

Perception of Students on Parental And Teachers' Pressure on Their Academic Performance

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Abstract

Introduction: Parents have certain value system and norms which they want their children to follow. The school curricula have become examination-oriented, promoting rote learning and overburdening the children. Pressure can have either positive or negative effects. The present study was focused on adolescents since academic pressurisation tends to mount up during this period and their urge for autonomy can make them resent parental control. The objectives of the study were to assess the perceptions of students on parental and teachers' pressure on their academic performance, to identify the students' coping strategies and to determine the association of pressure with other variables of interest like sex, class, type of family, place of residence and their academic performance.

Method: This was a cross-sectional study conducted among Class IX and X students studying in the high schools of Imphal West District of Manipur state during March to April 2017. A stratified multistage cluster sampling method was used and a pre-designed, pre-tested, structured, self-administered questionnaire was used as the study tool.

Results: A total of 954 students were studied. 525 (55%) students reported that they felt pressure to perform well in their academic activities and of those who felt pressure 454 (86.5%) reported that parents were mostly responsible. 205 (39.0%) students responded that they were sleep deprived and 119 (22.7%) students felt depressed due to pressure. 233 (44.4%) students cope by taking pressure positively by obeying their parents/teachers and engaging in recreational activities like music, meditation, yoga etc. Pressure was more commonly felt by male students compared to female students (60.3% vs. 51.2%) and this finding was statistically significant. When students felt pressurized, 346 (57.0%) felt that academic performance was not satisfactory as compared to 161 (50.7%) students who rated their academic performance as satisfactory.

Conclusion: The study showed that the prevalence of parental pressure is high with male students affected more than the females. More than one-fourth of students under pressure were feeling depressed. Nearly half of the students cope positively by obeying their parents/teachers and engaging in recreational activities like music, meditation, yoga etc.

Keywords: Parental pressure, perceptions, performance, parents, teachers

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I. Introduction

Pressure involves expectations or demands that one behave in a certain way. The positive effects of pressure are good academic achievement and attendance, favorable attitude towards school and educational inspiration. Negative effects includes lower self esteem, increased failure rate, mental effects like depression, stress, anxiety and substance abuse.^[1] Parental pressure is "behaviour perceived by children as indicating expectation of unlikely, even unattainable heights of accomplishment".^[2] Parents have certain value system and norms which they want their children to follow. Academic stress refers to "the unpleasant psychological situations that occur due to the Perception Of Students On Parental And Teachers' Pressure On Their Academic Performance educational expectations from parents, teachers, peers and family members, pressure of parents for academic achievement, present educational and examination system, burden of home work etc."^[3] The school curricula have become examination-oriented, promoting rote learning and overburdening the children. Students experienced academic stress arising from both their own expectations to excel as well as expectations arising from their parents and teachers.^[4] There are various coping strategies used by students when

experiencing academic stress. Some resort to avoidant coping: alcohol/drug abuse, denial and behavioural disengagement; while others cope actively through acceptance, planning, and positive reframing and taking the necessary steps to overcome it.^[5] It has been found that majority of adolescents in the stressed groups were in the age group of 14-16 years.^[6] It was more among adolescents since academic pressurisation tends to mount up during this period and their urge for autonomy can make them resent parental control. No previous study on perception among school students on parental and teachers' pressure have been conducted in this region of India. Hence, this study was undertaken among adolescents in order to assess their perceptions on parental and teachers' pressure on their academic performance, their coping strategy and to determine the association of pressure with socio-demographic variables and academic performance.

II. Methods

This cross-sectional study was conducted among Class IX and X students studying in the schools of Imphal West district in Manipur during March and April, 2017. Those students who were absent on the day of visit and those who did not give assent were excluded. Sample size was calculated using prevalence of 66% from a previous study Deb S et al⁷, 5% absolute allowable error, design effect of 2 and 95% confidence level. Expecting a non-response rate of 20%, the final calculated sample size was 861. A stratified multistage cluster sampling with probability proportionate to size (PPS) was used to get the desired sample size. For this study, clusters identified were institutions providing high school education. A pre-designed, pre-tested, structured, self-administered questionnaire was used. Instructions were given to the students on how to fill up the questionnaire and time allotted was one class period. IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 21.0. Armonk, NY: IBM Corp. was used for data analysis. Descriptive statistics like mean, standard deviation and percentages were used. Chi square test was used to test for association between proportions and a p-value of <0.05 was taken as statistically significant. Approval was obtained from the Research Ethics Board, RIMS, Imphal. A written permission from the school authorities was obtained. Informed verbal assent was taken from the participants and confidentiality was maintained. The students were reassured about their anonymity.

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III. Results

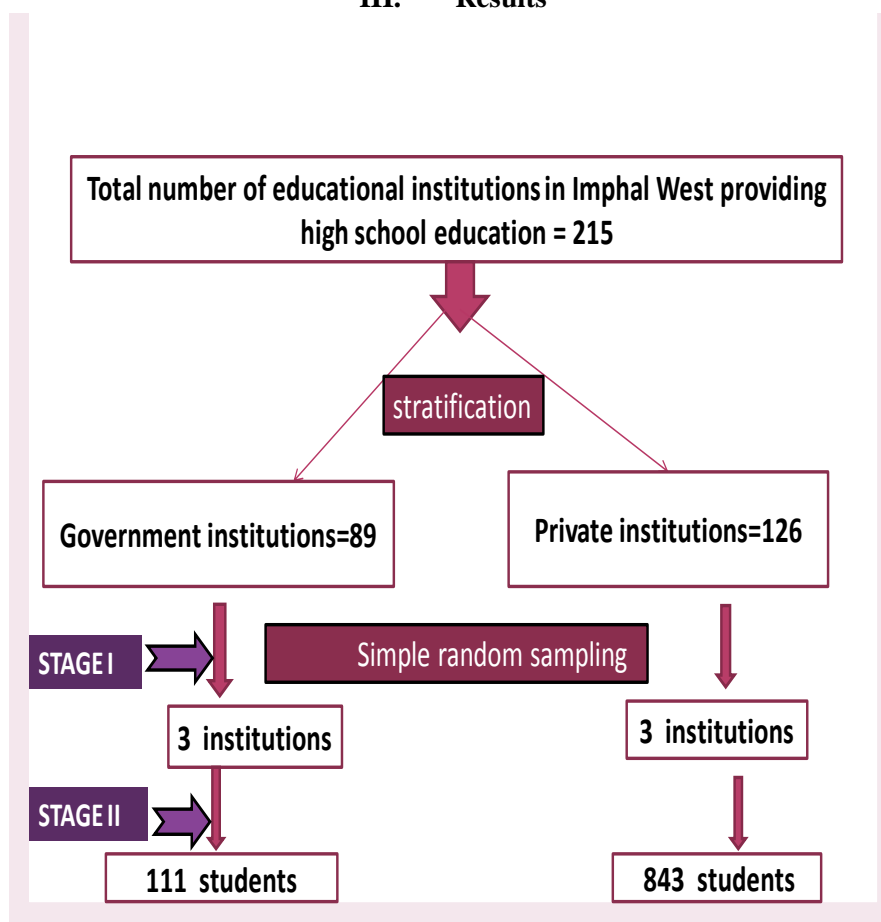


Fig. 1: Flowchart showing the recruitment of the study respondents.

Three institutions from private and three from government schools were selected by simple random sampling. From each selected school, one section each from both class IX and X was then selected by simple random sampling. All the students in the selected section were included in the study. A total of 954 students, 111 students from government and 843 from private institutions were studied. (Figure 1) The minimum age was 13 years, maximum age was 18 years and mean age of participants was 14.42 ± 0.85 years

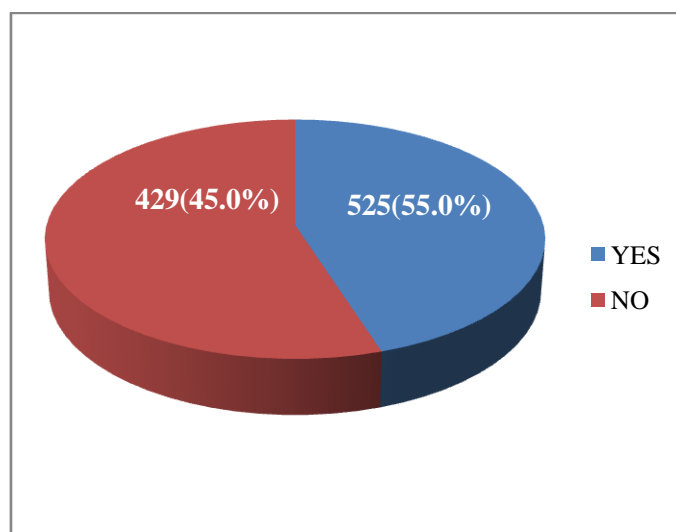


Fig. 2: Students' response to "Do you feel pressure to perform well in studies?" (N=954)

A total of 525 (55.0%) reported that they felt pressure to perform well in their academic activities. (Figure 2) Perception Of Students On Parental And Teachers' Pressure On Their Academic Performance

Table 1: Students' response to "From whom do you feel the pressure most?"(N=525)*

Source of Pressure	Frequency	Percentage
Parents	454	86.5
Teachers	214	40.8
Peers	96	18.3
All of the above	106	20.1
Others	19	3.6

*Multiple options allowed

Table 1 showed that 454 (86.5%) students perceived that parents were mostly responsible for the pressure.

Table 2: Responses to "Why do you feel there is pressure?" (N=525)*

Reasons for pressure	Frequency	Percentage
To do better than others in the class	324	61.7
Lack of sleep < 8hours per day	205	39.0
To study late hours	184	35.0
No recreation/sports/television etc	145	27.6
Take too much tuitions	118	22.5
No freedom to choose their aim in life	87	16.6
Others	12	2.3

*Multiple options allowed

Table 2 showed that 324 (61.7%) felt pressured to study late hours, 145 (27.6%) were made to forgo their recreational activities, 184 (35.0%) students were made to sleep less than 8 hours a day and 118 (22.5%) students felt that they were made to take too much tuitions by their parents .

Table 3: Responses to "What effect has pressure on you?" (N=525)*

Effect of pressure	Frequency	Percentage
Unable to enjoy life due to lack of free time	210	40.0
My marks have improved	136	25.9
Try to hide results	136	25.9
My marks/grades have reduced	123	23.4

Depression	119	22.7
Sick at the time of exam	108	20.6
Suicidal tendency	35	6.7
Try unfair means to score good marks	31	5.9
Others	16	3.0

*Multiple options allowed

Table 3 showed that of those who felt pressure, 210 (40.0%) students cannot enjoy their lives due to lack of free time and 119 (22.7%) felt depressed. 35 (6.7%) students had suicidal tendency which is a matter of concern. Perception Of Students On Parental And Teachers' Pressure On Their Academic Performance

Table 4: Responses to "How pressure is handled?" (N=525)*

Ways of handling pressure	Frequency	Percentage
Taking positively and obeying them	149	28.4
Engaging in recreation like music, yoga	134	25.5
Work and study harder	100	19.0
Manage time properly	74	14.1
By pretending to study	31	5.9
Keeping to himself/herself	24	4.6
Other ways	13	2.5

*Multiple options allowed.

Table 4 showed that among those who felt pressure, 124 (23.6%) students cope by taking pressure positively and obeying their parents/teachers. 109 (20.7%) students engaged in recreations like music, yoga etc.

Table 5: Responses to "Why do you think there is pressure?" (N=954)*

Reasons for pressure	Frequency	Percentage
Heavy competition from classmates	377	39.5
Overloading with home-work or assignments	319	33.4
Result oriented educational system	307	32.2
Unrealistic parental expectation	297	31.1
Indifferent attitude of teachers	189	19.8
High self expectation	188	19.7
Inappropriate teaching curriculum	133	13.9
High student- teacher ratio	69	7.2
Others	18	1.9

*Multiple options allowed

Table 5 showed that 377 (39.5%) students reported that heavy competition and too many assignments were the main sources of pressure. 297 (31.1%) students reported that unrealistic parental expectation were the main sources of pressure. Perception Of Students On Parental And Teachers' Pressure On Their Academic Performance

Table 6: Association of perception of parental and teachers' pressure with socio-demographic variables and academic performance (N=525)

Characteristics		Parental pressure		P value
		Yes N (%)	No N (%)	
Gender	Male	242(59.0)	168(40.9)	0.006
	Female	283(52.0)	261(47.9)	
Class	IX	254(57.1)	191(42.9)	0.307
	X	271(53.2)	238(46.8)	
School Type	Govt.	57(51.4)	54(48.6)	0.156
	Private	468(55.5)	375(44.5)	
Residence	Urban	339(60.9)	217(39.3)	0.115
	Rural	186(54.7)	212(53.3)	
Type of Family	Joint	185(53.2)	163(46.8)	0.423
	Nuclear	340(56.1)	266(43.9)	
Fathers' education	Up to VIII	52(44.8)	64(55.2)	0.168
	IX-XII	177(59.6)	120(40.4)	
	Graduate & above	296(54.7)	245(45.3)	

Mothers' education	Up to VIII IX-XII Graduate & above	88(60.7) 190(55.7) 247(52.8)	57(39.3) 151(44.3) 221(47.2)	0.261
Academic performance	Very good Good Moderate Not so good	36(69.2) 143(47.2) 293(55.8) 53(71.6)	16(30.8) 160(52.8) 232(44.2) 21(28.4)	0.136
Extra curricular activity	Yes No	276(55.6) 249(54.4)	220(36.3) 209(45.6)	0.540

Table 6 showed that perception of pressure was significantly more among the boys as compared to girls (60.3% vs. 51.2%). Students coming from urban, joint families, private schools, day scholars; students without extra-curricular activities are more likely to have more pressure. However, these differences were not found to be statistically significant. When students felt pressurized, 64.6% felt that academic performance was not good as compared to 51.2% students who rated their academic performance as good. The difference was however not found to be statistically significant. Perception of students on parental and teachers' pressure on their academic performance

Table 7: Suggestions given by students for reducing pressure (N=954)*

Suggestions	Frequency	Percentage
Parents/teachers to have positive interaction, encourage and support	220	23.0
Parents/teachers not to expect beyond capacity	156	16.4
Students should take pressure positively and study hard	155	16.2
Parents should give freedom to decide	140	14.7
Students should have leisure/recreation time	101	10.6
Parents should reduce tuitions	85	8.9
Change of education system like percentage/grading and reduce syllabus	55	5.8
Others	42	4.4

*Multiple options allowed

Table 7 showed that 220 (23.6%) students wanted that parents and teachers to have positive interaction with the students and give encouragement and support to them. 156 (16.7%) students suggested that parents should not expect their children to achieve beyond their capacity.

IV. Discussion

The present study revealed that more than half (55%) of the school students experienced pressure to perform well. Pressure is mainly from parents as reported by four-fifth (86.5%) of the students. These findings are consistent with findings from a study done by Deb et al in Kolkata who reported that 60% of students experienced academic pressure mainly from their parents.^[7] Parents put pressure on their children to succeed because of their concern for the welfare of their children and their awareness of the competition for getting admission in reputed institutions. The overall unemployment situation in India has also provoked parents to put pressure on their children for better performance. Some of the parents wish to fulfil their unfulfilled dreams through their children.^[8] There were differences in perception of parental pressure across gender, age, class, and other factors. The incidence of reported parental pressure differed by parental education levels, parental occupation, number of private tutors, and academic performance. The study also examined the effect of parental pressure on academic activities. Those who do not perform well in their academics are found to have more pressure from parents than those who are doing well. These study findings are similar to those from a study conducted by Yumba et al.^[9] Class IX students reports higher levels of academic stress, due to major life changes and various types of academic and non-academic conflicts related to adaptation, and the lack of a strong social support network. At the same time, the class X students reported low levels of stress, due to the adaptation to new responsibilities, and challenges to perform well in studies and in exam. Similar findings are also reported from a study where students from first year undergraduate students experienced pressure more than the second year undergraduate students.^[9] In this study, male students are found to perceive significantly more parental pressure. This may be so because boys are more outgoing and involved more in many extracurricular activities compared to girls, so when more pressure is given to them to study, they are compelled

to compromise on their sports and other extracurricular activities. This study is in contrast to findings from other studies that reported adolescent girls reporting a greater number of worries, and higher levels of generalized anxiety than do boys of the same age.^[7, 17-20] In this study too female students might also be experiencing the same amount of stress as their male counterparts; however they may not like to show it, because they have been taught that accepting being stressed expresses a feminine trait to which they have adapted. Perception of students on parental and teachers' pressure on their academic performance The study also showed that parents with low level of education i.e., non- graduates are found to pressurize their children more than the parents with graduation and post-graduation background do. Parents from lower and middle class social strata want their children to do well in studies since this is often the only means to an honorable vocation for them. In a review of studies from low and middle income countries, Patel and Kleinman confirmed the association between indicators of poverty and the risk of common mental disorders.^[10] Academic anxiety is found to be the least in case of adolescents from high socio-economic classes – which may be partly attributed to their secured future at least in material aspects. The prevalence of anxiety disorders tends to decrease with higher socio-economic status.^[11] Another study has also reported that social disadvantage is associated with increased stress among students.^[12] It is believed that extra-curricular activities could be one of the mediating factors for academic stress. More than half of the students reported to be involved in extra-curricular activities like games and sports, cultural programmes, National Cadet Corps (NCC), National Social Service (NSS) and so on. Students who engaged in extra-curricular activities are less likely to experience stress. However, no significant association is found between perception of parental pressure and involvement in extra-curricular activities. This could be because of either a lack of meaningful involvement in extracurricular activities or involvement for an insufficient period of time and requires further investigation. In this study, more than one out of five students complained that their parents make them take too much tuition. This situation is considerably better than other studies where more than half of the parents appoint 3 to 4 private tutors or even more for their wards. On days when there are no academic tuitions, there are Art or Music lessons. The students hardly get time to watch TV, to play or to interact with neighbors freely or even to get adequate sleep. Naturally, such students end up being nervous wrecks when the examination pressure mounts.^[13] Unexplained headache, migraine and hypertension are becoming alarmingly common among teenagers – often an outcome of their stressful lives. Even recreational activities like sports, music, painting or swimming have become as competitive as studies. Constantly pushed to perform better in both academic and extra-curricular activities, some children develop deep rooted nervous disorders in early childhood.^[14] Unfortunately, the magnitude of mental health problems of children and adolescents has not yet been recognized sufficiently by the policy makers in many countries. In this study too, students suffer from psychological disorders like depression and even suicidal ideation. In the present study, psychiatric problems – depression (22.7%), sickness during exam (20.6%) and suicidal ideation (6.7%) were reported by the participants, which is an issue of concern for policy makers. A number of previous studies reported psychiatric illnesses among children.^[15,16] These students require immediate psychiatric attention for improving their mental health status along with counseling for their parents. Academic stress is found to be positively correlated with parental pressure and psychiatric problems. Sickness during exam and trying to score marks by resorting to unfair means during exam is also observed due to examination-related anxiety. It is important to remember that mental constitution or coping capacities vary from one child to another. Therefore, children with poor coping capacities become more prone to anxiety, depression and fear of academic failure. Parents put pressure on their children for academic performance which leads to stress so as to have examination-related anxiety. Again, examination-related anxiety was positively related to psychiatric problems—which emphasize the need for psychological intervention.

4.1 Strengths

Adequate samples of students in the study. Possibly one of the first studies conducted in Manipur assessing the prevalence of parental pressure among the high school students and it is hoped that this study will be a source of information for future researchers. Perception Of Students On Parental And Teachers' Pressure On Their Academic Performance

4.2 Limitations:

This study consisted of students of only class IX and X students. Inclusion of classes XI and XII students might have helped to get a wider perspective of pressure in relation to academics among the whole adolescents. Students from government schools were less compared to students from private schools. Therefore more number of government schools should have been included so as to get equal representation from both the schools such that the study would be generalizable to both the schools. The effects of pressure were all self reported and not based on direct observation.

V. Conclusion

Almost 3 out of 5 students reported that they felt pressure to perform well in their academic activities and of those who felt pressure more than 4/5th of them revealed that parents were mostly responsible. More than 1/4th of the students responded that they had less sleep and more than one-fifth felt depressed due to pressure. More than 1 in 5 students cope by taking pressure positively and obeying their parents/teachers and engaging in recreation like music, meditation, yoga etc. Pressure was more commonly felt by male students compared to female students and the finding was statistically significant. Even though academic performance was poor among those students who perceived parental pressure, the finding was not statistically significant.

VI. Recommendation

Considering the magnitude of prevalence of pressure among the high school students, school authorities should initiate School-based Counseling sessions for both parents and teachers periodically to counsel them on positive interaction with the students. Well trained counselors should be made available in schools and students should be trained on how to manage stress and anxiety. Knowledge about mental health and academic stress should be promoted among the parents of the adolescents and taught strategies to help improve the resilience and coping strategies of their children. Parents and teachers should set time aside for recreation for the students.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no competing interests.

Author's Contribution

ZMS and SK, conceived the research work. ZMS and ABM coordinated the data collection. ZMS, VV, V, DL carried out the data analysis. ZMS and ABM contributed in literature review. ZMS wrote the draft of manuscript. SK interpret the results and revised the manuscript. All the authors contributed in the revision of the paper and agreed on the final manuscript.

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