Adolescent Well-being under Siege
The Burden of Academic Stress

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Abstract

Academic stress is a prevalent issue among students at various educational levels, significantly impacting their mental and physical well-being. Understanding the sources, consequences, and coping mechanisms associated with academic stress is crucial for developing effective interventions. This study aims to identify the primary factors of academic stress in Adolescents. A sample of 350 adolescents was taken and Confirmatory Factor analysis was conducted using PLS SEM. The findings revealed that major sources of academic stress include heavy workload, pressure from study, high expectations from self, worry about grades and despondency. The effects of academic stress manifested as anxiety, depression, sleep disturbances, suicidal thoughts and decreased academic performance. Academic stress is a multifaceted issue that significantly affects students' mental health and academic success.

Keywords: Academic Stress, Student Wellbeing, Adolescents, Pressure, Workload, Despondency.

Introduction

Adolescents' problem behaviour is characterised by actions that diverge from societal norms and expectations during the developmental phase of adolescence. These behaviours can include a range of activities, such as substance abuse, delinquency, truancy and aggressive behaviour. Understanding these behaviours

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is crucial as they have significant implications for adolescents' physical and mental health, as well as their social functioning. According to Markova and Nikitskaya (2017), problem behaviour in adolescents encompasses a spectrum of activities that are not aligned with societal standards. These behaviours are often viewed through the lens of societal expectations, which vary across cultures and communities (Jiang et. al, 2022). Kenneth et al. (2003) highlight that such behaviours are critical indicators of adolescents' overall well-being. They argue that problem behaviours can provide insights into underlying issues related to mental health and social functioning (Torsheim et al., 2003; Kaman et al., 2021; Fu et al., 2022). Academic stress is defined as mental distress resulting from frustrations due to poor academic performance and the anticipation of potential failure (Verma and Gupta, 1990). It is characterised by feelings of inadequacy, fear of disappointing others and a general sense of hopelessness concerning academic success. It is a feeling of pressure brought on by a student's evaluation of rigorous academic standards (such as an excessive amount of homework and tests) (Weiqun and Iris, 2000; Lee and Larson, 2000). For school-age children, getting the best marks or ranking at the top of the class are common goals. However, the quest of academic success usually leads to the accumulation of academic stress, jeopardising the psychological growth and well-being of students (Schotte and Clum, 1987). High school students' main causes of stress include issues relating to school, including tests, grades, studying, and pressure from both external and internal sources to do well (Kouzma and Kennedy, 2004). Numerous studies emphasise how the pressure to perform academically can lead to significant stress and anxiety among students (Ringdal et. al, 2020; Rana et al., 2019; Murdoch Children's Research Institute, 2015; Akram and Khan, 2012; Gillihan et al., 2005).

Academic stress, which may be caused by problems like homework, tests and failing grades, is a common psychological problem that affects adolescents all over the world (Santhakumar et al., 2024; Kristensen et al., 2023). For students, the exam-focused educational system—particularly the college admission exam—has created a fiercely competitive and demanding learning environment (Sang et al., 2017). Numerous research has demonstrated that academic pressure may have a significant influence on adolescent's happiness, family relationships, and physical and mental health (Subramani and Kadhiravan, 2017; Zhang et al., 2016; Sun et al., 2011). Academic pressure is the term used to describe the stress, unease and other feelings that arise throughout the learning process because of pressure from the family,

school, and society (Luo et al., 2020). Research indicates that adolescents who perform well academically have increased learning demands from both parents and instructors, leading to increased academic stress. Negative emotions might result in deviant actions when academic performance falls short of expectations (Çelik, 2019; Ma et al., 2018). Adolescents who do not perform well in school are more susceptible to peer pressure on campus and are more likely to experience worry, dread and feelings of inadequacy when it comes to their academics. Nevertheless, their lack of success in school leaves them open to criticism and scrutiny from their peers. This results in psychological problems that are rebellious, problematic behaviour including hyperactivity and violence, and even criminal activity (McEvoy and Welker; 2000).

Education-related concerns have also been connected to mental health problems like depression, anxiety and suicide thoughts, and have been shown to be the main cause of stress for teenagers in Western countries (Assana et al., 2017; Shankar and Park, 2016; Ang and Huan, 2006; Anderman, 2002). The level of stress, anxiety, and dysphoria-related symptoms reported by Greek adolescents showed a substantial correlation. These symptoms included pressure to study well, worries about grades and melancholy (Moustaka et. al, 2023a; 2023b). In both the French and Swedish adolescents, there was a positive correlation between high school work pressure and the prevalence of psychosomatic problems during all examined school years (Sonmark et al., 2016). Vietnamese high school students choose to seek assistance from friends, classmates, relatives or family members rather than professionals due to their high levels of stress, depression and worry as well as their medium levels of mental health literacy (Thai et al., 2020). Academic issues have been linked to mental health problems in adolescents, including anxiety, depression and suicide, in various Asian countries, including Korea, Singapore, Thailand, India, etc. (Jagannathan et al., 2023; Lee et al., 2000; Assana et al., 2017; Truc et al., 2015; Ang and Huan, 2006).

Literature Review

Pressure from schoolwork was positively correlated with psychosomatic health issues (Bersia et al., 2022; Cosma et al., 2020; H¨ogberg et al., 2020). For both girls and boys, there was a favourable correlation between the number of emotional troubles and academic stress (Haugan et al., 2021). Comparing students with low levels of school work pressure to those with high or moderate levels, the former were more likely to report high levels of psychosomatic symptoms (Redmond et al., 2022; L¨onnfjord and Hagquist, 2021). Tension, dissatisfaction and other feelings brought on during the learning process by pressure from the

family, school, and society too (Luo et al., 2020).

Workload is a predominant factor contributing to student academic stress, driven by the perception of excessive academic demand (Shahmohammadi, 2011). Many students report feeling overwhelmed by the sheer volume of homework, which often extends beyond reasonable limits and encroaches on their personal time, leading to heightened stress levels. This sense of overload is further exacerbated by the substantial amount of schoolwork that must be managed concurrently, creating a constant pressure to juggle multiple assignments and projects (Weiqun and Iris, 2000). Additionally, the frequent scheduling of tests and exams adds another layer of stress, as students must continuously prepare for assessments, often feeling that they do not have adequate time to fully absorb and understand the material. The cumulative effect of these academic demands can lead to a relentless cycle of stress and anxiety, underscoring the need for a balanced and manageable workload to support student, well-being and academic success (Masood et al., 2018).

One significant variable contributing to student academic stress is the pervasive worry about grades, which manifests through various psychological pressures (Jahara et. al, 2022). Many students experience intense feelings of disappointment towards their teachers when their test or exam results do not meet expectations, fearing they have let down those who invest in their academic success (Zeidner, 2020; Struthers et al., 2000). This sentiment is often compounded by the pressure to meet parental expectations, where poor academic performance can lead to a profound sense of having disappointed their parents, who often place a high value on educational achievements (Sun et al., 2011; Shahmohammadi, 2011). Furthermore, the belief that academic grades are crucial to future success and potentially determinant of one's entire life trajectory, exacerbates this stress (Kouzma and Kennedy, 2004). This triad of concerns—disappointment of teachers, parental expectations and the perceived life-altering importance of grades—collectively contributes to a heightened state of anxiety and stress among students, highlighting the need for supportive interventions to mitigate these pressures (Nikanjam et al., 2022; Bankole and Ogunsakin, 2015).

Self-expectation is a critical factor in student academic stress, characterised by the internal pressures' students place upon themselves to achieve high standards (Jahara et al., 2022; Tan and Yates, 2011). Many students experience significant stress when they perceive that they have not met their rigorous benchmarks, which can lead to a pervasive sense of inadequacy and self-doubt (Putro et al., 2022). This internalised stress is often so

intense that failing to meet personal expectations results in feelings of not being good enough, undermining their self-esteem and overall well-being. The worry associated with unmet goals can also disrupt sleep patterns, as students lie awake at night, ruminating over their perceived shortcomings and fearing the consequences of their perceived failures (Sifatu et al., 2020). This cycle of self-imposed pressure and resultant anxiety underscores the profound impact of self-expectation on academic stress, necessitating strategies to help students manage their own standards and expectations more healthily (Wongdaeng, 2022).

The study also considers a school despondency as a variable. Promoting positive interactions and emotions in the classroom can enhance student performance as well as the overall functioning of the school, as children spend a significant portion of their time there interacting with teachers and peers (McCabe et al., 2011). Children should enjoy their education and not just on the weekends or after school (Uusitalo-Malmivaara, 2012). In contrast, the study also revealed that students' contentment appeared to decline during their time in school (Hunter and Csikszentmihalyi, 2003). The study demonstrates a strong relationship between stress, depression, self-esteem, and school satisfaction and the degree of school despondency (Cheon and Lim, 2020).

The present study intends to investigate the prevalence, causes and effects of academic stress. By analysing existing literature, conducting surveys and utilising quantitative analysis, the study aims to develop a comprehensive understanding of the concept of academic stress in adolescents that affect mental health and overall well-being of adolescents. The study offers evidence based recommendations for educators, parents and policymakers to support students in managing academic stress.

Research Methodology

1. **Data Collection:** The study collected data from adolescents from the age group of 15 to 19, presently studying in class IX to XII. A total of 400 students answered the questionnaire; 93.75 per cent was the response rate. After deleting replies from missing data, 350 students' responses were analysed, yielding an approximate response rate of 87.5 per cent. 48.5 per cent were female and 51.5 per cent were males.
2. **Measures:** The study used an instrument on academic stress, developed by Sun et al. (2011), consisting of 16 items assessed on a 5 point Likert scale from 1 to 5 (strongly disagree = 1 to strongly agree = 5). The subject's score on this instrument ranges from 16 to 80, with a higher score indicating greater stress. According to Sun et al. (2011), the reliability of the

retest technique was 0.78 and the Cronbach's alpha method was 0.82.

3. **Structural Equation Model (SEM):** It was used to demonstrate the relationships among the latent variables— pressure, self-expectation, despondency, workload, and worry. In measurement model, pressure is measured by four indicators (IT1, IT2, IT3, IT4); Self-expectation is measured by three indicators (IT11, IT12, IT13); despondency is measured by three indicators (IT14, IT15, IT16); workload is measured by three indicators (IT5, IT6, IT7) and worry is measured by three indicators (IT8, IT9, IT10). Item Statements (SEM)

Table 1
Educational Stress Scale for Adolescents

Variables	Item No.	Statements
Pressure from Study	IT 1	I feel a lot of pressure in my daily studying.
	IT 2	There is too much competition among classmates that brings me a lot of academic pressure.
	IT 3	Future education and employment bring me a lot of academic pressure.
	IT 4	My parents care about my academic grades too much that brings me a lot of pressure.
Workload	IT 5	I feel there is too much homework.
	IT 6	I feel that there is too much school work.
	IT 7	I feel that there are too many tests and exams in the school.
Worry	IT 8	I feel that I have disappointed my teacher when my test or exam results are not ideal.
	IT 9	I feel that I have disappointed my parents when my test or exam results are poor.
	IT 10	Academic grade is very important to my future and can even determine my whole life.
Self-expectation	IT 11	I feel stressed when I do not live up to my own standards.
	IT 12	When I fail to live up to my own expectations, I feel I am not good enough.
	IT 13	I usually cannot sleep because of worry when I cannot meet the goals, I set for myself.

Despondency	IT 14	I always lack confidence with my academic scores.
	IT 15	I am very dissatisfied with my academic grades.
	IT 16	It is very difficult for me to concentrate during classes.

4. **Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA):** The CFA was used to assess the relationships between observed variables (items), i.e., IT1 to IT16 and latent constructs (factors), i.e., pressure, self-expectation, despondency, workload and worry in the model. The observed variables should have a reasonable association with the applicable latent constructs if the factor loadings are larger than the criterion of 0.5.
5. **Model Fit indicators:** Chi-Square/df (CMIN/df) ratio measures model fit, with values less than three indicating a good fit. Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Adjusted GFI (AGFI) and Normed Fit Index (NFI)— values closer to 1 indicate a better fit, with values above 0.90 being desirable. Standardised Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) values less than 0.08 are generally considered acceptable. Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) and Comparative Fit Index (CFI) with values above 0.90 indicating a good fit.
6. **Reliability and Validity:** Cronbach's Alpha (*a*) measures internal consistency or reliability of the constructs. Standardised and Unstandardised, both versions should be similar if the data is scaled appropriately. Composite Reliability (CR) is another tool to measure internal consistency and reliability. Both Cronbach's Alpha (*a*) and Composite Reliability (CR) values above 0.70 are considered good, indicating the items consistently represent the construct. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) measures the amount of variance captured by the construct in relation to the amount of variance due to measurement error. Values above 0.50 indicate that more than half of the variance in the construct is due to the items, suggesting good convergent validity.
7. **Discriminant Validity:** The Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) values are used to assess discriminant validity in a set of constructs. Discriminant validity is established when a construct is empirically distinct from other constructs in the model. A common rule of thumb is that HTMT values should be below 0.85 (sometimes 0.90 is used) to indicate good discriminant validity.

Results

Structural Equation Model (SEM)

Fig. 1 shows, results of the SEM model. High loading values indicate strong relationships between latent variables and their indicators. For example, IT2 has a high loading on Pressure (1.419), suggesting IT2 is a strong indicator of Pressure. Lower loading values indicate weaker relationships. For example, IT6 has a relatively lower loading on Workload (0.054). Correlations Between Latent Variables (green arrows with correlation values)— pressure and self-expectation variables demonstrate highest correlation (0.875), whereas despondency and workload variables demonstrate lowest correlation (0.292). Observed variable values (circles connected to the indicators), these values represent the variance explained by the indicators. Higher values suggest more variance in the observed variables that is explained by the corresponding latent variable. For example, IT13 has a high value (0.873), indicating a strong explanation by self-expectation.

Pressure and self-expectation are highly interrelated, and both are strongly linked to despondency. These variables share significant overlap, indicating that high pressure and self-expectation often lead to the feelings of despondency. Workload has a moderate effect on other variables, indicating it plays a role but is not as central as pressure or self-expectation in this model. Worry is influenced by all other variables, suggesting it is a broader outcome affected by various factors, but does not strongly influence other variables

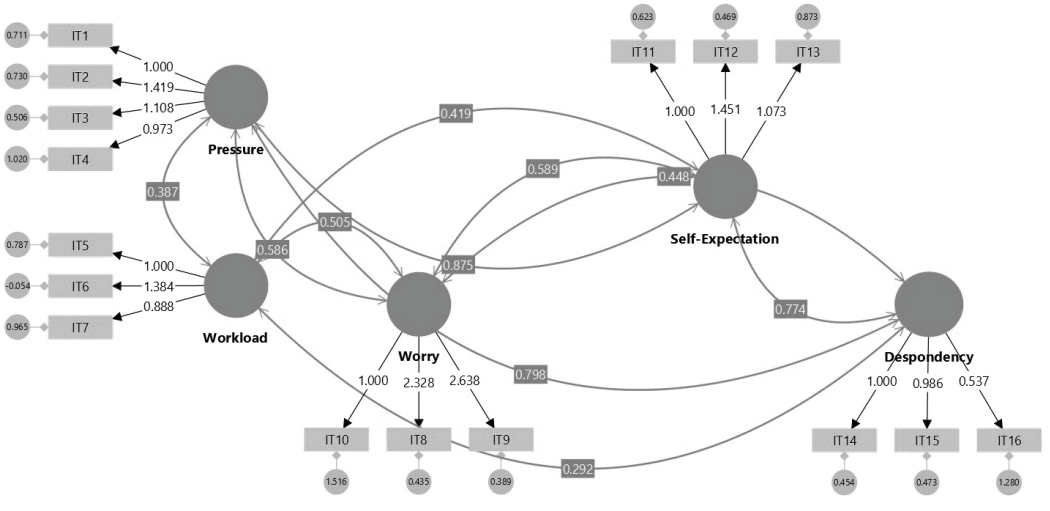

Figure 1: SEM Model to analyse relationship among the latent variables

itself. The model highlights key areas where interventions might be most effective, especially focusing on pressure and self-expectation to reduce despondency and worry. The structural equation model, thus, provides a comprehensive overview of how these latent variables and their indicators interact, pointing towards critical areas for potential intervention to improve the overall well-being.

Table 2
CFA Analysis (Factor Loading)

Items<-Constructs	Loading Value
IT5<Workload	0.712
IT2<Pressure	0.762
IT6<Workload	1.018
IT14<Despondency	0.849
IT8<Worry	0.86
IT4<Pressure	0.564
IT9<Worry	0.896
IT13<Self-expectation	0.666
IT7<Worry	0.631
IT16<Despondency	0.457
IT1<Pressure	0.643
IT10<Worry	0.361
IT11<Self-expectation	0.702
IT3<Pressure	0.741
IT15<Despondency	0.841
IT12<Self-expectation	0.855

Table 1 explains CFA analysis. According to the results, IT5 (0.712) and IT6 (1.018) both loads significantly on the workload construct, indicating that these items are strongly associated with the concept of workload. Items IT2 (0.762), IT4 (0.564), IT1 (0.643) and IT3 (0.741), all have notable loadings on the pressure construct, suggesting a strong relationship between these items and the pressure factor. Items IT14 (0.849), IT16 (0.457) and IT15 (0.841), load significantly on the despondency construct, indicating that these items are closely related to feelings of despondency. Items IT8 (0.86), IT9 (0.896), IT7 (0.631) and IT10 (0.361), all load on the worry construct, showing a strong connection between these items and the concept of worry. Items IT13 (0.666), IT11 (0.702) and IT12 (0.855), load significantly on the self-expectation construct, suggesting that these items are indicative of self-expectations. Overall, the factor loadings generally appear to be acceptable, as most of them exceed the common threshold of 0.5, indicating that the observed variables are reasonably related to their corresponding latent constructs. However, the interpretation of the results should also consider the theoretical context and the specific aims of your analysis. Additionally, it is essential to assess the overall fit of the CFA model using fit indices, which can provide further insight into the validity of the model.

The chi-square test assesses the fit of the model by comparing the observed covariance matrix with the model-implied covariance matrix. In the model, a better fit is suggested

by the estimated model's lower chi-square value (210.857) and higher degrees of freedom (94). An acceptable fit is suggested by the estimated model's Chi-Square/df (CMIN/df) value of 2.243, which is less than the criterion value of 3. With a GFI of 0.85, an AGFI of 0.824 and an NFI of 0.802, suggests an acceptable but not excellent fit. The TLI of 0.746 and CFI of 0.801 suggest a moderate fit.

Table 2 signifies that despondency, pressure and self-expectation are highly interrelated, indicating that individuals experiencing one of these issues are likely to experience the others as well. Workload has a weaker relationship with despondency but a moderate relationship with pressure, self-expectation and worry. Worry is moderately correlated with all other variables, suggesting it is somewhat influenced by and can influence the other factors. These correlations suggest that interventions targeting Pressure and self-expectation might simultaneously impact despondency, given their high correlations. Similarly, managing workload and worry might also contribute to better overall mental well-being, though their effects might be more moderate.

The findings for construct validity and reliability, including Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Composite Reliability (CR), and Cronbach's alpha (standardised and unstandardised), are shown in Table 3. Most

Table 3
Correlations

Constructs	Despondency	Pressure	Self-expectation	Workload	Worry
Despondency	1	0.798	0.774	0.292	0.448
Pressure	0.798	1	0.875	0.387	0.586
Self-expectation	0.774	0.875	1	0.419	0.589
Workload	0.292	0.387	0.419	1	0.505
Worry	0.448	0.586	0.589	0.505	1

Table 4
Reliability and Validity

Construct	Cronbach's alpha (standardised)	Cronbach's alpha (unstandardised)	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Despondency	0.754	0.754	0.772	0.546
Pressure	0.78	0.776	0.774	0.565
Self-expectation	0.773	0.772	0.793	0.556
Workload	0.818	0.817	0.836	0.647
Worry	0.709	0.709	0.776	0.558

Table 5
Discriminant Validity: HTMT

Construct	Despondency	Pressure	Self-Expectation	Workload	Worry
Despondency	0.739				
Pressure	0.798	0.682			
Self-Expectation	0.774	0.825	0.746		
Workload	0.292	0.387	0.419	0.805	
Worry	0.448	0.586	0.589	0.505	0.747

constructs show strong validity and reliability: Cronbach's alpha scores for despondency, pressure, self-expectation, workload and worry are all above 0.70, suggesting strong internal consistency. This is confirmed by the fact that their composite reliability scores are over 0.70. Additionally, AVE values exceed 0.5, indicating that there may not be any problems with convergent validity.

The findings of the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) are shown in Table 4. Values over these cutoffs (0.85) imply a lack of discriminant validity, implying that there may not be a discernible difference between the notions. The majority of the table's constructs have strong discriminant validity (HTMT scores<0.85). For example, it is demonstrated that despondency and pressure (HTMT=0.798) are separate constructs as value is below the threshold limit of 0.85.

Discussion

The present study aimed to investigate the multifaceted nature of academic stress among students, identifying key contributing factors through a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). The analysis affirmed five primary factors— workload, pressure from study, worry about grades, self-expectation and despondency. Each factor significantly contributes to the overall experience of academic stress, with implications for students' mental health and academic performance.

The findings indicate that workload is a predominant source of academic stress. Students often juggle multiple assignments, projects and examinations, which can lead to overwhelming pressure. This is consistent with previous research suggesting that excessive academic workload contributes to stress and burnout among students (Pascoe et al., 2020). The implications of this finding underscore the need for educational institutions to balance curricular demands with students' capacity to manage their workload effectively. Strategies, such as flexible deadlines, reduced assignments and improved time management training could mitigate the stress associated with heavy academic workloads.

Pressure from study emerged as another significant factor. This encompasses the intense effort and focus required to keep up with academic expectations and the competitive atmosphere prevalent in educational settings. The constant push to excel and the fear of falling behind peers can exacerbate stress levels. This aligns with the literature on academic pressure, which highlights the adverse effects of a high-stakes academic environment on student well-being (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). To address this, fostering a supportive learning environment and promoting collaborative rather than competitive academic practices may help reduce the stress associated with study pressure.

Worry about grades is a critical stressor identified in the study. Students often perceive their academic performance as a key determinant of their future success, leading to anxiety and stress about obtaining high grades. This concern is well-documented in academic stress literature, where grade-related anxiety is linked to various negative outcomes, including reduced academic motivation and increased mental health issues (Richardson et al., 2012). Interventions, such as grade reform policies, emphasis on learning over performance and provision of psychological support services can help alleviate grade-related stress.

The factor of self-expectation pertains to the internal pressures students place on themselves to meet high standards. Many students set unrealistic goals and experience stress when they fail to meet these self-imposed expectations. This is corroborated by studies on perfectionism, which show a strong correlation between high self-expectations and academic stress (Stoeber and Otto, 2006). Encouraging realistic goal setting and providing resources for self-compassion and resilience training can be beneficial in addressing the stress associated with self-expectation.

Despondency, characterised by feelings of hopelessness and a lack of motivation, was also identified as a significant factor. This state of mind can result from prolonged exposure to academic stress and is often a precursor to more severe mental health issues, such as depression (Hysenbegasi et al., 2005). The recognition of despondency as a component of academic stress highlights the need for proactive mental health support and early intervention programmes in educational settings. Counseling services, peer support networks and stress management workshops can play a vital role in preventing and alleviating despondency among students.

Implications of the Study

The findings of this study have several important implications for educators, policymakers and mental health professionals aiming to alleviate academic stress among students. In terms of educational policies and practices, institutions

should consider revising their curricula to balance academic rigour with students' capacity to manage their workload. This could involve reducing the number of assignments and examinations, allowing for more flexible deadlines, and integrating project-based learning to mitigate workload stress. Additionally, transitioning from high-stakes testing to more formative and continuous assessment methods can reduce the pressure related to grades. Emphasising learning processes and providing opportunities for students to demonstrate their knowledge in diverse ways can alleviate grade-related anxiety. Creating a collaborative rather than competitive academic atmosphere is also crucial; encouraging group work, peer learning and fostering a supportive community can help students feel less isolated and more supported in their academic endeavours.

In the realm of mental health and well-being, schools and universities should enhance their mental health services by providing counselling, stress management workshops and resilience training. These services can help students develop coping mechanisms to manage self-expectation and despondency. Promoting mental health awareness through campaigns and integrating mental health education into the curriculum can help destigmatise seeking help and educate students about the signs of academic stress and the importance of mental well-being. Implementing early intervention programmes to identify and support students at risk of severe academic stress can prevent the escalation of stress-related issues. Regular mental health screenings and peer support networks can play a crucial role in early detection and intervention.

Future Research Directions

The current study lays the groundwork for further exploration into the complex phenomenon of academic stress. Conducting longitudinal studies would provide a deeper understanding of how academic stress evolves over time and its long-term effects on students' mental health and academic performance. Such studies could track students from high school through college to identify critical periods of stress and effective coping strategies. Future research should also evaluate the effectiveness of various interventions designed to reduce academic stress. Randomised controlled trials could assess the impact of specific strategies, such as mindfulness training, time management workshops and curricular reforms, on different dimensions of academic stress.

Exploring academic stress across different cultural contexts could reveal how cultural values and educational systems influence stress levels. Comparative studies between countries with varying educational practices could provide insights into universal versus culture-specific stressors and coping mechanisms. Examining the role of individual differences, such as personality

traits, socio-economic status and previous academic experiences, in moderating academic stress could enhance the understanding of personalised stress management. Identifying which students are most vulnerable to specific stressors can help tailor interventions more effectively. With the increasing integration of technology in education, future research should investigate the role of digital learning environments in contributing to or alleviating academic stress. Studies could examine the impact of online learning, digital distractions and virtual support systems on students' stress levels.

Adopting interdisciplinary approaches that combine insights from psychology education, sociology and neuroscience can provide a more comprehensive understanding of academic stress. Collaborative research efforts can explore the biological, psychological and social factors contributing to stress and develop holistic intervention strategies. By addressing these future research directions, scholars can build on the current study's findings and contribute to a more nuanced and effective approach to managing academic stress, ultimately enhancing students' academic experiences and overall well-being.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study offers valuable insights into the components of academic stress among students, identifying workload, pressure from study, worry about grades, self-expectation and despondency as key factors. These findings provide a framework for developing targeted interventions to alleviate stress. Addressing these factors holistically can significantly enhance students' academic experiences and overall mental health. Educational institutions should consider reducing workload, fostering supportive learning environments, reforming assessment methods, promoting realistic goal-setting and enhancing mental health support services. By adopting a comprehensive approach that balances academic rigor with mental well-being, schools and universities can create more sustainable and supportive educational environments. Future research should explore the long-term impacts of these stress factors, evaluate intervention effectiveness, and consider the individual differences and cultural contexts to further inform stress management strategies

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