Perceived Academic Stress of General Academic Strand Students in Senior High School

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Abstract

Aim: The main purpose of this study was to assess the perceived academic stress among General Academic Strand students at Dagohoy National High School for the School Year 2022-2023.

Methodology: This research used a descriptive evaluative design. The purposive-universal technique was used in which the sample was selected purposely as all students enrolled in the General Academic Strand were being considered. To determine the level of components of the perceived academic stress, the computation of the weighted mean and Parametric Test- Single Factor ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) was applied. To determine the association between the respondents' profile and the perceived academic stress, the data were subjected to a statistical formula using the Non-Parametric Test- Chi-square Test of Independence. An adapted questionnaire was used to measure the components of perceived academic stress.

Results: Results showed that there is no significant difference among the components of perceived academic stress. Therefore, the first null hypothesis of the study was accepted. The second null hypothesis of the study was also accepted which means there is no significant association between the respondents' profile and perceived academic stress in terms of rationale.

Conclusion: The respondents' academic performance is closely monitored by their teachers, and unrealistic expectations from their parents are placing significant pressure on them. General Academic Strand students feel the highest level of stress due to academic demands and expectations brought about by the curriculum. It is essential to raise awareness among students' families and teachers regarding the perceived academic stress of students. Future studies may employ a Mixed Method of Research to further assess the academic stress of students.

Keywords: adapted questionnaire, descriptive evaluative design, General Academic Strand students, perceived academic stress

INTRODUCTION

Health is wealth. Wellbeing, not only physically but also mentally, emotionally, and spiritually, presupposes the human as moving towards better productivity in society. A person who is healthy can be a better asset in the community. This is true and applicable even in the field of education. Students, as the subject of the present study, can better perform when their wellbeing is given authentic priority. Pursuing education is challenging and demanding, and students face increasing pressure at every stage of their academic journey in this fast-paced society. In recent years, there has been a rising awareness of the prevalence and consequences of academic stress, leading to a shift in how it is perceived and addressed. This trend is reflected in the growing number of studies, advocacy efforts, and initiatives focused on understanding and mitigating academic stress among students. As a result, educational institutions are recognizing the need for comprehensive support systems that address not only academic performance but also students' emotional and psychological needs.

Moreover, digital tools and platforms can be developed to assist students in managing their stress levels, improving time management skills, and promoting self-care. Mobile apps and online platforms provide access to

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resources such as mindfulness exercises, stress management techniques, and study planning tools. By leveraging technology, educational institutions, and organizations can provide scalable solutions and reach a larger number of students who may be experiencing academic stress. Innovation devices can provide a more student-centered technique or empower students to participate in a more authentic level of learning, hence alleviating the academic stress perceived by students (Galgo & Balbaguio, 2022; Galgo, 2020; Galgo et al., 2023).

In Asian countries, known for their highly competitive educational systems (Salendab & Dapitan, 2021a; Sanchez, 2022), the prevalence of academic stress is particularly notable. Students in countries like China, South Korea, and Japan often face intense pressure to excel academically due to cultural expectations and the fierce competition for limited university placements. Similarly, in the Philippine setting, academic stress is a significant concern. The emphasis on academic achievement, coupled with societal expectations and the impact of high-stakes entrance exams, places a heavy burden on students (Muńoz & Sanchez, 2023; Salendab & Dapitan, 2020). These stressors can lead to adverse effects on students' mental health and well-being. Recognizing the global, Asian, and Philippine contexts is crucial in understanding the multifaceted nature of academic stress and developing tailored approaches to address and alleviate its impact on students' lives.

Academic stress presents a multitude of challenges and demands for education, impacting students, educators, and educational institutions alike. The competitive nature of modern education systems and the pursuit of high academic achievement create immense pressure on students to perform exceptionally well academically (Sanchez, et al., 2022). This pressure often leads to increased levels of stress, anxiety, and burnout among students. Additionally, the demands of a rigorous curriculum, coupled with extracurricular activities and high expectations from parents and society, further contribute to academic stress.

Students in Dagohoy National High School engaged in a wide range of subjects and activities to receive a well-rounded education. Most of them were engaged in extracurricular activities that fostered their leadership and interpersonal skills. As students navigate through their academic journey, the experience of shifting classes for almost three years ago among senior high school students often brings about a significant amount of stress. Consequently, students often feel overwhelmed and experience a variety of stress-related symptoms that affect their academic and social performance, as well as their time management skills. The most common sources of academic stress include exam preparation and performance, pressure to achieve high grades, and the overwhelming amount of information that students must absorb in a short period of time.

The students belonging to the General Academic Strand at Dagohoy National High School in Dagohoy, Bohol, Philippines, experience stress due to various reasons, which can negatively impact their academic performance. One of the main causes of this stress is academic pressure, which arises from having to deal with a higher number of subjects and activities compared to other strands, along with the limited time available to complete assignments. This study assessed the impact of academic stress factors on the scholastic performance of General Academic Strand students in the said school.

Studies conducted discuss the causes and effects of academic stress, as well as coping strategies that can be employed to manage it. According to Thakkar (2018), elevated levels of academic stress can lead to a higher incidence of psychological and physical issues, such as depression, anxiety, nervousness, and stress-related disorders. These issues, in turn, can have an impact on academic performance. Galgo (2020) believed that when students are free from the constant pressure of academic stress, they can focus better on their personal and professional growth.

As stated by the American Psychological Association (2022), the effects of school-related stress are evident across various age groups and social backgrounds of students. Sources of stress for young individuals may vary and include meeting academic standards, maintaining social relationships, and coping with perceived pressure from parents, teachers, or coaches (Salendab & Laguda, 2023; Salendab, 2021).

When school-related stress is disregarded and left unaddressed, it can result in physical symptoms such as headaches and muscle tension, as well as mental health issues like anxiety and depression. In certain instances, the consequences of stress can be more detrimental to students than the original stressors. While it may be impossible to eliminate all external factors that trigger stress in students, it is possible for them to learn how to manage their response to school-related stress (Mayo Clinic, 2022).

According to Depaynos, et al. (2021), academic performance was adversely impacted by the pressure placed on students, resulting in a sense of being overwhelmed and unable to manage their workload. The research also indicated that academic pressure was associated with increased anxiety levels among students, and a reduction in the time spent on leisure activities. The consequences of academic pressure on students can have far-reaching effects on their mental health, overall well-being, and academic performance. Therefore, it is imperative for

educators to acknowledge the impact of academic pressure and to establish a learning environment that is supportive, conducive to learning, and minimizes unnecessary stress (Dizon & Sanchez, 2020; Salendab, 2023a).

Republic Act No. 11036, also known as "Mental Health Act", aims to improve mental health services, protect the rights of people with mental health conditions, and promote mental health awareness and education in schools and workplaces. The law provides for the creation of a national mental health program, the education and training of mental health professionals, and the inclusion of mental health services in disaster response and management programs. Overall, the law is a significant step towards promoting and protecting mental health in the Philippines, recognizing its importance as an essential aspect of overall health and well-being.

DepEd Memorandum No. 392, s. 2010 advises teachers to provide a balanced workload for students and avoid excessive assignments. The guidelines include limiting homework given per night and per week, considering students' abilities, ensuring homework is relevant, and offering support to manage academic stress. The memorandum prioritizes student well-being for academic success.

Objective

The main goal of this study is to assess the perceived academic stress of General Academic Strand students in Senior High School at Dagohoy National High School for the school year 2022-2023. Specifically, this study determined the extent of academic stress among General Academic Strand students in the following aspects: (a) Academic expectations, (b) Faculty work and examinations, and (c) Students' academic self-perceptions. Additionally, the study examined if there is a significant variance among the components of perceived academic stress and if there is a significant association between the respondents' profile and perceived academic stress.

Hypotheses

There is no significant difference among the components of perceived academic stress and no significant association between respondents' profile and perceived academic stress.

METHODS

Research Design

To fulfill the research objectives, the researchers used a descriptive evaluative design in assessing the perceived academic stress of students that involves collecting data to describe the phenomenon of academic stress and evaluating its implications or impact on students' well-being and academic performance. It provides a comprehensive understanding of the stress experiences of students and informs interventions or support mechanisms to alleviate stress and promote their well-being. Furthermore, a descriptive research design methodically gathers data to depict a phenomenon, situation, or population.

Research Environment and Respondents

The study was conducted at Dagohoy National High School, Poblacion, Dagohoy, Bohol during the first semester, S.Y. 2022-2023. The purposive-universal sampling technique was used in which the sample is selected purposely as all students enrolled in the General Academic Strand having a total population of 146 students were being considered and with a total sample size of 80 respondents.

Research Instrument

To obtain the necessary data for the study, the researchers used an adapted questionnaire on the "Perceptions of Academic Stress Scale" by Dalia Bedewy and Adel Gabriel (2015) which is composed of three (3) parts. The first part is all about the components of stress related to academic expectations toward GAS students which consists of four (4) items. The second part is all about the components of stress related to faculty work and examinations which consists of eight (8) items. The third part is the stress related to aspects of students' academic self-perceptions which consists of six (6) items. The researchers note the validity of the instruments in accordance with rigorous standards of measurement described in a study report and validation on its face and content was done by having a three panel of experts.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers directly conducted the study by personally handing out survey questionnaires to the participants. The survey questionnaire consisted of three (3) parts from an adapted questionnaire on the

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"Perceptions of Academic Stress Scale" by Dalia Bedewy and Adel Gabriel (2015), which aimed to assess the perceived academic stress of General Academic Strand students.

Data Analysis

The study utilized simple percentages, frequency count, and weighted mean scores to describe descriptively the profile of the respondent and the extent of academic stress of General Academic Strand students. Single Factor ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) was used to assess the significant variance among the components of the perceived academic stress and the Chi-Square Test of independent sample was used to measure the significant association between the respondent profile and the perceived academic stress. For the interpretation of the results, the weighted mean score was subjected to the interpretation scale: 3.26 - 4.00 - Strongly Agree (SA); 2.51 - 3.25 - Agree (A); 1.76 - 2.50 - Disagree (D); 1.00 - 1.75 - Strongly Disagree (SD).

Ethical Consideration

To ensure the credibility and reliability of the study's results, the researchers strictly followed established research protocol guidelines. Prior to conducting the study, they sought permission from the school principal to obtain approval for conducting the research. The participants were presented with consent letters and were given the opportunity to sign them if they agreed to participate in the study. The researchers personally administered the survey questionnaire to the participants. To safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of the respondents, the collected data were treated as confidential and anonymous, with only the researchers having access to the survey responses. Once the data had fulfilled its intended purpose, it was appropriately disposed of, ensuring that no personal information was accessible to anyone other than the researchers. The researchers obtained approval from the school, indicating their commitment to upholding ethical standards and protecting the rights and well-being of the respondents. By adhering to these ethical practices, the study's findings maintain their credibility, and the participants' rights and safety are upheld.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

Table 1 displays the profile of the respondents wherein the first part divulged the age distribution of the respondents, showcasing their respective percentages and frequencies. Among the 80 participants, 49 students, accounting for 61.25% of the total, fell into the age range of 16 to 17 years. The study further revealed that 27 students, comprising 33.75% of the sample, were between 18 and 20 years old. Additionally, there were 4 respondents, representing 5% of the total, who fell between the ages of 21 and 23. The findings indicate that the majority of respondents fell within the younger age range which may suggest the need for age-appropriate interventions or support systems to address academic stress specifically tailored to this age group.

Regarding the sex distribution, the study found that out of the 80 respondents, 40 were male, constituting 50% of the sample, while the remaining 40 were female, also accounting for 50% of the participants. The equal representation of male and female students in the study suggests that both genders may experience similar levels of academic stress within the General Academic Strand. However, further analysis could explore potential differences in the sources or manifestations of stress between male and female students, potentially guiding the development of gender-responsive strategies for stress.

The study also investigated the grade levels of the respondents. The findings indicate that 48 students, encompassing 60% of the total sample, belonged to Grade 12. Additionally, 32 students, making up 40% of the sample, were from Grade 11. The disparity in the distribution of respondents across Grade 11 and Grade 12 implies that students at different stages of their senior high school education may encounter distinct stressors. These findings emphasize the significance of recognizing and addressing the unique challenges faced by students in each grade level, enabling targeted interventions to alleviate academic stress effectively.

Table 1. Respondents' Profile (n= 80)

PROFILE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE	RANK
Age			
21-23	4	5%	3
18-20	27	33.75%	2
16-17	49	61.25%	1
TOTAL	**80**	**100%**	
Sex			

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Female	40	50%	1.5
Male	40	50%	1.5
TOTAL	**80**	**100%**	
Grade Level			
11	32	40%	2
12	48	60%	1
TOTAL	**80**	**100%**	

Table 2.1 highlighted the level of academic stress experienced by the respondents in relation to academic expectations. Specifically, item number 2, "My teachers are critical of my academic performance," and item number 4, "The unrealistic expectations of my parents stress me out," received the highest mean score of 2.58. This implies that the respondents agreed that they experience significant academic stress due to the academic expectations imposed upon them, including criticism from teachers and unrealistic parental expectations. These findings suggest that General Academic Strand students perceive substantial pressure to meet academic standards and struggle to cope with these demands. It highlights the need for appropriate support systems to help students manage these stressors effectively. Conversely, item number 3, "Teachers have unrealistic expectations of me," received the lowest weighted mean score of 2.36. This indicates that, overall, the participants disagreed with this statement. It suggests that General Academic Strand students do not perceive their teachers as having unrealistic expectations of their academic performance. This finding may indicate that the students have a reasonable perception of their teachers' expectations or that they feel adequately supported by their teachers in meeting those expectations.

Similarly, in the study conducted by Wang et al. (2023), students belonging to high-ability groups received more teacher support, which contributed to their higher academic achievement. Furthermore, both parental and school pressure had a negative impact on various aspects of students' well-being, with parental pressure being associated with a greater number of negative effects (Kleinkorres et al., 2023).

Table 2.1. Level of Academic Stress in Academic Expectations (n=80).

I. Academic Expectations	**Weighted Mean**	**Descriptive Interpretation**	**Rank**
1. Competition with my peers for grades is quite intense.	2.51	Agree	4
2. My teachers are critical of my academic performance.	2.58	Agree	1.5
3. Teachers have unrealistic expectations of me.	2.36	Disagree	3
4. The unrealistic expectations of my parents stress me out.	2.58	Agree	1.5
COMPOSITE MEAN	**2.51**	**Agree**	

Interpretation Scale: 3.26 - 4.00   - Strongly Agree (SA)   2.51 - 3.25   - Agree (A)   1.76 - 2.50 - Disagree (D)   1.00 - 1.75 - Strongly Disagree (SD)

Table 2.2 presented the level of academic stress experienced by the respondents in relation to faculty work and examinations. The highest mean score of 2.98 was obtained for item number 4, "I am unable to catch up if I get behind on my homework and activities." This indicates that the respondents agreed that falling behind in homework or other school-related activities would hinder their ability to catch up or make up the work, leading to stress or anxiety. This finding suggests that General Academic Strand students perceive a lack of flexibility or support in managing their academic workload, which contributes to their stress levels. It emphasizes the need for strategies and interventions to help students effectively manage their time, prioritize tasks, and develop resilience in handling academic demands. On the other hand, item number 7, "Examination time is too short to complete my answers," received the lowest weighted mean score of 2.36. This descriptive interpretation of "disagree" implies that the respondents generally did not perceive the time allotted during examinations as a contributing factor to their stress levels. It suggests that the students feel that they have sufficient time to complete their exam answers, alleviating one potential stressor in the academic environment.

Accordingly, Xie and Derakhshan (2020) in their study revealed that the amount of homework and time spent on homework significantly predicted academic stress among students. As specified by Adolphus and Adolphus (2022), providing resources and support to help students manage their workload and reduce their academic stress are essential. Huang and Wu (2020) stated that time pressure was a significant factor that influenced the students' test

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E - ISSN 2945-3577

The Exigency
P - ISSN 2984-7842
E - ISSN 1908-3181

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anxiety, motivation, and academic performance. This contrasts with the finding that the allotted time during examinations is not a significant contributing factor to their stress" for improved clarity.

Table 2.2 Level of Components of Academic Stress in Faculty Work and Examinations (n=80).

II. Faculty Work and Examinations	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Interpretation	Rank
1. The time allocated to classes and academic work is enough	2.48	Disagree	7
2. The size of the curriculum (workload) is excessive.	2.51	Agree	4.5
3. I believe that the number of assignments is too much.	2.51	Agree	4.5
4. I am unable to catch up if I get behind on my homework and activities.	2.98	Agree	1
5. I have enough time to relax after doing homework and activities.	2.93	Agree	2
6. The examination questions are usually difficult.	2.66	Agree	6
7. Examination time is too short to complete my answers.	2.46	Disagree	8
8. Examination time is very stressful for me.	2.81	Agree	3
COMPOSITE MEAN	**2.67**	**Agree**	

Interpretation Scale: 3.26 - 4.00   - Strongly Agree (SA)   2.51 - 3.25   - Agree (A)   1.76 - 2.50 - Disagree (D)   1.00 - 1.75 - Strongly Disagree (SD)

Table 2.3 presented the level of academic stress experienced by the respondents in relation to their academic self-perception. The highest mean score of 3.09 was obtained for item number 1, "I am confident that I will be a successful student." This descriptive interpretation of "agree" suggests that despite being General Academic Strand students, the respondents possess confidence in their ability to handle the stress associated with academics. This finding indicates that students believe in their potential to overcome challenges and succeed academically, which can contribute to their resilience and motivation in their academic pursuits. Conversely, item number 3, "I can make academic decisions easily," received the lowest weighted mean score of 2.53, also interpreted as "agree." This indicates that General Academic Strand students find it challenging to make academic decisions easily, considering the tension, pressure, and concerns they experience from the components of perceived academic stress. This finding suggests that students may feel overwhelmed or unsure when making academic choices, potentially leading to increased stress levels. It highlights the need for guidance and support in developing students' decision-making skills, fostering autonomy, and helping them navigate academic challenges more effectively.

Reddy et al. (2018) stated in their study that various methods, including feedback, yoga, life skills training, mindfulness, meditation, and psychotherapy, have been found effective in managing stress. It is crucial to identify the root cause of stress to deal with it effectively (Salendab & Dapitan, 2021b; Sanchez & Sarmiento, 2020; Sanchez, 2023a). It's essential to ensure the overall well-being of students, which not only benefits them but also contributes to the institute's success (Salendab & Cogo, 2022; Sanchez, Sanchez & Sanchez, 2023). In summary, stress management is critical for students, and it can be addressed through various effective approaches at different levels to keep them motivated and successful.

Table 2.3 Level of Components of Academic Stress in Students' Academic Self-Perception (n=80).

III. Students' Academic Self-Perception	WEIGHTED MEAN	DESCRIPTIVE INTERPRETATION	RANK
1. I am confident that I will be a successful student.	3.09	Agree	1
2. I am confident that I will be successful in my future career.	3.06	Agree	2
3. I can make academic decisions easily.	2.53	Agree	6
4. I fear failing my grade this year.	2.89	Agree	4
5. I think that my worry about examinations is a weakness of character.	2.84	Agree	5
6. Even if I pass my exams, I am worried about getting a job.	2.98	Agree	3
COMPOSITE MEAN	**2.89**	**Agree**	

Interpretation Scale: 3.26 - 4.00   - Strongly Agree (SA)   2.51 - 3.25   - Agree (A)   1.76 - 2.50 - Disagree (D)   1.00 - 1.75 - Strongly Disagree (SD)

Table 3.1 and Table 3.2 display the analysis for the significant variance among the components of perceived academic stress. The computed F value of 16.75 exceeds the critical value of 3.03, using a 0.05 level of significance at 2 and 237 degrees of freedom ($p<0.05$, $p=0.000$). Therefore, the null hypothesis of the study is rejected, indicating a significant variance among the components of perceived academic stress. To further investigate the observed significant variance, Scheffe's test was conducted on the data, as shown in Table 3.3. Among the three pairings examined, two were found to be significant. Significant pairings were identified between academic expectations and students' academic self-perceptions, as well as between faculty work and examinations and students' academic self-perceptions. This further indicates that students' academic self-perceptions exhibited the highest mean value of 2.90, while academic expectations and faculty work and examinations showed lower values with means of 2.48 and 2.59, respectively. On the other hand, all other pairings were found to be insignificant.

These findings have several implications. Firstly, they suggest that there are varying levels of perceived academic stress among General Academic Strand students in Senior High School, with certain components of stress being more significant than others. Specifically, academic expectations and faculty work/examinations appear to contribute significantly to students' perceived academic stress. Additionally, the higher mean value for students' academic self-perceptions implies that students may have a relatively positive perception of their own academic abilities, despite experiencing stress. This finding could be explored further to understand how students' self-perceptions influence their coping mechanisms and overall well-being in the face of academic stress. The results also indicate that interventions and support systems could be tailored to address the specific stressors identified in this study, such as academic expectations and faculty work/examinations. By focusing on these significant components, educators and school administrators can develop targeted strategies to mitigate academic stress among General Academic Strand students. However, it is worth noting that the study did not find significant differences in other pairings of components. This suggests that factors such as peer relationships, extracurricular activities, or personal circumstances may not be major contributors to the perceived academic stress of General Academic Strand students. Further research could delve into these non-significant components to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the sources of academic stress among this student population.

Similarly, as stated by Zulfiqar and Kausar (2021), university students in Pakistan experienced distinct variations among the perceived academic stress components. The primary reasons for academic stress were associated with academic workload, poor time management, and the pressure to excel in exams. The study emphasized the significance of managing academic stress at both the individual and institutional levels and recommended interventions like time management training, counseling, and relaxation techniques to aid students in coping with academic stress.

Table 3.1 Significant Difference among the Components of the Perceived Academic Stress (n=80).

Groups	N	Sum of x or Σx	Sum of x Squared or (Σx)²	Sum of squares or SS	Variance	Mean x
Academic Expectations	80	198	39204.00	23.825	0.302	2.475
Faculty Work and Examinations	80	206.875	42797.27	16.019	0.203	2.586
Students' Academic Self-perceptions	80	231.67	53669.44	14.021	0.177	2.896
Total	**240**	**636.54**	**35670.71**	**53.864**	**0.682**	

Table 3.2 Analysis of Variance Table

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	Critical Value at 0.05	REMARKS
Between Groups	7.61	2	3.80591	16.75	0.000	3.03	Reject H$_0$ (Significant)
Within Groups	53.86	237	0.227276				
Total	**61.48**	**239**					

Table 3.3 Multiple Comparison using Scheffès Test

Between Treatments	Mean 1	Mean 2	F`	Scheffès Critical Value	Interpretation

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Academic Expectations	Faculty Work and Examinations	2.475	2.586	2.166	6.068	Not Significant
Academic Expectations	Students' Academic Self-perceptions	2.475	2.896	31.169	6.068	Significant
Faculty Work and Examinations	Students' Academic Self-perceptions	2.586	2.896	16.902	6.068	Significant

Table 4.1 presents the analysis of the significant relationship between respondents' age and academic stress. Since the computed chi-square value of 22.205 exceeds the critical value of 9.49 at 0.05 level of significance with 4 degrees of freedom. As a result, the null hypothesis of the study is rejected, indicating a significant relationship between respondents' age and academic stress. This finding suggests that respondents' age plays a crucial role in shaping their perceptions of academic stress. The results imply that students' experiences of academic stress vary significantly depending on their age. It suggests that different age groups within the General Academic Strand students in Senior High School may encounter distinct academic stressors or have varying levels of susceptibility to academic stress. Recognizing and addressing this relationship can inform the implementation of age-specific interventions and support systems to mitigate academic stress and promote the well-being and academic success of students. Further research is warranted to deepen the understanding of the factors underlying this relationship and to develop more effective strategies for managing academic stress among students of different ages (Salendab & Akmad, 2023b; Sanchez, 2023b; Sanchez, 2020a).

This finding is consistent with a study conducted by Singh et al. (2021) where high school students' academic stress level was significantly related to their age, with younger students reporting higher levels of academic stress compared to their older counterparts.

Table 4.1 Significant Relationship between Respondents' Age and Academic Stress (n=80)

Source of Association	df	X^2	Critical Value at 0.05	REMARKS
Respondents' Age	2	22.2051	9.49	Reject H_0 (Significant)
Academic Stress				

Table 4.2 presents the analysis of the significant relationship between respondents' sex and academic stress. Since the computed chi-square value of 5.571 is lower than the critical value of 5.99 at a 0.05 level of significance with 2 degrees of freedom. As a result, the null hypothesis of the study is accepted, indicating that there is no significant relationship between respondents' sex and academic stress. This finding suggests that regardless of sex, respondents' perceptions of academic stress do not vary significantly. The result implies that male and female General Academic Strand students in Senior High School experience similar levels of academic stress. It suggests that factors other than sex, such as academic workload, peer relationships, or personal circumstances, may play a more prominent role in shaping students' perceptions of academic stress. This further emphasizes the importance of avoiding gender stereotypes and adopting a comprehensive approach to address academic stress. By considering a range of individual and contextual factors, schools can develop inclusive interventions and support systems that effectively address the shared stressors experienced by students of all sexes.

Contrastingly, female students reported higher levels of academic stress than male students, and academic workload and peer pressure were the main sources of academic stress (Singh et al. 2021).

Table 4.2 Significant Relationship between Respondents' Sex and Academic Stress (n=80)

Source of Association	df	X^2	Critical Value at 0.05	REMARKS
Respondents' Sex	2	5.5714	5.991	Accept H_0 (Insignificant)
Academic Stress				

Table 4.3 presents the analysis of the significant relationship between respondents' grade Level and academic stress. Since the computed chi-square value of 2.195 is lower than the critical value of 5.99 at a 0.05 level of significance with 2 degrees of freedom. Consequently, the null hypothesis of the study is accepted, indicating that there is no significant relationship between respondents' grade level and academic stress. This finding suggests that

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regardless of the grade level, respondents' perceptions of academic stress do not vary significantly. The result implies that students across different grade levels within the General Academic Strand in Senior High School experience similar levels of academic stress. It indicates that factors other than grade level, such as workload, academic expectations, or personal circumstances, may play a more substantial role in shaping students' perceptions of academic stress. This further emphasizes the importance of addressing academic stress comprehensively and developing interventions that are applicable across different grade levels. By considering a range of individual and contextual factors, schools can implement strategies that effectively address the shared stressors experienced by students throughout their academic journey (Sanchez, 2020b).

However, it is worth noting that Mohd Nor and Hashim (2021) found that Malaysian university students in their third year experienced higher levels of academic stress compared to their peers in the first and second years due to academic workload, financial problems, and relationship issues.

Table 4.3 Significant Relationship between Respondents' Grade Level and Academic Stress (n=80)

Source of Association	df	X²	Critical Value at 0.05	REMARKS
Respondents' Grade Level	2	2.1951	5.991	Accept H₀ (Insignificant)
Academic Stress				

Conclusions

Based on the study results, teachers criticize the academic performance of the respondents, and their parents' unrealistic expectations significantly affect their academic performance, causing them extreme stress as General Academic Strand students. This stress is related to the perceived academic stress of the General Academic Strand regarding academic expectations.

The data also shows that falling behind on homework and activities has a significant impact on academic performance, causing the respondents to experience the highest level of stress as General Academic Strand students. This stress is associated with the perceived academic stress of the General Academic Strand in faculty work and examinations. Despite these challenges, the respondents are confident in their ability to succeed as General Academic Strand students, which is a positive aspect of their academic self-perception.

The result has further the various factors that contribute to academic stress, such as academic expectations, workload, faculty work, exams, etc., are all perceived to be equally stressful by the respondents. In other words, none of these factors stand out as being significantly more stressful than the others. Additionally, the factors related to the respondents' demographic characteristics, such as age, gender, academic track, etc., do not have a significant influence on their perceived academic stress. In other words, the respondents' profile does not provide a clear rationale for their level of perceived academic stress. There may be other factors, such as individual differences in coping strategies or personal circumstances, that are more influential in shaping their perceived academic stress levels.

Recommendations

1. Encourage students to take responsibility and be attentive to meeting the requirements of both teachers and parents from the beginning. This can be achieved by providing students with guidance on how to effectively manage their academic workload, meet teacher expectations, and understand their parents' educational aspirations. By doing so, students can develop a sense of ownership and accountability towards their academic responsibilities.

2. Foster a culture of effective time management among students, emphasizing the importance of avoiding procrastination and completing tasks on time. Schools can provide students with resources and strategies for managing their time efficiently, such as study schedules, prioritization techniques, and goal-setting exercises. By equipping students with these skills, they can reduce academic stress by staying organized and meeting deadlines.

3. School administrators should proactively inform students about the potential academic stress factors associated with the General Academic Strand before they enroll. By providing comprehensive information about the challenges and expectations of the strand, students can make informed decisions about whether

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or not to choose this particular pathway. This ensures that students are prepared for the academic demands they may face, potentially reducing feelings of regret or being overwhelmed.

4. Educators should maintain awareness of their students' stress levels, particularly those related to academic pressures and a lack of opportunities for relaxation during periods of tension. Teachers should be trained to recognize signs of stress in students and be equipped with appropriate strategies to address and support them. Creating a supportive classroom environment and providing outlets for stress reduction, such as mindfulness exercises or open discussions, can significantly contribute to students' well-being.

5. Families should acknowledge the heightened academic stress levels experienced by students pursuing the General Academic Strand. Recognizing the pressures their loved ones face, families should strive to be supportive and understanding. Offering emotional support, active listening, and providing a conducive home environment for studying and relaxation can help alleviate the stress students may feel.

6. Future researchers could consider employing a Mixed Method approach to further assess the academic stress experienced by students. Combining quantitative and qualitative research methods can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors contributing to academic stress and shed light on individual experiences and coping mechanisms. This approach would enable researchers to gather a broader range of insights and perspectives, leading to more targeted interventions and support systems.

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