of science, commerce and arts streams on academic stress.

Variables		Academic Streams (B)					
		Science		Commerce		Arts	
		Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D
Emotional Maturity (A)	High Emotionally Matured	9.15	3.21	4.97	3.64	8.80	4.13
	Low Emotionally Matured	12.00	4.32	8.48	4.71	8.48	4.71

Table 1 simply provides the composite mean scores on the two independent variables i.e. emotional maturity and academic streams of students with regard to academic stress. Table 5.8 shows the mean and SD scores of high and low emotionally matured students of different academic streams i.e. science, commerce, and arts on academic stress. From the above table it can be seen that on academic stress, the mean score of high emotionally matured students is 9.15 (SD=3.21) and the mean score of low emotionally matured students is 12.00 (SD=4.32) among science stream students. The mean value clearly shows that low emotionally matured students experience more academic stress as compared to high emotionally matured students among science stream students.



Table 2
Summary of two-way ANOVA on academic stress

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Sqaure	F
Emotional Maturity (A)	366.02	1	366.02	21.15**
Streams (B)	889.36	2	444.68	25.70**
(A*B)	251.67	2	125.83	7.27**
Error	6125.15	354	17.30	
Total	34551.00	360		

** Significant at 0.01 level

On academic stress, it is clear from the results shown in table 2, the F-value is 21.15 for two levels of emotional maturity (high emotional maturity and low emotional maturity). The significant difference is found between students of high emotional maturity and low emotional maturity in regard to academic stress. This indicates that high and low emotional matured students differ significantly in academic stress and low emotionally matured students experienced more academic stress as compared to emotionally matured students. It implies that the maturity plays an important role in experiencing the academic stress among students.

Further F-value (25.70) is found to be significant in different academic streams which indicates that students belonging to different academic streams differed significantly on academic stress.

Table 3
Tukey's Post hoc test for significant group comparison on academic stress.

Academic Streams	N	Mean Difference
Science- Commerce	60	3.85**
Science -Arts	60	1.93**
Commerce-Arts	60	-1.91**

**Significant at 0.01 level

The above table 3 reveals that there is a significant difference among science and commerce stream students on academic stress. The higher level of academic stress is significantly experienced by science stream students as compared to commerce stream students. Further, the result indicates that there is a significant difference among science and arts stream students on academic stress. More amount of academic stress is experienced by science stream students. Similar trend of results has been found among commerce and arts stream students. The result implicates that the students belonging to arts stream experience more stress as compared to commerce stream students in academics. It can be concluded that among all the three academic groups, the subjects of science group experienced more academic stress. Hence it can be said that academic stress experienced by science students can be attributed to the demanding curriculum, research requirements, competition, grading, limited career options, long study hours, complex problem-solving, and high societal expectations. Present findings supported by Prabu (2015) who indicated that science students reported higher academic stress than Arts students. The result is inaccordance with Menaga and Chandrasekaran (2014) found that there is non- significant difference between arts students and science students in their academic stress. Result is also inconsistant with Kamel, Elazeem, and Ali (2022) that there



is a negative relation between emotional maturity and academic stress among studied nursing students. Hence, the hypothesis which stated that “**there would be significant difference in academic stress of high and low emotionally matured students of different academic streams**” is verified.

Limitation

- The study is limited to private schools only. The comparison between government and private school students would have more fruitful.
- In addition to the academic stress, more psychological variables could also be included in this study.
- In addition to the quantitative data, qualitative data could also be included in this study.
- Gender Differences could also have studied.

Implication and Suggestion

- School teachers should understand the actual need of the students and provide emotional support to them.
- Parents should understand their emotions and create a harmonious relation which would help them to become emotionally mature.
- Educators and parents should support students and providing guidance in managing academic stress effectively.

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