

## **EFFECT OF ALIENATION AND GENDER ON ACADEMIC STRESS AMONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Childhood is considered to be the golden period of our lives. It is often generalized as making friends, playing with them, going to school and a care-free life. But in the shadow of fast development, advanced technological era, where everyone seeks for achieving higher and to earn comforts for them, the best of the time of life (childhood) is lost somewhere which is supposed to be more enjoyable and to be cherished. It is now pushed either by parents or by teachers and or even students by themselves to compete for attaining better marks and grade so that they can seek admission in good institute or better job opportunities in their future. Now childhood and adolescence is turning into adulthood before time ripens. The high competition and constant pressure on students for performing better in examination making students to be more vulnerable to stress ultimately they get estranged from themselves and from their surrounding and have to met with several health related issues. Therefore, the researchers have done effort to investigate the effect of alienation and gender on Academic Stress among high school students. The researchers had adopted Descriptive Survey method to conduct the present investigation. A sample of 600 high school students was selected from Haryana state by employing multistage random sampling technique. In this procedure one district each was randomly chosen out of four administrative divisions. To find out the effect of alienation and gender on Academic Stress a two way (2x2) ANOVA design was carried out. The results from the analysis revealed that Alienation and gender both significantly affect the Academic Stress among high school students.

**Keywords:** Academic Stress, Alienation and Gender

Everyone is now in the competition to get better and better life with lot of comforts and good job opportunities, Which ultimately lead everybody's life very stressful. Childhood is considered to be the golden period of our lives. It is generalized as making friends, playing with them, going to school and a care-free life. But in the modern era of fast development, advanced technology and population as well as knowledge explosion, everyone seeks for achieving higher and to earn

better for them, the best of the time of life (childhood) has lost somewhere which is supposed to be more enjoyable and to be cherished. This attire desire of getting more and more and to achieve better in comparison to others is casting a shadow of health related issues, feeling of anxiety, stress and depression on each and every body and students are of no exception. Now childhood and adolescence is turning into adulthood before the time ripens. The high competition and constant pressure on children in schools for performing better in examination making them more vulnerable to stress. Parents and teachers and or even sometimes students by themselves pushed to compete for attaining better marks and grade so that they can seek admission in good institute or better job opportunities in their future which finally lead to the students to trap into stress. Stress is conditions of nervous tension that has a direct effect on emotions, behavior, thought process and physical and mental health of person. According to **Lee & Larson (2000)**, "Stress as an interaction between environmental stressors, student's appraisal and reactions for the same". While **Lazarus & Folkman, (1984)** explained, "Stress is a consequence of a person's appraisal process i.e., when personal resources are insufficient to meet the required demands of the environment, then individual faces disequilibrium". Along with adults, the students' life is also become a no more fun. In the present scenario we everyone is seeing that throat cut competitions where every people is facing challenges and each has a high level of ambitions, but lack of time to achieve these goals, eventually results in occurrence of stress. Generally it has been found out that students are carrying school bags more than their own weight (**Yashpal Committee Report, 1992**). As they grow parents and teachers expects more from them. The cognitive development of the child is now given more importance while other aspects are being neglected. It ultimately filled the innocents mind with school related fears. Such a stress experienced by students due to their academics to perform better is known as academics stress. Academic stress is also defined as the anxiety and stress that comes from schooling and education (**Sonali, 2016**). Academic stress is refers to the force to perform well in the final school examinations. Students are motivated and pressurized to perform better in examination. Stress pertaining to academics has emerged as a mental health problems in the past years (**Rangaswamy, 1995, Subramani and Kadhiravan,2017**). Therefore, daily news is filled with committing suicide after getting failures in examinations. Such instances are indicating that students are getting stressed. According to the statistics published by National Crime Records Bureau, there is one student every hour that commits suicide (**Saha,2017**). The bureau registered 1.8% students who committed suicide due to failing in examinations (**Irshad Seema,2017**). Several Psychologists have registered distress (**Iype, 2004**) among students due to failure in their academic performance. The incidences of an adolescent's distress and academic stress have been recognized and discovered by several researchers in Korea (**Lee and Larson, 2000**) and Japan by (**Schoolland, 1990**). It is one of the significant barriers for the school students that hinder their academic performance.

### **Potential Stressors causing Academic Stress among Students**

The educational system also plays an enabling role in enhancing stress levels experienced by students. Stress pertaining to the field of education is known as 'Academic Stress'. Students have to compete with other class mates, fulfilling teachers and parent's academic expectations (Lal, 2014). Deb et al. (2015) reported that parental expectations is one of the important potential stressors, inadequate study facilities at school or home, wrong teaching method, lack of supportive environment etc. (Sonali, 2016) also make the students to feel themselves under stress. These demands may tax or exceed available resources of the students (Ghatol,2017). Besides parental expectations it is the parental involvement is also one of the important stressor has been found by researchers. Parents play a good role in enhancing stress among students by constantly interfering in the academics of their wards (William Jeynes, 2007) Academic stress imposes extra academic workload and attending lectures (Awino J. O & Agolla J. E. (2008); Agolla & Ongori, 2009) on students. Students having poor study habits, poor time management, difficulties in study matter, lack of concentration also lead to poor academic performance of the students which ultimately led to experience high level of stress (Jain,2017). Verma S. Sharma D & Larson R. W (2002) found that Indian students generally devoted more time in doing their school work. If a student involve more in studies, certainly will have high pressure to complete it in a particular time and lack of recreational activities. Some of the potential sources of stress include overcrowded lecture halls, semester grading system, inadequate resources and facilities (Agolla & Ongori, 2009), parental relationship with their children, test and grades (Archer and Lamnin (1985). Fear of examinations, school curriculum (Shah et.al, 2010), inadequate learning materials (Shah et al., 2010), subject-related projects (Conner, Pope, & Galloway, 2010) have also been found to be potential stressors among students. High self-expectations is also act as one of the factors responsible for increased stress levels (Ang & Huan, 2006). Friendships and peer relationship has also been found to cause stress among students (Hansell, 1985). Students found to be highly pressurized due to course overload and academic evaluation procedures and least stressed by personal familiar and social factors (Zeidner, 1992)

### **Types of Stress:**

Stress has been described as both having positive and negative affect on an individual. Stress is not necessarily harmful (Selye,1956). It depends on how one take it. Stress has been described as following types:

- **Eustress:** It is considered as a motivator stress or good one necessary to perform any task. It is popularly known as enjoyable stress.

- **Acute stress:** It is temporary stress which after arrival disappears quickly.
- **Chronic stress:** It is a long term stress, but may not appear as intensive from surface.

### **Alienation**

Alienation is an experience which has become more and more a fact of life in the era of modernization. This concept has been emerged from the works from *Theories of Alienation* of Karl Marx. But it was initially described in context of labour alienation in economics and social field. Now, Alienation has become one of the greatest problems confronting everyone today (Mohan, et al., 1999). Alienation is nothing but a negative relationship that an individual develops with the environment. When an individual does not consider himself a part of society he gets himself separated from it and a feeling of isolation starts developing in him. In the field of education, its conception credited to Melvin Seeman in his work '*On the Meaning of Alienation*' (1959). Seeman states that, "Alienation is identified by five alternative meanings: powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, isolation, and self-estrangement." According to Yilmaz and Sarpkaya (2009), each of these dimensions; powerlessness, normlessness, meaninglessness and isolation actually points to an end in itself. Stressed students generally get depressed and isolate themselves from their society. Akar and Aydin (2015) reported that the students who want to get high grades but have low academic achievement feel themselves powerless. The state of getting estranged of an individual from his surrounding is nothing but the state of alienation (Harre & Lamb, 1983). Alienation has been found to be associated with a withdrawal from participation in social institutions, such as the school (Calabrese & Seldin, 1986). Alienation can have adverse effects on young people and lead to a sense of disconnectedness from school (Brown et al., 2003). It has been revealed that students, who experience social isolation regard the school and classroom environment as disordered, crowded and complicated (Mau, 1992). Mau (1992) further noticed that the students who got alienated also lead to school drop-out. Many factors like changes in family circumstances, lack of social acceptance, academic underachievement, and oppressive or inequitable practices can trigger an adolescent's feelings of isolation and disconnection from family, friends, and the community (Hawkins et al., 2000; McInerney, 2009). Students who become alienated exhibit several behavioural problems and include hostility, passivity, withdrawal, poor quality work, disinterest, lack of involvement and initiative, suspensions, expulsions, and non-completion (Hawkins et al., 2000; McMillan, 1992)

**Variables:** Academic Stress, Alienation and Gender

### **Objectives:**

- O<sub>1</sub>**. To study the main effect of alienation on academic stress of high school students
- O<sub>2</sub>**. To study the main effect of gender on academic stress of high school students
- O<sub>3</sub>**. To study the interaction effect of alienation and gender on academic stress of high school students

### **Hypotheses**

- H<sub>1</sub>**. There exists no significant main effect of alienation on academic stress of high school students
- H<sub>2</sub>**. There exists no significant main effect of gender on academic stress of high school students
- H<sub>3</sub>**. There exists no significant interaction effect of alienation and gender on academic stress of high school students.

### **Method and Procedure:**

The study was undertaken to determine the effect of alienation and gender on academic stress among high school students. The investigator had employed descriptive survey method of research for the present study. In order to collect the data, Student Stress Scale, and Student Alienation scale scales were administered on male and female students of 9<sup>th</sup> class. Then after scoring the appropriate statistical measures were applied do analysis and interpretation of the collected data.

### **Sample:**

A sample of 600 male and female High school students of 9<sup>th</sup> class was selected from 32 secondary schools located in Haryana state by employing multistage random sampling technique. One district each was randomly selected from out of the four administrative divisions of Haryana state i.e Ambala, Hissar, Rohtak and Gurgaon. Out of the total sample of 600 the students who scored average were dropped and the analysis was done only on high and low scored students on academic stress.

### **Tools Used:**

#### **Following Scales were administered to collect data:**

- Stress Inventory for School Students (S.I.S.S): Tool is constructed and standardized by **Singh and Rani (2008)**
- Student Alienation Scale by **Sharma R.R (1988)**

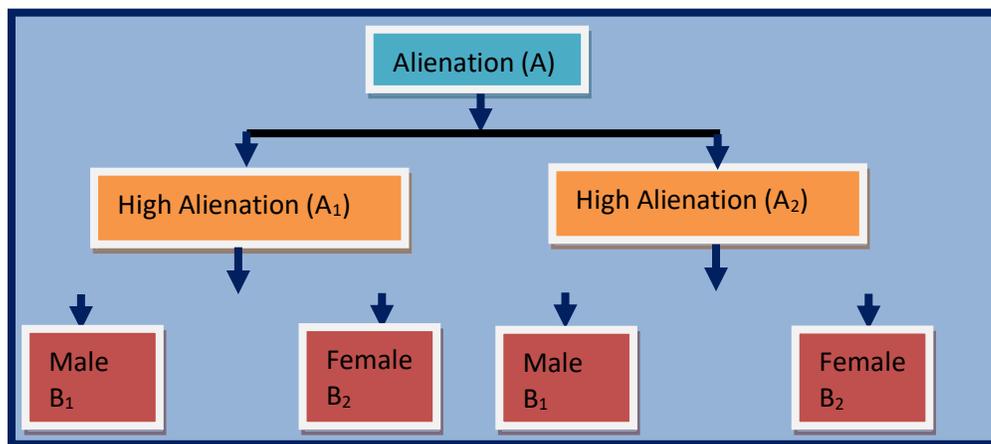
**Statistical Techniques Employed:**

For the present investigation 2x2 factorial (ANOVA) was employed to analyze the data, then it was subjected for further verification to determine the significance of effect by applying post-hoc tests. The analysis was done with the help of SPSS software.

**Analysis and Interpretations of the Data:**

In order to carry out the analysis of the collected data that the data was organized and designed on the basis of 2x2 factorial. For the present analysis the independent variable was categorized in to high alienated and low alienated students and further classified on the basis of gender i.e male and female students. The layout of the design has been graphically represented in the **Fig. no. 1**

**Fig 1: Lay out of 2X2 ANOVA Summary of Alienation and Gender on Academic Stress.**



**Table No. 1: The 2x2 ANOVA Summary of the Independent Variables (Alienation and Gender) with Dependent Variable (Academic Stress)**

Source of Variance	Df	Sum of Squares (SS)	Mean Squares (MS)	F-ratio
<b>Main Effects</b>				
Alienation (A)	1	5290.60	5290.60	15.23 *
Gender (B)	1	1727.69	1727.69	4.97 *
<b>Double Interaction</b>				
Interaction (A×B)	1	1651.96	1651.96	4.23 *
Between Cells	3	9034.55	3011.51	
Within Cells	213	73990.26	347.37	
<b>Total</b>	<b>216</b>			

\* Significant at 0.05 level

**Main Effect of Alienation (A):**

From Table-1 it is evident that F-ratio 15.23 for main effect of alienation on academic stress is significant at 0.05 level leading to the alienation have significant effect on academic stress of high school students. Therefore, the null hypothesis “There exists no significant main effect of alienation on academic stress of high school students” is rejected. In order to investigate further, post hoc test was applied and the ‘t’-value obtained are as given below:

**Table 2: Showing Results of Post-hoc Tests of Alienation on Academic Stress**

Group	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value
High Alienated (A <sub>1</sub> )	110	115.82	20.70	4.45**
Low Alienated (A <sub>2</sub> )	107	104.46	16.62	

\*\* Significant at 0.01 level

The results obtained from Table 2. are clearly showing a statistically significant difference between high alienated (Mean=115) and low alienated (Mean=104) with 4.45 t-value at 0.01 level of significance. This indicates that high alienated high school students are higher on academic stress in comparison to the low alienated students. Therefore, a significant difference has been verified from the above results.

**Main Effect of Gender (B)**

Table-1 is clearly indicating that F-ratio 4.97 for main effect of gender on academic stress is significant at 0.05 level leading to the gender have significant effect on academic stress of high school students. Therefore, the null hypothesis, “There exists no significant main effect of gender on academic stress of high school students” is rejected. In order to investigate further, post-hoc test was employed for further verification of differences on the basis of gender on academic stress ( shown in given in Table-3)

**Table 3: Showing Results of Post-hoc Tests of Alienation on Academic Stress**

Group	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value
Male (B <sub>1</sub> )	82	106.02	19.35	2.48*
Female (B <sub>2</sub> )	135	112.76	19.38	

\*\* *Significant at 0.01 level*

**Double Interaction Effects Alienation (A) × Gender (D) on Academic Stress of High School Students**

As shown in Table 1. the F-ratio 4.23 is found to be significant at 0.05 level leading to the inference that there occurs and interaction of alienation and gender occurs on academic stress. Therefore, the null hypothesis, “There exists no significant interaction effect of alienation and gender on academic stress of high school students” is rejected. It may therefore, be said that there is significant interaction effect of alienation and gender on academic stress of high school students. **Misra et.al (2000)** also reported gender differences in context of academic stress. **Bhansali R, Trivedi K. (2008)** also confirmed that girl students are more on stress and anxiety than boys. these results were further confirmed by **Dhull and Kumari (2015)**. They reported that Female subjects were found to be under more academic stress as compared to their male counterparts. But the results of **Sagar, and Singh (2017)** were contradictory to the above results. t-tests were further employed to find out the significant of difference in mean scores of academic stress for different groups (as shown in Table-4). The mean scores for academic stress of different groups for alienation and gender have also been illustrated graphically in Fig.2.

**Table 4: ‘t’-values for Mean Scores of Academic Stress of High School Students for Different Groups of Alienation (A) × Gender (D)**

Group	N		Mean		S.D		t-value
A <sub>1</sub> B <sub>1</sub> vs A <sub>2</sub> B <sub>1</sub>	37	45	110.19	102.6	18.92	19.24	1.79 (NS)
A <sub>1</sub> B <sub>1</sub> vs A <sub>1</sub> B <sub>2</sub>	37	73	110.19	118.67	18.92	21.10	2.05 *
A <sub>1</sub> B <sub>1</sub> vs A <sub>2</sub> B <sub>2</sub>	37	62	110.19	105.81	18.92	14.45	1.29 (NS)
A <sub>2</sub> B <sub>1</sub> vs A <sub>1</sub> B <sub>2</sub>	45	73	102.6	118.67	19.24	21.10	4.15 **
A <sub>2</sub> B <sub>1</sub> vs A <sub>2</sub> B <sub>2</sub>	45	62	102.6	105.81	19.24	14.45	0.98 (NS)
A <sub>1</sub> B <sub>2</sub> vs A <sub>2</sub> B <sub>2</sub>	73	62	118.67	105.81	21.10	14.45	4.05 **

\*\*Significant at 0.01 level \*Significant at 0.05 level, NS= Not Significant, A<sub>1</sub>= High Alienated , A<sub>2</sub>= Low Alienated, B<sub>1</sub>= Male, B<sub>2</sub>= Female

Table-4 Indicates that the t-value is 1.79 for high alienated male students (A<sub>1</sub>B<sub>1</sub>) and low alienated male students (A<sub>2</sub>B<sub>1</sub>) are found to be insignificant at 0.05 level. However, a glance at Table-4. indicates that the t-value is 2.05 for high alienated male students (A<sub>1</sub>B<sub>1</sub>) and high alienated female students (A<sub>1</sub>B<sub>2</sub>) are found to be significant at 0.05 level. From the mean scores it can also be concluded that high alienated female students (A<sub>1</sub>B<sub>2</sub>) have more academic stress than their counterparts. The t-value (1.29) for high alienated male students (A<sub>1</sub>B<sub>1</sub>) and low alienated female students (A<sub>2</sub>B<sub>2</sub>) is found to be insignificant at 0.05 level. Further the t-value obtained is 4.15 for low alienated male students (A<sub>2</sub>B<sub>1</sub>) and high alienated female students (A<sub>1</sub>B<sub>2</sub>) are found to be significant at 0.01 level. From the mean scores it can also be concluded that high alienated female students (A<sub>1</sub>B<sub>2</sub>) have more academic stress than the low alienated male students (A<sub>2</sub>B<sub>1</sub>). t-value is resulted from the analysis from Table 4. is 0.98 for low alienated male students (A<sub>2</sub>B<sub>1</sub>) and low alienated female students (A<sub>2</sub>B<sub>2</sub>) is found to be insignificant at 0.05 level. It was also found that the t-value is 4.05 for high alienated female students (A<sub>1</sub>B<sub>2</sub>) and low alienated female students (A<sub>2</sub>B<sub>2</sub>) are found to be significant at 0.01 level. (The comparison between different groups have been illustrated in Fig. No.2. a study done by **Brown et.al (2003)** also marked gender differences among students on alienation.

**Fig 2: Mean Scores for Interaction Effect of Alienation and Gender on Academic Stress of High School Student**



**Conclusions:**

- ❖ Alienation has significant effect on Academic Stress of high school students
- ❖ Gender has significant effect on Academic Stress of high school students
- ❖ Alienation and Gender both have a significant interaction effect on Academic Stress of high school students.

**Educational Implications:**

Stress pertaining to education among school students is a big issue not only in our country but the problem can be seen at global level. Increasing level of stress has been found to be affected by alienation. High alienated school students have been found to be suffered with high stress. Therefore adequate measures should be taken in reducing alienation among students. it can be done by enhancing social activities and making the teaching learning environment more interesting and friendly. High alienated students can be trained by employing such methods which can make them more social and more extroverts. Alienated students estranged themselves from school. Therefore school authorities and teachers should pay an attention by arranging school activities whether academics or non academics in more amenable way. The curriculum of the school can be implemented with more flexibility. Another finding of the study suggests that individual differences should be taken in to account as gender has also found to influence the academic stress.

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