

High IQ Adolescents Under Stress: Do They Perform Poor in Academics

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ABSTRACT The study was aimed at finding if any relationship exists between psychological stress and academic achievement of high IQ adolescents. Subjects were high IQ adolescents having IQ 110 and above. Bisht Battery of Stress Scales was used to assess the amount of stress on these adolescents. Academic achievement was assessed on the basis of average of marks obtained in last three examinations. Correlation coefficients between stress scores and academic scores were computed. Academic achievement was found to be negatively and significantly correlated with all types of stress except existential stress.

INTRODUCTION

Stress is a part of life. Up to a certain extent stress proves to be accelerating the magnitude and quality of efforts in achieving the desired goal. Students, who find 5-6 hrs. study a really tedious task, can study for 10-12 hrs. at a stretch with better concentration during exam days. But the prolonged stress is likely to reduce the efficiency of a person. Adolescence is the age of stress and storm. Rapid body changes and heightened emotionality characterize this stage of human development. And when the adolescents face additional stress in their family, school and social environment, what is the combined effect of all this psychological distress? Does it influence their working ability? Does it affect their performance at school? Bell (1995), Dubois and Felner (1992) and Ganesan (1995) have found that stress made significant contribution in poor school performance of adolescents. One may wonder if mental stress can adversely affect the promising adolescents, having above average intelligence, resulting in their poor academic performance. The present study was carried out to know if any relationship exists between mental stress and academic achievement of high IQ adolescents. The objectives of the study were-

- 1 To identify high IQ adolescents.
- 2 To examine the relationship between mental stress and academic achievement of high IQ adolescents.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Sample of the study consisted of 120

adolescents, having IQ above 110, in the age group of 15-17 Years from four schools of Hisar City (Haryana). WISC-R (Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-Revised) devised by David Wechsler (1974) was used to assess the intelligence level of the subjects. The Scale is divided into verbal scale and performance scale, each of which has 6 subtests. WISC-R is most recognized and widely used intelligence test around the world (Witt et al, 1988). The scale yielded verbal IQ and performance IQ which were combined to give full scale IQ. Adolescents having IQ above 110 were selected for the study. The high IQ adolescents were tested for mental stress with the help of Bisht Battery of Stress Scale (BBSS) devised by Bisht (1987). Adolescents were tested for seven types of stress viz. Existential Stress, Achievement Stress, Academic Stress, Social Stress, Institutional Stress, Financial Stress and Vocational Stress. Higher score on the test indicated greater stress. Academic Achievement was assessed on the basis of average percentage of marks obtained by the adolescents in last three examinations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows the correlation coefficients of mental stress and academic achievement. It is clear from the table that no significant correlation existed between academic achievement and existential stress while other types of stress viz. achievement stress, academic stress, social stress, institutional stress, financial stress, vocational stress as well as total mental stress were negatively and significantly correlated with academic

Table 1: Correlation coefficient of mental stress and academic achievement of adolescents.

<i>Mental stress</i>	<i>Academic achievement</i>
Existential Stress	- 0.05
Achievement Stress	- 0.37**
Academic Stress	- 0.26**
Social Stress	- 0.27**
Institutional Stress	- 0.40**
Financial Stress	- 0.41**
Vocational Stress	- 0.55**
Total Stress	- 0.51**

Note: ** Significant at $p < 0.01$

achievement of adolescents where 'r' values ranged from -0.26 to -0.55, $p < .01$. It means greater was the stress exerting on the student poorer was his performance. Such negative relationship between academic achievement and psychological stress was also reported by Ford (1993), Moore (1997) and Alatorre and Los Rey (1999).

CONCLUSION

A person under stress needs to fight the stress in order to survive. Adolescents whose minds are full of apprehensions are not free to use their energy and ability in achieving. There foremost priority is to nullify the effects of stress over their mind and they have to spend major part of their energy in this task. Hence a lot of highly

intelligent children who are under mental stress give poor performance in academic.

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