

OPEN ACCESS

Manuscript ID:
EDU-2025-14019311

Volume: 14

Issue: 1

Month: December

Year: 2025

P-ISSN: 2320-2653

E-ISSN: 2582-1334

Received: 26.08.2025

Accepted: 12.10.2025

Published Online: 01.12.2025

Citation:

Meenatchi, B., Gaspar Raja, A., Santhamani, B., & Ponnusamy, P. (2025). A Study on Academic Stress among Secondary School Students and their Learning Interest. *Shanlax International Journal of Education*, 14(1), 80–92.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.34293/education.v14i1.9311>




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A Study on Academic Stress among Secondary School Students and their Learning Interest


B. Meenatchi

Gandhigram Rural Institute, India

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0003-7969-2395>


A. Gaspar Raja

Gandhigram Rural Institute, India

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0009-9673-8918>


B. Santhamani

Gandhigram Rural Institute, India

 <https://orcid.org/0000-7891-2374>

P. Ponnusamy

Gandhigram Rural Institute, India

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8799-5121>

Abstract

Purpose: This study investigates the relationship between academic stress and learning interest among secondary school students in Tamil Nadu, India, examining how various stress factors influence student motivation and engagement in learning.

Methodology: A cross-sectional survey design was employed with 68 secondary school students selected through simple random sampling from four schools in Coimbatore District, Tamil Nadu. Data were collected using the standardized Student Academic Stress Scale (SASS) with six dimensions and the Student Learning Interest Questionnaire (SLIQ). Statistical analysis included descriptive statistics, t-tests, and linear regression analysis.

Results: The majority of students experienced high stress levels in their learning environment (mean=2.88), while showing no significant stress in academic workload (mean=3.07) and examination pressure (mean=3.07). Gender differences were significant only in academic workload stress ($t=2.91, p=0.01$), with females experiencing higher stress. Rural-urban differences were significant only in examination stress ($t=3.10, p=0.00$). Regression analysis revealed that academic stress did not significantly predict learning interest ($R^2=0.014, p=0.332$), suggesting that despite stress exposure, students maintain their intrinsic motivation to learn.

Conclusions: While secondary school students experience considerable environmental stress, their fundamental learning interest remains resilient. Educational institutions should prioritize stress management interventions and environmental improvements to enhance overall student well-being while preserving their natural learning motivation.

Keywords: Academic Stress, Learning Interest, Secondary Education, Student Well-being, Educational Environment, Stress Management

Introduction

The educational landscape has undergone unprecedented transformation following the COVID-19 pandemic, fundamentally altering teaching-learning dynamics and student experiences globally (Prime et al., 2020). This paradigm shift has not only disrupted established educational patterns but has also intensified academic stress among students, creating new challenges for maintaining learning interest and academic engagement. The transition back to traditional classroom settings has revealed persistent stress-related issues that demand immediate attention from educational stakeholders.