

‘THE EFFECT OF STRESS ON STUDENTS’ ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AT SECONDARY LEVEL

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Abstract

The modern world, which is said to be the world of achievement, is also a world of stress. Students today are facing new challenges in education that require more efforts of students. The demands of society to perform various roles, many of which are indeterminate, contradictory, and unattainable in the current social, cultural, economic and bureaucratic conditions of our society and causing severe pressures on High School Students. The current study aims to find out the effect of stress on students' academic performance at secondary level in Gujranwala district. Students (N=80) and teachers (N=40) of four public secondary schools in Gujranwala. Teachers' Perception on Students' Academic Performance (TPSAP) and Perceptions of Students Academic Stress (PSAS) were administered on participants to collect data. Two questionnaires were developed and validated through pilot testing and administered to the sample for the collection of data. The researcher personally visited respondents, thus 100% of data were collected. The results were analyzed and interpreted using Frequency, mean, percentage while the standard deviation was used to determine the effects in secondary level students. Academic, institutional, and social pressures have long been explored among students and researchers have identified various stressors. The learning additional efforts deal into those components of academic stress such as competitions, disappointments, fear of failure, board exam pressure, poor relations with peers or teachers, domestic issues, curriculum and methods of teaching, climate of institution, and assessment, these are some issues that effects academic performance of students. The current study provides useful information for teachers and parents to determine the effects of stress on students' academic performance. In addition, this study is useful to future researchers who intends to conduct further studies on the effects of stress on students' academic performance.

INTRODUCTION

Stress refers to "the sum of physical, mental and emotional stresses or anxiety on the individual." (Solanky, Desai, Kavishwar, & Kantharia, 2012) . It is determined in the context that is usually identified by symptoms of mental or physical stress, such as depression or hypertension, which can be a response to a condition in which a person feels fear, stressed or both. Stress that enhances performance (physically or mentally, for example by training of strength or routine of working) is called stress, while determined stress that is not set by dealing or adjustment maybe the cause of anxiety or stress, depression can become known as distress. (Mehfooz & Haider, 2017).

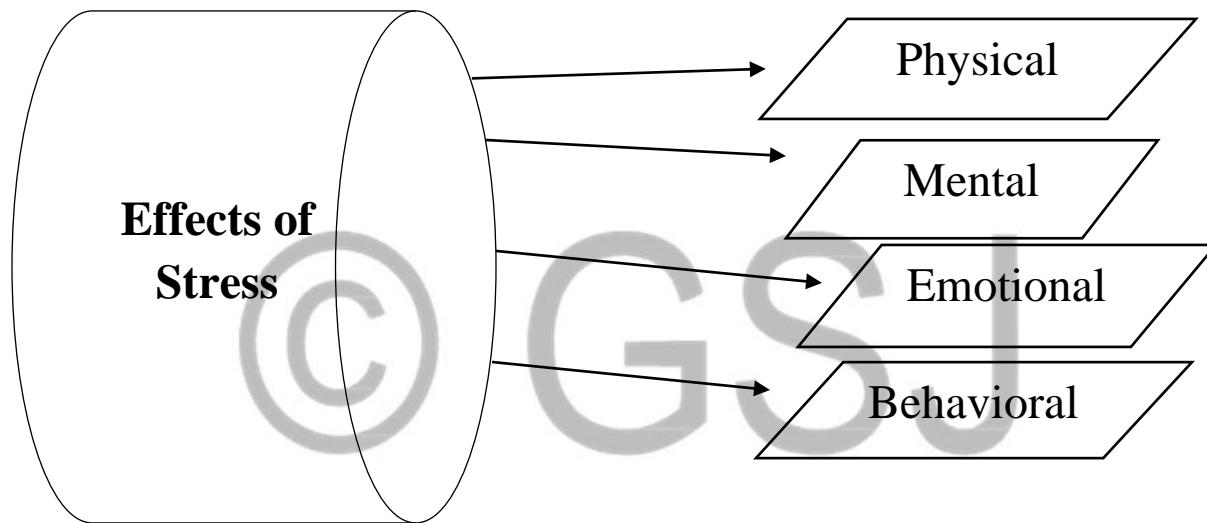
The researchers agrees with the finding on the impact of stress on the body of a human. Consensus of data shows that if not done correctly, stress can lead to several types of illness. Some of the most striking biological effects of stress are heart disease and cancer. But regardless, stress can negatively impact the respiratory system. It makes breathing more difficult. The impact of stress is not only biologically effective able, but also psychologically. A stressful person may not be able to work effectively in any field of life. For students, stress can have effects on their academic performance. The effects of stress on students could be enough. Many studies have shown that stress disturbs students' ability to concentrate. The students tend to meet their requirements of the multi-level school at the same time (Lumantod, 2017).

Adulthood is the phase of human development that occurs between childhood and adulthood. Because of rapid physical and mental development at this phase, students may experience mental inconsistency between physical or social change and, therefore, suffer from ineffective to remolding the problems. These kinds of problems can be caused by more

psychological problems and even trigger unusual behaviors. Adulthood is the most desperate period in which teenagers experience confusion. The stress is mainly caused by academic tests, personal relationships, relationship problems, life changes, and career exploration. This tension can usually cause mental, physical and behavioural problems (Aafreen, Priya, & Gayathri, 2018).

Figure 1:

Effects of stress on a child



Academic stress is one of those factors that cause students' failure. Stress is the response of the mind and action through hormonal signals, the perception of danger arising from an automatic response system, known as war or flight response. Academic performance is educational goal of a student life, teacher, and institution that you achieve within a specified time. Students' academic performance largely depends on parents' involvement in their child's academic activities to achieve the higher level of academic success. Students are very emotional, especially women. They are nervous about everything at the school level. There are many factors

that affect their studies, such as current stress, teachers' attitude towards education, hardening at home, aspirations the future, severe stress on labels (Saqib, 2018).

Student is a learner or a person who attends the educational institution. The time it takes for a person to build a positive and hopeful future on the basis of scientific knowledge which remains an enjoyable experience for many, but with pleasure, many problems arise. Academic stress can be the stress that is often caused by span of time compared to one's ability to perform at university (Kiani, Latif, Bibi, Rashid, & Tariq, 2017). Different scholars have identified different academic pressures (Jha, 2004) describing academic stress as a product of physical or psychological struggle to organize the requirements or tests which the learner uses it in the specified area.

This study depicts that education and academic performance are a significant source of stress for students. The impact of this ongoing academic-related stress to student outcomes and well-being has not been comprehensively explored. Therefore, the research has been undertaken on “The effect of stress on students’ academic performance at secondary level”.

METHODOLOGY

This section presents the method and procedures that were used to collect and analyze the data of this study. The purpose of the study was to provide sufficient knowledge on the dimensions of students' stress not attended to and several the gaps. The research design was used to arrange the research and shows how all the main aspects of the research project, including sample, criteria, and methods of assignment, worked together to address the main research questions of the study. The effects of stress on students' academic performance were thoroughly studied, through local literature was a bit limited.

Research Design

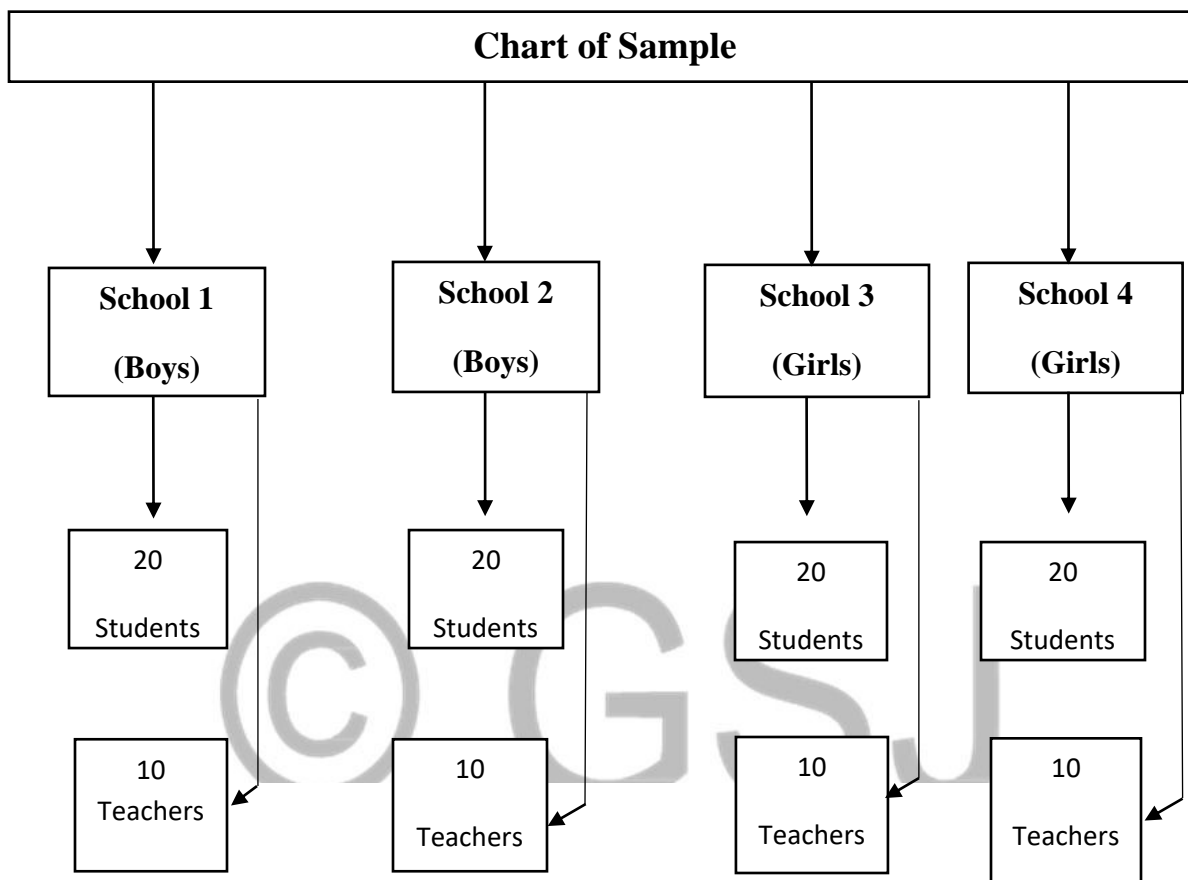
It was descriptive and quantitative in nature. A survey technique were used. Quantitative research is done to discover how people think, act or feel about specific problems. Quantitative projects focus on the number of responses rather than achieving a centralized or emotional view that aims to do qualitative research.

Population of the Study

The population for this study were students and teachers of government secondary schools of district Gujranwala. There were 364 for boys schools and 455 of girls schools of private and government-affiliated institutions running in district Gujranwala out of which through randomly four government schools were taken.

Sample of the Study

Flow Chart of Sample



Of this population, a simple random sampling strategy was used to collect the data in the current study. The high school teachers both male and female were included in the sample. There were 134 working but on the basis of their informed consent 40 teachers was available for data collection. The student were not coming as per enrollment due to covid-19. In four school's 968 students were enrolled but out of all those 80 could be approached. The sample which researcher could rely upon used. The sample was consisting of 80 students and 40 teachers of government secondary schools of Gujranwala District.

Development of Research Instruments

This study uses two self-developed instruments for investigation. Descriptive statistics are employed for the analysis of data. 5. Point rating scale was developed questionnaire was used for students and teachers'. The scale was developed as Teachers' Perception on Students' Academic Performance (TPSAP) scale and Perceptions of Students Academic Stress (PSAS) scale were used to measure the effects of stress on students' academic performance. For this total of 40 items collectively in two questionnaires were used 20 for students and 20 for teachers.

The Likert 5-point scale is formatted to measure satisfaction because of:

1. It's relatively easier for respondents to understand the statements and 5-point scale tends to have better data distribution (Chomeya, 2010).
2. This tool meets the objectives of the study and conform the purpose of the study (Joshi, Kale, Chandel, & Pal, 2015).
3. The validity and reliability were calculated and this tool was administered (Hartley, 2013).

Scale contains 5 response options with columns and an undecided option associated with average response options. Respondents rate each item on 1-5 point Likert scale.

Validation of Instruments

The Validity of the rating scale was determined with the help of expert opinion to had the experience to working with students and teachers dealing them through the stress, moreover which included the social activist, philanthropists, supervisor of the study, researchers and teachers of social sciences. The items their sequence wording and placement was finalized on 40 items of the rating scales.

To ensure the reliability of the research instrument co-efficient cronbach alpha was used the value of cronbach's alpha was 0.78 which shows interment is reliable.

Pilot Study

Initially, a pilot study conducted from one Government girls' high school and Government boys high school to administer the questionnaires used in this study were understandable to respondents and there was no ambiguity in the tools. In a pilot study, participants took at least 15 to 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire, and when filling out the questionnaire, it was observed that some language problems were found in English words, then using easy-to-understand vocabulary for students. After the pilot study, the main study was performed in the same process.

Administration of the research Instruments

The demographic variables comprised on basic information of the teacher participants including age, qualification, marital status and class they teach on the other hand, basic information about the student was institution, subject and class.

Teachers' Perception on Students' Academic Performance (TPSAP)

Teacher Perception on students' academic performance Scale was used for this purpose. Therefore the present questionnaire consists of 20 items that were developed to determine students' performance through teachers. This scale determined the perception of teachers about their students' stressors, behaviors, peer pressures, academic expectations, resources, classroom issues, and academic performance. Respondents' rate was each item on the 1-5 point Likert scale. According to the scale, the score of 1= strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = undecided, 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree.

Perceptions of Students Academic Stress (PSAS)

For the measurement of academic achievement “Academic Achievement Scale was used. Therefore the present scale has 20 items that were developed to assess the effects of stress on students' academic performance at the secondary level. This scale determined the perception of students about their stresses and academic performance. Through this scale, it was determining how a student feels about their issues during in classroom with a teacher and other fellows, how they learn things and how they perform. And how they relate the domestic and social pressure with their stress and academic performance. Respondents' rate was each item on 1-5 point Likert scale. According to the scale, the score of 1= strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = undecided, 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree.

Data Collection Procedure

The research procedure was performed at various steps. These tools were initially adopted, followed by a pilot study to complement the tools for boys and girls in public school students and teachers. Following a pilot study, the original study was conducted from four public schools with a sample of 80 students and 40 teachers. After collecting the data, the last process of analyzing the data and obtaining the results followed the discussion and recommendations.

Data Analysis Techniques

Descriptive statistics were used to collect the data. The results were analyzed and interpreted using Frequency, mean, percentage while the standard deviation was used to determine the effects in secondary level students from public schools in terms of factors that effects the academic performance of students.

Ethical Consideration

A consent form was sought from the supervisor and the ethical considerations were met while the collection of data. During the study, the ethical approach was followed:

1. First of all, a consent form was given to the headmaster/headmistress of a school for permission to conduct the survey.
2. The confidentiality and privacy of all participants are guaranteed by the researcher.
3. The researcher considered the convenience of the participants as having free will to participate in the study without any pressure.
4. Participants were also informed that if they are uncomfortable, they have the right to refuse.
5. After completing the questionnaire, asked to all participants they complete the questionnaire.
6. It was confirmed that the researcher biases should not affect the study by reporting the results of the questionnaire.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

This chapter comprises of data analysis of the information that was obtained from the students and teachers. This research was about to investigate the effect of stress on students' academic performance at Secondary Level. Information was collected by using questionnaire which includes close ended questions. Respondents had to respond in Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Statistical analysis was done to find frequencies and distribution. Frequency of each demographic was shown in tables, statements regarding effect of stress on

students' academic performance at Secondary Level are also presented in tables in the form of frequency distribution, t-test with respect to gender was also given in table, one-way ANOVA was also presented in table.

Demographic Analysis of Sample for Students

Table 4.1

Frequency Distribution of Students Subject

Sr.	Subject	Frequency	Percentage
1	Science	52	65
2	Arts	28	35
Total		80	100%

Table 4.1 demonstrates that the total number of respondents who responded to the questionnaire was 80 in numbers. As for as the subject of respondents is concerned the 65 science and 35 arts students responded to the questions. The percentage of science respondents is 65% while the arts students are 35%.

Table 4.2

Classes of Students

Sr.	Class	Frequency	Percentage
1	9 th	40	50
2	10 th	40	50
Total		80	100

Table 4.2 describes that the total number of respondents who responded to the questionnaire was 80 in numbers. As for as the class of respondents is concerned the 40, 9th and

40, 10th responded to the questions. The percentage of 9th respondents is 50% and the percentage of 10th class respondents is 50%.

Table 4.3

Age of Respondents (In Years)

Sr.	Age of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
1	13 Y	38	48
2	14 Y	23	29
3	15 Y	19	23
Total		80	100

Table 4.3 mentions that 48% of the respondents were with age of 13 Years, 29% from 14 Years and 23% from 15 Years.

Demographic Analysis of Sample for Teachers

Table 4.4

Frequency Distribution of Teachers of Classes 9th and 10th

Sr.	Teacher of Class	Frequency	Percentage
1	9 th	20	50
2	10 th	20	50
Total		40	100%

Table 4.4 describes that the total number of respondents who responded to the questionnaire was 40 in numbers. As for as the class of respondents is concerned the 20, 9th class teacher and 20, 10th class teachers responded to the questions. The percentage of 9th class teachers' respondents is 50% and the percentage of 10th class teachers is 50%.

Table 4.5

Professional Qualification of Teachers

Sr.	Profession	Frequency	Percentage
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1	Bachelor	9	14
2	Master	25	77
3	M.Phil.	6	9
Total		40	100

Table 4.5 describes that the total number of respondents who responded to the questionnaire was 40 in numbers. As for as the Qualification of respondents is concerned the 9 Bachelor’s degree holders, 25 Master’s and 6 M.Phil. Scholars’ responded to the questions. The percentage of Bachelor’s degree holders’ respondents is 14%, the percentage of Master’s respondents is 77% and the percentage of M.Phil. Scholar’s respondents is 9%.

Table 4.6

Age of Respondents (In Years)

Sr.	Age of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
1	31-40 Y	25	78
2	41-50 Y	10	16
3	51-60 Y	5	6
Total		40	100

Table 4.6 mentions that 78% of the respondents were with age of 31 to 40 Years, 16% from 41 to 50 Years and 6% from 51 to 60 Years.

Teachers Perception on Students’ Academic Stress (TPSAP) Scale

The results showed that against the standard deviation the mean score was between 4.11-4.23 which is the highest mean value. In the first question it was observed that 70% of the teachers agreed with the statements that identification of most of the students was done by them in activation in class activities. In the second statement it was seen that 70% of the teachers responded that results expectation were the reasons of stress among students. Whereas, in third statement it was measured that the 90% of teachers agreed on the cognitive abilities as their

focus. In fourth statement, it was measured that according to teachers' student's response in academics was through avoiding punishment and competing for rewards. In fifth statement it was measured that 70% of teachers said when students are motivated, they built good relations with teachers. In sixth statement, it was recorded that the most of the teachers almost 80% of them agreed that the students' academics were measured well when they involve in different activities of classrooms. In statement 7 it was responded that the 60% of teachers motivated students by admiring their work and targets. In statement eight it was recorded that the 90% of teachers focused on class room environment when students suffer from stress. Whereas, in statement nine it was reported that the 80% of teachers respond that the friend were the most common barriers of student's academics. Whereas, 90% of teachers respond that the major causes of students' stress were domestic issues. While 70% of teachers said that the stress of students effects their mental health more. In statement twelve it was resulted that 80% of teachers said that the secondary level students were disturbed because of family pressure. In thirteenth statement it was recorded that according to 70% teachers' lack of appreciation increases discouragement among students. In statement fourteen 60% teachers responded that the stress increases threatening institutional environment. 55% teachers also mentioned that consistent failing of students was because of challenging environment of school. While in statement 16 it was measured that according to 70% teachers' students worried more about course workload. In statement 17 according to 70% teachers the first sign of stress among students was bad academic performance. In question 18 it was recorded that the 80% of teachers perceive that the friendly classroom environment increases the self-efficacy of students. In question 20 it was reported that the 90% of teachers said that the most important role of teacher is to help students to find purpose of life.

Analysis of Variance

Table 4.7

Comparison of Opinion of Respondents at the Base of Subject (Independent Sample t-test)

Gender	N	M	SD	df	t	Sig.
Science	26	206.21	11.437	78	.486	.587
Arts	14	205.08	11.197			

**P > .05 Level of Significance*

Table 4.8 indicates that the empirical information for Science ($N=52$, $M=206.21$) and for Arts ($N=28$, $M=205.08$) with t-statistics ($t(78) = .486$, $P > .05 = .587$) which shows that there is no significant difference in the opinions of respondents.

Table 4.8

Comparison of Opinion of Respondents at the Base of class (Independent Sample t-test)

Gender	N	M	SD	df	t	Sig.
9th	20	206.21	11.437	78	.486	.587
10th	20	205.08	11.197			

**P > .05 Level of Significance*

Table 4.9 indicates that the empirical information for 9th ($N=40$, $M=206.21$) and for 10th ($N=40$, $M=205.08$) with t-statistics ($t(78) = .486$, $P > .05 = .587$) which shows that there is no significant difference in the opinions of respondents.

Table 4.9

Comparison of Opinion of Respondents at the Base of their Age (One-Way ANOVA)

Age	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	f	Sig.
Respondents					

Between Groups	1963.60	2	490.901		
Within Groups	10555.38	77	111.109	4.418	.003
Total	12518.99	79			

**P < .05 Level of Significance*

Table 4.10 indicates that the empirical information for Between Groups (*Sum of Squares=1963.60, df=2, Mean Square=490.901*) and for Within Groups (*Sum of Squares=10555.38, df=137, Mean Square=111.109*) with One Way ANOVA ($F(79)=4.418, P<.05=.003$) which leads to the decision that there is a significant difference in the opinions of respondents on the basis of age of participants.

Perceptions of Student Academic Stress (PSAS) Scale

The results showed that against the standard deviation the mean score was between 4.12-4.42 which is the highest mean value. In first statement it was observed that the 60% of students were worried mostly about the examinations. In statement two it was measured that the stress of taking admission in a specific field adds their level. 70% of students in third statement also responded that the pressure of study to get high scores also affect them. Whereas in fourth statement it was recorded that according to the 70% students their teachers respond positively when they share their problems to them. While in statement 5 it was measures that the 60% student's problem were solved emotionally through teachers. In sixth statement 55% students said that the most supportive teachers were those who provide different activities. In statement 7 it was recorded that the 70% students perceived that the board exams were the cause of stress. According to the statement 8 it was recorded that according to the 60% student to some extent financial problems effect stress. While in statement 9 60% students respond that peer's relationship effects teacher's relationship. In question 10 it was also observed that the 70%

students felt burden due to workload. In question eleven it was measured that according to the 80% students' academic depression was because of lot of syllabus. In statement 12 according to 60% students' teachers provide equal chances to learn more. While in statement 13, fourteen and fifteen according to 80% of the student's quality of instructions, competitions with peers and relationship with peers also effect the academic and stress. While in statements sixteen, seventeen and eighteen respectively 90% of students responded that the environment of class, family expectations and teacher centered lessons effect stress level. Whereas, in statement 20 it was recorded that the according to the 60% decisions were made by parents.

Analysis of Variance

Table 4.10

Comparison of Opinion of Respondents at the Base of Teacher of Class (Independent Sample t-test)

Teacher of Class	N	M	SD	df	t	Sig.
9 th	20	206.21	11.437	78	.486	.587
10 th	20	205.08	11.197			

* $P > .05$ Level of Significance

Table 4.12 indicates that the empirical information for 9th ($N=40$, $M=206.21$) and for 10th ($N=40$, $M=205.08$) with t-statistics ($t(78) = .486$, $P > .05 = .587$) which shows that there is no significant difference in the opinions of respondents.

Table 4.11

Comparison of Opinion of Respondents at the Base of Professional Qualification (One-Way ANOVA)

Professional Qualification	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	f	Sig.
Between Groups	1963.60	2	490.901	4.418	.003

Within Groups	10555.38	77	111.109
Total	12518.99	79	

**P < .05 Level of Significance*

Table 4.13 indicates that the empirical information for Between Groups (*Sum of Squares=1963.60, df=2, Mean Square=490.901*) and for Within Groups (*Sum of Squares=10555.38, df=77, Mean Square=111.109*) with One Way ANOVA ($F(79)=4.418, P<.05=.003$) which leads to the decision that there is a significant difference in the opinions of participants.

Table 4.12

Comparison of Opinion of Respondents at the Base of their Age (One-Way ANOVA)

Age Respondents	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	f	Sig.
Between Groups	1963.60	2	490.901		
Within Groups	10555.38	77	111.109	4.418	.003
Total	12518.99	79			

**P < .05 Level of Significance*

Table 4.14 indicates that the empirical information for Between Groups (*Sum of Squares=1963.60, df=2, Mean Square=490.901*) and for Within Groups (*Sum of Squares=10555.38, df=77, Mean Square=111.109*) with One Way ANOVA ($F(79)=4.418, P<.05=.003$) which leads to the decision that there is a significant difference in the opinions of teachers on the basis of age of participants.

Relationship between Stress and Academic Performance

Table 4.13

Correlation Analysis between Stress and Academic Performance

Correlation Analysis		Effects of Stress	Loss of Academic Performance
	Pearson Correlation	1	.791**
Effects of Stress	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	80	80
Loss of Academic Performance	Pearson Correlation	.791**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	80	80

Table 4.15 describes the correlation between Stress and academic performance. There is a pure linear relation between effect of Stress vs effect of Stress and loss of academic performance vs loss of academic performance and vice versa. The correlation between effect of Stress and loss of academic performance is positive (.791). This shows that if Stress increases then loss of academic performance will also increase.

Discussion

This Study was conducted to investigate the effects of stress on students' academic performance. the results of the analysis that were performed to justify the research questions. Through these findings it was resulted that there were certain effects of academic stress among secondary school students. It was measured that the 70% of the teachers responded that stress of results was the major factor of students' problems and 90% of them responded that the classroom

activities and cognitive abilities represent the state of students. Whereas, Clemmitt (2007), also conducted a research and justify these findings. In his research of high school students he conducted a survey of stress and academic results with mental abilities focus. In his research he developed thress research questions based on stress, academia and cognition measurements. In the results he concluded that the 80% of students were in stress because of examns and 75% of students had cognitive issues because of stress. He also elaborated his study with the survey of teachers about the stress level of students. In which the results also revealed that 95% of high school teachers also recorded that the stress of exams was the main factor. Hence, the results of the current study were justified.

Results of the study presned that according tpo the 60% of the students peers relationship also effect teachers relationship. While Volpe (2000), also conducted a study on the relationship of students and teachers. In which he analysed the results on five point likert scale of student teacher relationship and concluded that the 70% of the Students reported that when they had bad relationship with peers that also effected their relationship with teachers and other fellows. Whereas, he also analysed different sub factors of stress and relationship effects. In which lengthy syllabus was also one of the major cause of stress in students that also effect their relationship with family and teachers. So, the results of the study were justified.

In another results teachers reported that the 70% stress was revealed by the academics. Whereas Feld (2011), conducted an online survey on the signs and symptoms of stress in students. He conducetd this survey with 1800 students and teachers. In which he concluded that according to both teachers and students the major impact of stress in students was on their academic results. Then, he also conducted an indepth interview with one of the students who was suffered with the stress. Reported that the students had highest marks in one class but after

suffering from stress problems he scored the least marks. So, the results of the study were also justified that the bad academics were the sign of stress in students.

As results also revealed that the stress had affected the health of students and their relationships. These findings were also justified through previous literature. Where, Lumantod (2017), conducted a vast research on university students ($n=200$). He investigated that the students who had stress during exams and study workload had more impact in their mental health and in the results, they get aloof and leave their relations. They get irritated and those students had no friends in the schools and also remain quiet during classrooms and did not interact with teachers.

In another research question it was presented that does stress negatively impact students' academic performance at secondary school level. Results analyzed the same findings. Though, previous literature also justifies the findings. Jha (2014), recognized that the two groups were studied in which one were the students who had stress and in other group were those students who did not have stress problems. In which he analyzed that the students who had stress had negative academic performance whereas, the students who were not in stress performed well in results and tests.

In third research question it was stated that the How can the causes of academic stress be minimized in context of secondary education in Pakistan. These findings were justified with previous literature. Lindsay (2016), conducted a research in which he administered the causes of stress and also gave solutions. He proposed that the students were in stress because, of their school environment, peers and academic workload. He also proposed that the teacher's negligence and view about students also increase their stress. Whereas, the students who had

healthy environment and teachers' help and support to achieve good grades and solve problems helped students to come out of stress.

In Pakistani culture, parents, teachers, and the institution of high school children are ignoring the personal needs of the students' in their plans, instead of focus on factors that effects the academic performance of students. Grading scores have been heavily emphasized, so parents provide a tutor to a child even after school. Therefore, the role of the teacher has been influenced by several factors such as the resource person, motivational, curriculum specialist, classroom supporter, mentor and manager. In our immediate community, there is a lot of pressure to get high scores because of the subsequent admission process in higher education institutions that rely on students' high-performance.

All of the findings were justified with the previous literature and justify the findings for effective use and contribution.

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