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Stress of Secondary School Students in Maram and Mao Area, Senapati District, Manipur

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ABSTRACT

Stress is a significant problem for Secondary students because this is also a stage of one's life where they deal with many life-changing events. It is essential to identify the cause of the stress among Secondary school students so that we can find ways to effectively intervene it. The objectives of the study are to study the level of stress of the secondary school students, the correlation between stress and academic achievement, and to study whether there exists a significant difference in the level of stress with respect to gender, class and school differences. The Descriptive method of research was adopted. The study covers all the secondary school students in the Mao and Maram areas of the Senapati District, Manipur. For the study, a sample of 200 students from various secondary schools in Mao and Maram of Senapati District, Manipur. The sampling was done on Class IX and X students by using the stratified random sampling technique. The findings of the study show that there exists a positive average level of stress. The levels of stress do not meaningfully impact students' academic performance in their last examination, gender, and academic level do not significantly influence stress, whereas the school environment has a notable impact on student stress levels.

Key Words: Stress, Academic Achievement, Secondary, Manipur, Senapati, Maram and Mao

INTRODUCTION

Life is full of challenges. If not dealt with, these situations can manifest stress, a word which has no clear definition and may differ from person to person, having different meanings for different people under different conditions. Stress is a pressure upon an individual when a person is not able to cope with it. Stress is any situation or event that evokes negative thoughts and feelings in every individual. Stress is a natural response that our body and mind experience when facing challenges or any uneasy situations. It triggers a cascade of physiological and psychological changes, preparing you to either confront the situation or flee from it. The physical and mental health of a person can be greatly affected by chronic or excessive stress.

Stress is a significant problem for Secondary students because this is also a stage of one's life where they deal with many life-changing events. It is essential to identify the cause of the stress among Secondary school students so that we can find ways to effectively intervene in it.

High levels of stress can affect physical, mental well-being and academic performance, and it is one of the major precursors of stress. Stress can be understood as a state of tension experienced by individuals facing extraordinary demands, constraints or opportunities. Stress is a common aspect of life that emerges when individuals perceive a gap between the demands placed on them and their ability to cope. For secondary students, stress such as academic pressures, social dynamics, and personal expectations can contribute to stress. Stress is a physiological and psychological response to challenging situations, triggering the "fight or

flight" mechanism. It can result from various factors, such as work pressure, personal issues, or unexpected events, affecting both mental and physical well-being. Understanding and managing stress are essential for maintaining a balanced and healthy lifestyle. Lack of stress contributes to healthy well-being.

Stress typically refers to a state of mental or emotional strain resulting from challenging situations. It can also describe the physical forces or pressure experienced by an object. For the secondary school students stress frequently occurs due to academic performance such as change of school, late during examination, personal loss or illness, mental illness, introvert, pressure of household, relationship with the authority of the school, being a naughty student, friendship, and the environment, are some to the problems that cause stress to students. Lack of stress contributes to healthy well-being.

RELATED LITERATURE

Stress among adolescents has been widely studied as a determinant of psychological and academic outcomes. Pascoe et al. (2019) reported that high levels of school-related stress negatively affect cognitive performance and emotional well-being. Deng et al. (2022) emphasized that both family and academic stress contribute to depressive symptoms and reduced academic engagement among students. In the Indian context, Kataria (2016) found a significant relationship between socio-economic status and student stress, highlighting the role of social and environmental factors. As per findings of some researchers the academic stress is a critical predictor of academic performance among higher education students, though findings remain mixed. While international studies consistently show negative associations between stress and achievement, evidence from Northeast India is limited. This gap warrants region-specific investigations, such as the present study, to explore how local school environments and cultural contexts influence stress among secondary school students.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the level of stress of the secondary school students.
2. To study whether there exists a significant correlation between stress and academic achievement.
3. To study whether there exists a significant difference in the level of stress with respect to gender, class and school differences.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

1. There exists a significant positive correlation between stress and academic achievement.
2. There exists a significant difference in the level of stress with respect to gender, class and school differences.

RESEARCH METHOD

Method of the study

The study and information collected were based on the Descriptive method of research.

Population of the study

The study population of the present study covers all the secondary school students in the Mao and Maram areas of the Senapati District, Manipur

Sample and Sampling technique

For the present study, the researcher has determined a sample of 200 students from various secondary schools in Mao and Maram of Senapati District, Manipur, enrolled during the academic session 2022-2023. The sampling was done on Class IX and X students, where data was collected from 7 schools, where 92 were female and 108 were male, and 92 participants from class X, and the remaining 108 were collected from class IX. Stratified random sampling was employed to maintain proportional representation across schools, gender, and class levels.

Table 1: Sample of the study

Sl. No.	Name of the School	Class	Male	Female	Total	Grand Total
1	Asufii Christian School	IX	7	6	13	24
		X	6	5	11	
2	Don Bosco Higher Secondary School (Maram)	IX	14	15	30	54
		X	14	11	25	
3	Don Bosco Higher Secondary School (Punanamei Mao)	IX	6	5	12	30
		X	5	13	18	
4	Mount Gibeon Higher Secondary School	IX	3	12	15	29
		X	6	8	14	
5	Nazareth Residential School	IX	0	0	0	26
		X	13	13	26	
6	Okai Academy	IX	5	5	10	20
		X	5	5	10	
7	P.P. Christian English High School	IX	6	6	12	18
		X	2	4	6	

Tool used

In the present study, the researcher used the Stress Scale (SSS-AZ) developed by Dr. Zaki Akhtar is a standardized tool with established validity and reliability in measuring student stress. In the present study, the internal consistency of the scale was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, which yielded a coefficient of 0.87, indicating high reliability.

Data analysis

In this present study, the researcher used various statistical tools and software, such as mean, standard deviation, t-test, ANOVA, and Pearson coefficient of correlation.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Table 2: Level of stress among secondary school students

Variable	Mean	SD	Z-score mean	Z-score SD
Stress	154.28	17.47	0.0001	1.0

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he above Table 2 indicates the overall stress level of secondary school students of Mao and Maram areas, Senapati district. The mean and SD of the total stress are 154.28 and 17.47. The mean Z score of total professional attitude is 0.0001. Hence, the calculated mean indicated that there exists a positive average level of stress in secondary school students of Mao and Maram areas, Senapati District.

Table 3: Correlation between stress and the academic performance of students.

Variables	r	Sig.
Stress and Academic Achievement	-0.048	0.501

The study also explores the relationship between stress and academic achievement among Class IX and X secondary school students, based on their performance in their last final academic examination. The Pearson correlation coefficient is -0.048, which indicates a very weak negative correlation between stress and academic achievement. This suggests that as stress levels increase, academic achievement may slightly decrease, but the relationship is so minimal that it is practically negligible. Furthermore, the significance value ($p = 0.501$) is well above the commonly accepted threshold of 0.05, meaning the correlation is not statistically significant. In other words, the data does not provide strong evidence to support a meaningful link between stress and academic performance in this group of students. It is likely that other factors, such as study habits, motivation, or support systems, play a more substantial role in influencing academic outcomes. Thus, hypothesis 1 is rejected.

Table 4: The level of stress among female and male students.

Variable	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	Sig.
Male	92	-0.279	1.009	198	3.762	0.439
Female	108	0.237	0.931			

The data in Table 4 presents the level of stress among male students, with a sample size of 92. The mean stress score for males is -0.279, with a standard deviation of 1.009. The degrees of freedom (df) for the t-test is 198, and the calculated t-value is 3.762. However, the significance level (p-value) is 0.439, which is much higher than the conventional threshold of 0.05. This indicates that the difference in stress levels between male and female students is not statistically significant. In other words, although the t-value suggests a difference, the high p-value means we cannot confidently conclude that gender has a meaningful impact on stress levels in this sample. Further investigation with a larger or more balanced sample might be needed to draw stronger conclusions. Therefore, hypothesis 2 regarding gender differences is rejected.

Table 5: The level of stress between class IX and X students.

Class	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-value	Sig.
IX	91	-0.007	1.065	198	-0.101	0.116
X	109	0.006	0.946			

The data in Table 5 compares the level of stress between Class IX and X students. Class IX students ($N = 91$) have a mean stress score of -0.007 with a standard deviation of 1.065, while Class X students ($N = 109$) have a slightly higher mean score of 0.006 and a standard deviation of 0.946. The t-test conducted to compare the two groups yields a t-value of -0.101 with degrees of freedom (df) of 198, and a p-value of 0.116. Since the p-value is greater than the conventional threshold of 0.05, the difference in stress levels between Class IX and X students

is not statistically significant. This means that, based on the data, there is no meaningful difference in stress levels between students in the two classes. The stress levels appear to be nearly identical, suggesting that academic level alone may not be a determining factor in student stress. So, hypothesis 2 regarding the class difference is rejected.

Table 6: The level of stress regarding school differences.

Schools	N	Mean	SD	F	Sig.
Asufii Christian School	24	0.239	0.972	3.408	0.003
Don Bosco Higher Secondary School (Maram)	54	0.329	0.978		
Don Bosco Higher Secondary School (Punanamei Mao)	29	0.081	0.860		
Mount Gibeon Higher Secondary School	29	0.398	1.294		
Nazareth Residential School	26	0.127	0.409		
Okai Academy	20	0.239	1.236		
P.P Christian English High School	18	0.553	0.631		

The data in Table 6 examines differences in stress levels among students from various schools. The analysis includes seven schools, each with varying sample sizes and mean stress scores. The mean scores range from -0.553 (P.P. Christian English High School) to 0.398 (Mount Gibeon Higher Secondary School), indicating that students from different schools experience different levels of stress. The standard deviations also vary, suggesting differences in how consistently stress is experienced within each school.

The analysis yields an F-value of 3.408 and a significance level (p-value) of 0.003. Since the p-value is below the conventional threshold of 0.05, the result is statistically significant. This means that there are meaningful differences in stress levels among students from the different schools included in the study. In other words, the school environment may play a significant role in influencing student stress, and further investigation could help identify specific factors within schools that contribute to these differences. Thus, the hypothesis 2 regarding the school difference is accepted.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The following are the major findings of the study:

1. **Teacher Stress Levels:** Among 200 teachers, the mean stress score was 154.28 with a standard deviation of 17.47. The Z-score mean was approximately zero (0.0001), and the Z-score standard deviation was 1.0, indicating a normalized distribution. Hence, the calculated mean indicated that there exists a positive average level of stress in secondary school students of Maram and Mao areas, Senapati District.
2. **Stress and Academic Achievement:** There is a very weak negative correlation between stress and academic achievement ($r = -0.048$, $p = 0.501$). This relationship is not statistically significant, indicating that stress levels do not meaningfully impact students' academic performance in their last examination.
3. **Gender Differences in Stress:** Male students ($N = 92$) had a mean stress score of -0.279 ($SD = 1.009$), but the difference in stress levels between male and female students was not

statistically significant (t = 3.762, p = 0.439). This suggests that gender does not play a significant role in determining stress levels among students.

4. **Class-Level Comparison:** Class IX students (Mean = -0.007, SD = 1.065) and Class X students (Mean = 0.006, SD = 0.946) showed nearly identical stress levels. The difference was not statistically significant (t = -0.101, p = 0.116), indicating that academic level does not significantly influence stress.
5. **School-Wise Differences in Stress:** Stress levels varied significantly across different schools (F = 3.408, p = 0.003). For example, students from P.P. Christian English High School had the lowest mean stress score (-0.553), while Mount Gibeon Higher Secondary School had the highest (0.398). This suggests that the school environment may have a notable impact on student stress levels.

DISCUSSION

The findings reveal that students enrolled in various educational institutions in the Maram and Mao areas experience an average level of stress, this stress does not significantly affect academic performance. This aligns with Sedláková's (2021) review, which suggests that stress impacts achievement only when chronic or extreme. The absence of gender and class differences supports Pascoe et al. (2019), who argue that adolescent stress is more strongly associated with environmental than biological factors. However, significant school-wise differences underline the influence of institutional climate. Factors such as teacher–student relationships, academic workload, peer support, and extracurricular opportunities may explain the observed variance. Schools with supportive counseling services and balanced curricula may help students from stress or help improve on navigating stress, whereas highly competitive or under-resourced environments may impair it. Future research could employ qualitative methods to identify specific environmental stressors within schools.

CONCLUSION

Stress has always been part of our life. Knowing about stress and learning it to understand and cope up with should be trained and prepared through various mediums. A proper understanding of stress and its causes are needed for every student to deal effectively with it in the coming days. Even out of academic life, stress is a problem not only for them but also for every individual. It could be understood that stress can cause both negative and positive influences in our life if not handled properly. Consulting adults or experts or listening to motivational and positive speech are also necessary to cope with stress positively in one's life. Stress is caused by different factors, which can be reduced or managed in different ways. Therefore, stress is an important and influential part of students' lives.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding this manuscript.

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CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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