

# Analyzing the Stress Among Students Fighting for Competitive Exams - Its Causes, Effects and Measures

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## Abstract

This paper examines the impact of stress on students' academic performance and stress management among students preparing for competitive exams. The main objectives of the study is to ascertain or identify the extent to which stress affects students' academic success, health and general lifestyle, as well as to inquire and bring to light measures to counteract the effects of existing stress in students. In this study we find that students of professional courses are under considerable amount of stress, owing to the ever increasing study load and the burden of expectations from the society. Some of them go to the extent of falling into depression and associated psychological disorder. A quantitative method was used in gathering and analysing the data by using 100 samples. For this purpose, questionnaire was distributed to different students groups who are preparing for different professional courses. The results obtained show the different factors that cause stress among students. The various factors namely Relationship factors, Environmental factors, Academic factors, and Personal factors are being studied. With respect to Relationship factors, working with new people was the main cause of stress for students in both groups. In the case of Environmental factors, worries about the future was the main factor causing stress among students, whereas class workload, stretched work hours were the main element of stress with regard to the academic factors. In the category of Personal factors change in sleeping habits and sleeping conditions caused most stress to students. Stress can, however, be managed through the introduction of a stress management course and engaging in extracurricular activities.

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**Keywords:** Academic Students, Stress, Stress Factors, Stress Management.

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## Introduction

Stress is the emotional and physical strain caused by our response to pressure from the outside world. A stressor is an event or any stimulus that causes an individual to experience stress. It is almost impossible to live without some stress and most of us not want to, because it gives life some peace and excitement. But if stress gets out of control, it may harm our health our relationship and the enjoyment of life.

Professional students go through a lot of stress due to their over- hectic schedules and never ending work processes. Stress has become an important topic in academic circles. Stress in academic institutions can have both positive and negative consequences if not well managed.

Academic institutions have different work setting compared to non-academic and therefore one would expect the difference in symptoms, causes and consequences of stress.

The general characteristics of a person in stress are: being over- aroused; tense or unable to relax; touchy, easily upset or irritable; easily startled or fidgety, and demonstrating intolerance of any interruption or delay. Stress can also be associated with the number of examinations and the monetary status and surroundings of the students.

## Objectives

1. To assess academic factors causing stress among college students attending coaching of competitive exams.
2. To assess environmental factors causing stress among college students attending coaching of competitive exams.
3. To identify techniques to deal with the stress.

## Hypotheses

- H<sub>01</sub> : There is no effect of gender on academic stress?
- H<sub>02</sub> : There is no effect of the various working environmental factors on stress?
- H<sub>03</sub> : Coaching students do not get stress while preparing for competitive exams?
- H<sub>04</sub> : Different factors of academic work do not results in stress among students.

## Methodology

This cross sectional study was carried out among the students preparing for various competitive exams in Udaipur (Rajasthan).

The study was aimed for assessing academic factors, environmental factors and various techniques to deal with, the stress among student who are preparing for various competitive exams at different coaching institutes of the stream focusing on science, commerce and arts.

The study was carried on the students of age 18 to 30 years including the Male and Female gender considering the nature of the family i.e. either joint or nuclear.

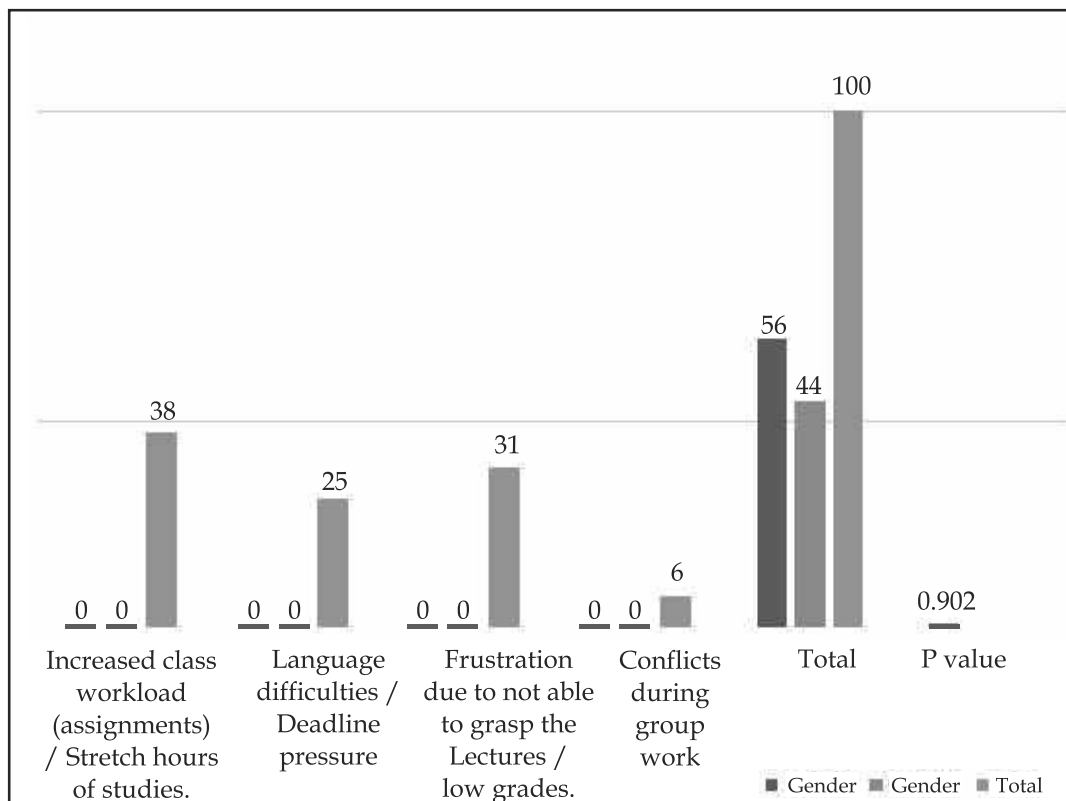
Data was entered in Microsoft Excel and analyzed using SPSS 20.0. Chi-square test of significance.

Table 1: Cross tabulation of Gender Academic factors as source of stress

Gender * Academic factors as source of stress Cross tabulation							
Count							
		Academic factors as source of stress				Total	P value
		Increased class workload (assignments) / Stretch hours of studies.	Language difficulties/ Deadline pressure	Frustration due to not able to grasp the Lectures/ low grades.	Conflicts during group work		
Gender	Male	22(39.28)	14(25)	16(28.57)	4(7.14)	56	0.902
	Female	16(36.36)	11(25)	15(34.09)	2(4.54)	44	
Total		38	25	31	6	100	

Source: Statistical output

Graph 1 : Gender Association with Academic factors as source of stress



Source: Statistical output

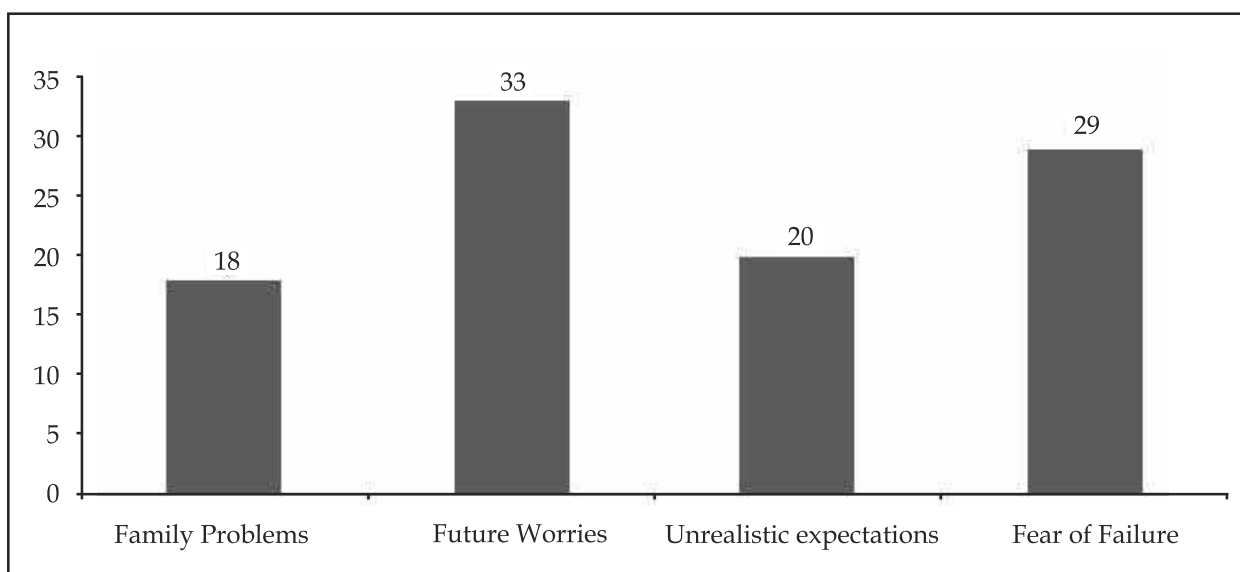
The chart depicts that the gender is not associated with academic factor as a source of stress. Statistically “P” value is more than 0.05. So, association is insignificant.

**Table 2 : Cross tabulation of Gender Environment factors as source of stress**

Gender * Environment factors as source of stress Cross tabulation							
Count							
		Environment factors as source of stress				Total	P value
		Family Problems	Future Worries	Unrealistic expectations	Fear of Failure		
Gender	Male	12 (21.42)	16(28.57)	13(23.21)	15(26.78)	56	0.483
	Female	6(13.63)	17(30.35)	7(15.90)	14(31.81)	44	
Total		18	33	20	39	100	

Source: Statistical output

**Graph 2 : Percent distribution of Environmental factor**



Source: Author’s Compilation

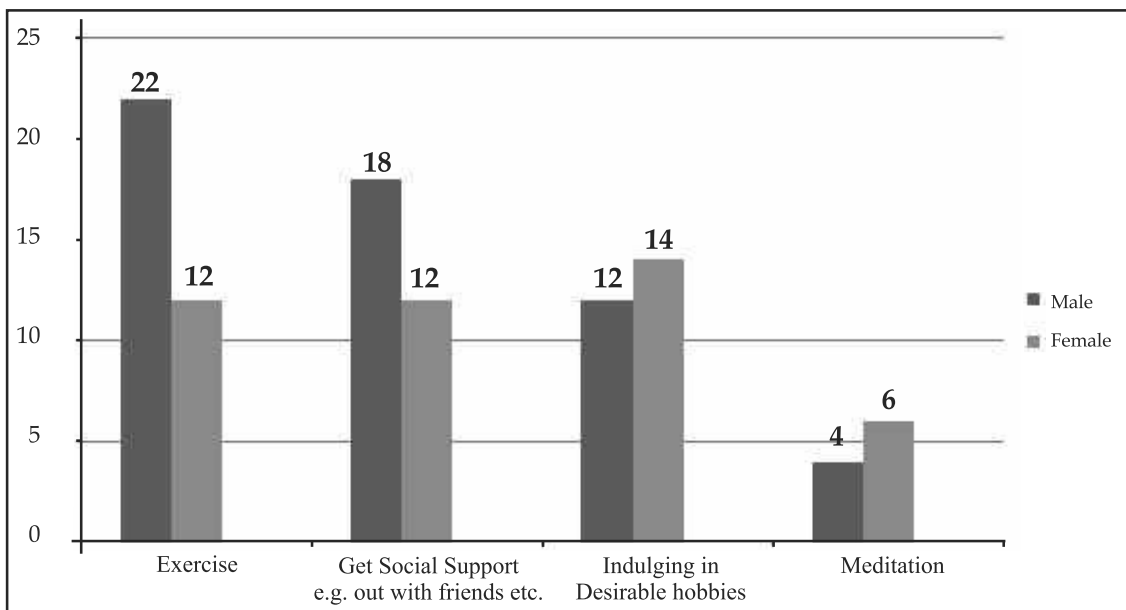
The chart depicts that the gender is not associated with environmental factor as a source of stress. Statistically “P” value is more than 0.05. So, association is insignificant.

**Table 3 : Cross tabulation of Gender and stress Management in town**

Gender * In your town how stress can be managed Cross tabulation							
Count							
		In your town how stress can be managed				Total	P value
		Exercise	Get Social support e.g. Outing with friends etc.	in Desirable hobbies Indulging	Meditation		
Gender	Male	22(39.28)	18(32.14)	12(21.42)	4(7.14)	56	0.347
	Female	12(27.27)	12(27.27)	14(31.81)	6(13.63)	44	
Total		34	30	36	10	100	

Source: Statistical output

**Graph 3 : Gender Association with stress Management Practices**



Source: Author’s Compilation

The chart depicts that the gender is not associated with technique used to deal with stress management. Statistically “P” value is more than 0.05. So association is insignificant.

**Results**

The total number of students, who participated in the questionnaire was 100, consisting of 56 male and 44 females, among which 91% students are of age group between 18 to 26 years. The study showed that among the various

factors the most important factors which cause stress are:

- Working Trouble with friends (43% students).
- Increasing class workloads [assignments/ stretch hours of studies] (38% students).

- Future worries (33% students).
- Change in living conditions (45% students).

The most behavioural impact that affects the students are (1) Insomnia (Ability to Sleep) & (2) Lack of Concentration as 29% students consider it.

In the context of techniques used by students for dealing with the problems of stress, the questionnaire depicts that 34% students consider that doing physical exercise makes them comfortable to manage the stress.

For the remedial and urgent measures of stress management, about 53% of the students consider that there must be a session to educate the students that how they may manage the stress and it should be done in Schools / Colleges.

And, lastly 59% of the students consider that stress affects the academic life of students.

### Conclusion

Nowadays, stress is more common in students due to academics. This survey is conducted through a standardised questionnaire distributed to 100 students from various students preparing at different coaching institutes. From this study one can infer easily that the stress level faced by students in coaching classes are very high and that proper counselling should be provided to the students and we shall prepare them to face the difficulties during their course and make sure that they deal with their problems in an effective manner.

However the limitation of the study was lesser sample size from one city only.

Further studies with large sample and a population from coaching institutions through the state or country would give us more accurate results.

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