

## Academic Stress and Seeking-support Coping Style Among Students

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### Abstract

Students during the viral outbreak have to adjust to the implemented new normal. The complicated situation is suspected to have affected the performance of the senior high school students. In this study, the researchers primarily assessed the academic stress the senior high school students have experienced as well as the seeking-support coping style of the students. With 219 willing participants for assessments, the researchers found out that the senior high school students are coping with academic stress. This significant observation entails that constant support for senior high school students is vital in their studies.

**Keywords:** Academic Stress, Coping Style, Senior High School Students.

### Introduction

Senior high school students may have experienced challenges in their studies and those challenges may have affected them badly. With the complicated situation right now, they could have been on it all along. One of which is academic stress. Academic stress is the response of the body to academic requirements that surpass students' adaptive capabilities. While

this is happening, senior high school students are more likely to prevent and may have endured the burden of these challenges. According to Thakkar (2018), academic stress includes mental discomfort or fear of the likelihood of academic failure over planned academic difficulties or failure. Whereas, seeking-support coping style is asking for help or seeking emotional support from family members or friends, during a difficult time that can be an effective way to preserve emotional wellbeing.

In today's world, it has become highly competitive where students have to face many academic problems such as the inability to understand a subject, academic pressure, academic workloads, and the feeling that you are constantly racing to meet another deadline. According to Thakkar (2018), excessive levels of academic stress can lead to an increased incidence of conditions linked to psychological and physical issues such as depression, anxiety, nervousness, and stress which in turn can impact their academic outcomes. Also in some cases, due to the growing occurrence of suicides among students, the mental health of students, especially in terms of academic stress and its effects has become a serious issue in schools.

On the other hand, it is also necessary to know the extent of the responses of the senior high school towards the stress. Literally, they have their own coping style but, in this study, each coping style is assessed from a general point of view. The use of effective coping mechanisms will help relieve the detrimental effects of stress (Smith & Renk, 2007). Seeking support or social support coping style can be employed when the person experiencing stress perceives the stressful situation that is outside of his or her control. Such study findings demonstrated that the early encounters that occur between parents and their children can have a long-lasting impact on the later functioning of grown children. How mothers and fathers raise their children can be an integral part of students' overall and academic functionality (Smith & Renk, 2007). It plays an important part in the relationship between parent and child. Also, in the social sort, it can be

helpful for their levels of stress keeping, as their mental and physical health is less affected by stressful circumstances (Susman, 2020).

Academic stress needs to be addressed. In a classroom setting, it has been observed that students have different courses of action in coping with their academic stress. Some are taking breaks, outlining the set of tasks to be completed, and seeking from their family and friends, while some cannot handle stress, which can lead to mental health issues. In general, different students have their ways to cope with academic stress.

In the study, the researcher intended to determine the correlation between academic stress and seeking-support coping style of the Senior High School students in Jagobiao National High School. Thus, the study focused on determining the extent of the coping style of the senior high school students and the effect of the academic stress they experienced.

### **Theoretical Background**

The study was anchored on three theories. The first theory is “Stress as a Response”, introduced by Hans Selye (1956). It states that stress is understood as a response caused by external pressures or stressors. The second theory is “Stress as a Stimulus”, introduced in the 1960s, and advanced by Holmes and Rahe (1967). It states that stress is caused by events in life. The third theory is “Stress as a Transaction”, developed by Richard Lazarus and Susan Folkman (1984). It states that stress is studied as a complex set of interactions and changes between the person and environment.

Students who experience academic stress are caused by stressors. According to the theory of Hans Selye (1956), stressors like academic workloads, have the feeling that you are constantly racing to meet another deadline, the ability to understand the subject, and academic pressure. Stimulus theory attempts to understand stress from the perspective of major events in life such as humanitarian crises, activities of a student, and other life-threatening activities. The theory states that humans even students are initially perceived as passive triggers of stress. The

transactional theory emphasizes the 'transactional' nature of stress by which stressors are created by the environment like in school. Students' experiences could create stress because of the academic workloads given by the teachers that students are not getting enough sleep because of the pressure put on their shoulders.

However, stress has been viewed as a response, stimulus, and transaction where how the students conceptualize stress determines their response and cope. In coping with stress on three theories, students should have positive thinking to lessen the stress they have and with it by seeking help or support from their family members and friends. It helps the students to adapt to the situation and face the challenge they are in.

Most students experience a significant amount of stress, and it can take a significant role in their health, happiness, and grades. They feel a sense of wanting to alleviate stress, but with all of the activities and obligations that fill a student's schedule, it is sometimes difficult. Thus, they need help from social support or seeking the support of their family and friends. With these, they would probably handle their stress.

### **Statement of Purpose**

This study intends to assess the relationship between academic stress and seeking-support coping style of the students in Jagobiao National High School. Furthermore, the study seeks to assess the level of academic stress, the level of seeking-support coping style, and the correlation between academic stress and the seeking-support coping style of the students.

### **Hypothesis**

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant association between Academic Stress and Seeking-support Coping Style.

### **Review of Related Literature**

Stress has become part of student's academic life due to the different internal and external demands put upon their shoulders. According to Thakkar (2018), exams, grades, assignments, academic workloads,

achievement standards, and parental pressure are the greatest academic stressors for high school students.

According to Lal (2014), academic stress is a key factor that accounts for variation in academic achievement. The mind and reflexes can be sharpened by the right kind of stress because stress is a natural reaction of the body to challenges (Aafreen, Priya & Gayathri, 2018). Further, another way that stress can be helpful in that it helps individuals learn to conquer and manage stressful circumstances (Dowdle, 2017). According to Ogbogu (2010), to achieve high academic success amid in stress, lecturers and educators should concentrate on intrinsic motivation that will have greater effects on students.

Despite some positive stress effects, the ongoing stress on education has shown a detrimental effect on the learning ability, academic achievement, employment attainment, quantity and quality of sleep, physical health, mental health, and substance use outcomes of students (Pascoe, Hetrick & Parker, 2019). According to Essel and Owusu (2017), their findings indicate that stress influences students' overall school activities as well as their social health. The risk of becoming overweight and obese may be increased (Chem et al., 2020). Moreover, there are indicators that stress is related to both increased and decrease food consumption, which may mediate the symmetry between stress and change in weight (Serlachiss, Hammer & Wardle, 2007). According to Jain and Singhai (2017), the lack of adequate support is the top cause of stress for students. It reduces the academic performance of the students and hinders their ability to study effectively and manage better time if academic stress was severe (Khan, 2018). Moreover, according to Cruz (2019), most the students have trouble dealing with teachers, completing requirements, and having cheater classmates because of academic stress, anxiety, nervousness, digestive problems, constant worries, pressure, neck pain, are the symptoms of the stress of people at home or school (Agolla & Ogori, 2009). Students are also prone to depression and headaches (Bhargava & Trivedi, 2018). According to

Buksh, Shahzad, and Niza (2011), most students in university agreed that during stress they felt fatigued, muscular tension, and even have difficulty concentrating and remembering things. According to Jain and Sinhai (2018), several personal and social factors lead to stress for students.

On the other hand, seeking support from family members or friends, during a stressful period can be an effective way of maintaining emotional health (Jane & Terry, 2020). Supportive skills such as making a conversation and sharing can be developed and it will encourage learners to relax and be free enough to express their emotions (Sheykhjan, 2015). According to Mundia and Shahrill (2018), evidence from their study indicates that coping and help-seeking may enhance the academic achievement of students in several ways. Students tend to use healthy stress managing strategies to cope with their stress (Yikealo & Tareke, 2018). And regardless of gender, most students used positive coping mechanisms such as praying, taking action to alleviate stressors, and gaining emotional support from family and friends. Many are also learning to live with the stress and accepting it (Kwaah & Essilfie, 2017). According to Pariat et al. (2014), hobbies and interests could also help students deal with academic stress. It provides a creative outlet and works to enhance self-confidence (Arhakos, 2018). According to Kaur (2019), it was proposed that better facilities, such as social support groups made up of lectures from administrators and students, should be placed by the academic center's counseling hub so that supportive skills like communicating and sharing could be developed. Good teaching cannot be overestimated because it is the key to preventing and mitigating stress among students (Brien, 2014).

However, some coping mechanisms are not as helpful as others, such as negative coping responses, which often make the stress worse because they are temporary distractions or drag you down over time (Healthwise Staff, 2019). According to Cherkil, Gardens, and Soman (2013), women prefer to seek further help, fix problems, and also use negative coping strategies, such as avoidant coping. Also, in female university students, academic test

stress tends to increase disordered eating symptoms and is associated with lower levels of self-esteem ( Costarelli & Patsai, 2012). Many students will increase the wrong habits in their eating routine as stress increases, such as eating unhealthy foods (Aljaber et al., 2019). According to Mazo (2015), recognizing the coping strategies they use in attempting to overcome the Stressors are equally important.

A significant goal for improvement is to improve the stress-management skills and abilities of students. It is also a wake-up call for parents, teachers, and counselors to teach students the opportunity to deal with stress for their better future and safe well-being, and deal the stress with hard work.

## **Research Methodology**

### **Design**

This research used the quantitative approach correlational research design to determine the correlation between academic stress and seeking-support coping style among students.

### **Environment**

The study was conducted through virtual communication on the messenger of Jagobiao National High School, Senior High, particularly in grades 11 and 12. The Jagobiao National High School grades 11 and 12 offered the same 5 strands which include Accountancy and Business Management (ABM), Humanities and Social Science (HUMSS), General Academic Strand (GAS), Technical Vocational Livelihood (TVL), and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM).

### **Respondents**

The participants of the study consisted of all Senior High School Students. The grade 11 students with a solidity of 209 population, while grade 12 with a sum of 100 students. The definite number of Senior High School students was 306 from grade 11 to grade 12. Out of 306, 87 respondents were not able to contact and some failed to communicate.

## **Instrument**

The researcher devised a researcher-made tool consisting of 10 indicators in each variable. The survey questionnaire was a checklist type that was composed of two variables Academic Stress and Students' Coping Style. The respondents were asked to put checkmark the blank provided which corresponds to any number written above each item that best described their opinions through a google form, and they were guided by the direction that the researcher gave. The choices were always, sometimes, and never. The respondents were given at least 5 minutes to answer the given survey questionnaire. The instrument was first validated before it was administered. Validating the instrument, the research pilot-tested instrument by administering it to 20 people and the results were subjected to statistical analysis.

## **Data Gathering Procedures**

The researcher asked first the permission of the research teacher. When the questionnaire was approved, the researcher conducted the data gathering from the students of senior high school through Google Forms. The researcher started gathering the data on March 25, 2021. The specific time and day when the researcher conducted the study was exactly 1:00 PM to 4:30 PM Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. The respondents were guided by the direction that the researcher gave. The respondents were assured that their answers were only used in the study, and be treated with utmost confidence and trust. The collection of data ended on November 28, 2021.

## **Data Analysis**

In interpreting the data, the researcher used chi-square as a statistical tool. The chi-square helped the researcher to determine the association of the two variables academic stress and seeking-support coping style.

## **PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA**



This chapter exposed the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of data gathered in which the study aimed to know the level of academic felt by the students and the level of students' self-efficacy.

**Table 1**  
**Academic Stress**

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. My teachers are critical of my academic performance.	3.52	Often
2. I lack concentration during class hours.	3.44	Sometimes
3. I lack time management that makes me fail to set my priorities.	3.42	Sometimes
4. I am worried about my grades.	4.00	Often
5. I fear failing my subjects.	4.11	Often
6. I feel stress when I have too many exams and tasks to do which is academic overload.	4.06	Often
7. Examination times are very stressful to me.	3.80	Often
8. I feel stressed when academic demands increase.	3.97	Often
9. I feel stress when I have to complete my worksheets and activity sheets when deadlines are about to come.	3.91	Often
10. I feel anxious even if I am well prepared for a test.	3.67	Often
Weighted mean	3.80	Often

Legend: 1.00-1.50 (Never); 1.51-2.50 (Rarely); 2.51-3.50 (Sometimes); 3.51-4.50 (Often); 4.51-5.00 (Always)

Table 1 shows the weighted mean ( $\mu=3.80$ ). Students fear failing their subjects ( $\mu=4.11$ ) among the ten items. It implies that senior high students fear failing their subjects. A student can feel stress when there are too many exams and tasks to do which is academic overload ( $\mu=4.06$ ). It indicates that students feel stressed when they have too many tasks to do and feel overloaded and cannot focus on studying. A student can be worried about his grades ( $\mu=4.00$ ). It signifies that student is anxious about their grades for the reason that it makes them feel stressed.

On the other hand, with a lack of time management, the student makes him fails to set his priorities( $\mu=3.42$ ). It indicates that only a few of the students lack time management which made them fail to set their priorities. Students have fewer problems with lack of concentration

during class hours ( $\mu=3.44$ ). It signifies that not all students lack attentiveness during class hours. Teachers are critical of my academic performance( $\mu=3.52$ ). It implies that teachers are not critical of the academic performance of the students. According to Jain and Singhai (2017), the lack of adequate support is the top cause of stress for students. It decreases the academic performance of the students and hinders their ability to study effectively (Khan, 2018). It was also proven that among the factors identified as sources of stress were their studies, peer pressure, family problems, and financial problems, and upon which their studies were said to be the factor that caused the most stress (Malarvili and Dhanapal, 2018).

**Table 2**  
**Seeking-support Coping Style**

Indicator	Mean	Interpretation
1. I have been getting comfort and understanding from my family	3.25	Sometimes
2. I have been trying to get advice or help from others people about what to do.	3.23	Sometimes
3. My teachers help me with how to deal with my stress.	3.00	Sometimes
4. My friends are always there for me when I needed them.	3.57	Often
5. I have been getting emotional support from others.	3.33	Sometimes
6. I let someone know about what I feel.	3.21	Sometimes
7. I am hanging out with my friends to relieve my stress.	3.61	Often
8. I go to church with my family to meditate on myself.	3.25	Sometimes
9. I seek attention from my friends and family with the intention to getting their support.	3.26	Sometimes
10. I exercise with my friends to escape the situation.	3.06	Sometimes
Weighted mean	3.30	Sometimes

Legend: 1.00-1.50 (Never); 1.51-2.50 (Rarely); 2.51-3.50 (Sometimes); 3.51-4.50 (Often); 4.51-5.00 (Always)

Table 2 shows the weighted mean ( $\mu=3.30$ ). In terms of indicators, looking closely at the table, it was observed that hanging out with my friends relieves stress ( $\mu=3.61$ ) It indicates that students who are experiencing stress spend time with their friends to alleviate their stress. Friends are always there for me when I needed them ( $\mu=3.57$ ). It signifies that friends are always there for them to lean on. A student can get emotional support from others ( $\mu=3.33$ ). It was inferred that students were getting emotional support from others that help lift them.

Sometimes, teachers help me with how to deal with their stress ( $\mu=3.00$ ). It indicates that not all teachers help their students on dealing their stress. Likewise, sometimes, a student exercise with my friends to escape the situation( $\mu=3.06$ ). It signifies that few of the students have physical exercise with their friends to escape the situation of being stressed. A student can let someone know about what he feels ( $\mu=3.21$ ). It implies that some of the students are letting someone know about what they feel. Ganesan, Talwar, and Fauzan (2018) show that students find it difficult to cope with the stress that they experience and tend to lag, while some other students see it as a challenge for them to work hard. Evidence from their study signifies that coping and help-seeking may help students' academic achievement in several ways (Mundia and Shahril, 2018). Kumar and Bhukar (2013) show that teachers and parents should work together to reduce the level of stress and enhance the coping strategy of the students.

**Table 3**  
**Academic Stress and Seeking-support coping style**

	Value	df	Assymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1044.00	644	.000
N of Valid Cases	218		

\*696 cells (100.0%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is .00

The table above shows that the p-value of the two variables which is the “academic stress” and “seeking-support coping style” is lesser than the alpha ( $\alpha=.05$ ). The result of the variable “Academic Stress” is  $.000 < .05$  is significant. This means that academic stress and seeking-support coping style among students has a significant correlation. Students positively cope with academic burdens and overcome personal challenges, resulting in improved academic achievement (Yazon, Manaig, and Tesoro, 2017). Even if students experienced negative events and feel stressed, but also believe that they can cope successfully and as a result of achieving their goals (Struthers, Perry, and Menec, 2002). Increasing students’ stress-management skills is an important target for change (Pascoe, Hetrick, and Parker, 2020). On the contrary, some researchers show results on how academic stress experienced by students. Worrying about future and having low self-esteem were both linked to academic stress in students (Nitin, Nallapati and Sinha, 2020). Their worries are weakening their character in doing tasks and coping with stress (Aina and Wijayati, 2019). Some studies also have shown how students cope with their stress in different ways. Students used active coping to release stress by keeping their minds engaged on things by participating in sports, exercising, listening to music, and talking with friends to manage their worries (Hudson, 2013). Socializing and being surrounded by positive people is an essential aspect of overcoming stress (Kumar and Bhukar, 2013).

## **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATION, AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

This chapter presents the summary of findings, conclusion, recommendation, and limitations of the study about the academic stress and seeking-support coping style.

### **Summary of Findings**

The result of the study shows that the level of academic stress among students is “often” which means that most of the students have

experienced academic stress. The level of seeking-support coping style, on the other hand, is which means that some students are using seeking support to cope with stress.

The data portrays that the level of academic stress is correlated with their coping level. Therefore, it is significant. It implies that students who experienced academic stress can be able to cope with their stress by seeking support.

The researcher claim that there is a significant relationship between the two variables which are Academic Stress and Seeking-support Coping Style. Overall, when the students are stressed at school, they should use seeking support for the reason that it helps them to handle their stress.

### **Conclusion**

This study implies that the students can cope with their stress by using a seeking-support coping style. It is inextricably linked to what the researchers are projecting. Students with high-coping levels are being linked to academic stress that is caused by the stressors like academic workloads, deadlines, inability to understand the subject, and worries. In addition, seeking support is a frequently used active coping style of the stress in students. In coping with stress, students have positive thinking to lessen the stress and deal with it by seeking help or support from their family members and friends. It helps the students to adapt to the situation and face the challenge. This has been associated with several positive health outcomes. Overall, academic stress has a big impact on the coping level of students and can lead to positive outcomes in different aspects of an individual's life

### **Recommendations**

The various recommendations were as follows:

1. It is recommended that the students must boost their self-confidence to seek support if they experience stress so that they can attain good performance at school.

2. It is recommended that teachers must help their students in dealing their stress so that they can achieve their learning goals.

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## Appendix A

Instruction: Please read the statement carefully and write your response by putting check mark (✓) that best characterizes how you feel about the statement.

5- Always      4- Often      3- Sometimes      2- Rarely      1- Never

### ACADEMIC STRESS

Questions					
	5	4	3	2	1
My teachers are critical on my academic performance					
I lack of concentration during class hours.					
I lack of time management that makes me fail to set my priorities.					
I am worried about my grades.					
I fear of failing my subjects.					
I feel stress when I have too many exams and tasks to do (academic overload).					
Examination times are very stressful to me.					
I feel stress when academic demands increase.					
I feel stress when I have to complete my worksheets and activity sheets when deadlines are about to come.					
I feel anxious even if I am well prepared for a test.					

**SEEKING-SUPPORT COPING STYLE**

Instructions: Please read the statement carefully and write your response by putting check mark (✓) that best characterizes how you cope with your stress.

5- Always      4- Often      3- Sometimes      2-Rarely      1- Never

Questions					
	5	4	3	2	1
I have been getting comfort and understanding from my family.					
I have been trying to get advice or help from other people about what to do.					
My teachers help me on how to deal with my stress.					
My friends are always there for me when I needed them.					
I have been getting emotional support from others.					
I let someone know about what I feel.					
I am hanging out with my friends to relieve my stress.					
I go to church with my family to meditate myself.					
I seek attention with my friends and family with the intention of getting their support.					
I exercise with my friends to escape the situation.					

## Appendix B

### DATA AND RESULT OF THE PILOT TESTING

#### Level of Academic Stress

#### Academic Stress

4	3	3	3	5	3	5	5	3	1
3	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	4
1	3	3	5	4	3	3	4	1	3
3	3	1	3	4	3	2	4	3	3
4	2	4	4	5	4	4	5	5	5
5	4	1	5	3	5	4	3	1	3
2	4	4	3	1	5	4	3	3	2
4	4	3	5	5	4	4	4	4	4
3	2	3	5	5	4	3	4	2	3
3	3	4	5	5	4	4	3	3	3
3	3	4	5	5	4	3	5	5	3
3	3	3	1	3	5	5	5	3	3
3	3	2	4	5	3	2	2	3	3
3	3	3	4	5	4	3	5	4	3
2	4	3	4	4	4	4	5	4	5
4	3	4	5	5	4	4	5	5	4
4	2	3	5	5	4	3	4	4	3
5	5	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	5
4	2	4	5	5	4	5	4	5	3

#### Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.722	10

## Level of Seeking-support Coping Style

**Seeking-support Coping Style**

3	1	1	3	3	1	5	5	5	1
3	3	5	5	4	3	5	3	3	3
4	3	4	4	3	3	5	2	3	3
2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	1	1
4	4	1	4	4	4	5	2	4	5
5	5	2	5	4	4	5	4	5	5
1	3	1	3	1	2	2	1	5	1
4	3	3	5	5	3	5	3	5	3
4	2	1	3	2	3	5	3	2	5
3	4	3	4	4	3	3	4	5	3
2	3	2	3	3	2	3	2	2	4
5	3	4	1	3	1	3	3	3	4
2	3	1	3	1	1	4	3	4	1
3	4	4	3	3	1	3	4	3	2
2	4	3	5	4	4	5	3	4	5
3	4	4	5	4	4	5	3	4	5
3	2	3	4	4	4	2	4	3	3
3	5	2	3	5	5	3	4	2	3
4	4	2	4	4	4	4	5	3	2
2	3	3	2	3	2	4	3	2	3

**Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.802	10