

# A Study and Review on Personality and Academic Stress and Their Consequences Among Bachelor and Master Degree Students in North Gujarat

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**Abstract:** Among students pursuing bachelor's and master's degrees in a variety of academic fields, academic stress has become a major psychological problem. This study looks at the connection between personality traits and academic stress and analyses how it affects students' social environments, mental health, and academic achievement, especially in the North Gujarat region. Students experience academic stress when they believe that the demands of their studies surpass their capacity for coping, frequently as a result of workload, competition, and career uncertainty. Stress perception and management are influenced by personality qualities such as neuroticism, extraversion, and conscientiousness. According to the study, high levels of stress cause anxiety, depression, poor academic performance, and damaged social interactions. Along with discussing stress patterns in a variety of fields, including engineering, law, medicine, and economics, the study offers detection techniques and solutions for stress management. College students are now under additional pressure and stress due to changes in our culture. Due to these students are under a lot of strain and exhibit more symptoms of stress. Stress is the reaction to circumstances or occurrences that interfere with our ability to perform physically or mentally. Sadness, loss of interest or enjoyment, feelings of guilt or low self-worth, trouble sleeping or eating, fatigue, and difficulty concentrating are all signs of depressive disorders.

**Key words:** stress, academic pressure, North Gujarat, bachelor and master degree students, measurement of stress

## Introduction

Students in higher education all experience academic stress, which has increased in prevalence in competitive learning settings. It describes the psychological discomfort brought on by academic obligations, such as tests, homework, and performance standards. Time limits, peer competition, and pressure to find work are just a few of the difficulties faced by students seeking bachelor's and master's degrees.

Students' responses to academic stress are significantly influenced by their personalities. Understanding emotional reaction, and strategies for coping are all influenced by character features. Research indicates that learning activity and academic achievement are strongly impacted by personality traits such neuroticism, extraversion, and meticulousness [1].

Teenagers around the world have been greatly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Universities in rural locations were inaccessible to students. Their educational achievement suffered and their self-confidence declined if they were unable to attend online classes. Since many students lacked access to online learning, resources, and support for educators, distance learning was totally inaccessible for them [2]. Students

are mostly in their late adolescent years, physically mature and mentally disturbed, and the university acts as a new setting for them. University students encounter confusion and indecision during the transitional stages of late adolescence and emerging adulthood [3]. Students experience psychosocial challenges throughout the course of their studies, with personal expectations requiring greater cognitive and emotional rigor than at earlier school levels.

Stress and adversity are common in this age group, which can lead to a range of psychological, social, and physical problems [4]. As a result, it should come as no surprise that students routinely have worse psychological health than all people, as seen by higher rates of anxiety, sadness, and other psychological disorders [5]. Every student experience stress and worry, which has an impact on their academic performance both mentally and physically. Anxiety can negatively impact a student's academic performance, self-esteem, and memory function [6]. The study also shows how students' personalities and IQs influence their adoption of various coping mechanisms for academic stress and exam anxiety. The study focused on the experiences of students in different educational environments and entailed a thorough analysis of data gathered using a structured survey. Notably, mental health problems tend to increase in young adulthood, especially because university curriculum-based

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academic activities are more demanding than those in elementary school [7-8]. Throughout the academic years, students work to overcome obstacles and adjust to university life. They also strive for emotional and financial independence [9-10]. One of the most demanding professional courses is graduate medical school [11-12]. A medical student is more likely to suffer stress that could become excessive due to high expectations from themselves and their family members as well as training in taking responsibility for the patient's well-being [13]. Numerous scholars have investigated the relationship between academic stress and personality in students pursuing bachelor's or master's degrees in a variety of fields, including law, economics, medicine, and engineering.

[14] highlighted that students in various academic streams feel stress in different ways and identified several drivers of academic stress, including peer competition, parental expectations, and workload. The authors of [15] created a scale to gauge academic stress and came to the conclusion that stress is multidimensional, resulting from social, psychological, and academic issues, particularly around exam times. A comprehensive review in [16] emphasized the significance of coping mechanisms while highlighting how academic stress impacts both mental and physical health and manifests as symptoms including worry, exhaustion, and lack of focus. Studies on medical students reveal that stress levels are especially high because of demanding schoolwork and emotional obligations, which eventually deteriorate mental health [17].

According to recent research, the prevalence of depressive symptoms among students in higher education around the world is rapidly rising and now exceeds that of the general population [18]. According to one study, 30% of college students reported feeling more psychologically stressed, and their levels of depression were significantly higher than those of the general population [19]. Symptoms of depression are more common among female university students in their senior year [20]. Approximately 11.9% of university students suffer from anxiety disorders, making it the most prevalent mental illness [21]. Research has shown that students who have unfavorable opinions about subjects like statistics and think the subject is dangerous are eventually more likely to experience anxiety [22].

## 1. Study Pattern of Bachelor and Master Degree Students

Students pursuing bachelor's and master's degrees in a variety regarding educational fields, including engineering, medicine, law, and economics, have very

different study habits. This is especially true when examining comprehension levels, institutional study hours, and the ratio of theoretical to practical knowledge. These differences have a direct impact on students' learning outcomes, professional preparedness, and degree of academic stress. Students pursuing bachelor's degrees in engineering typically adhere to an organized program that prioritizes both theoretical ideas and real-world applications. However, at the undergraduate level, practical experience is typically restricted to lab sessions and project work, with a greater emphasis on theoretical comprehension. Students' comprehension levels are typically moderate in the early years and gradually improve with exposure to key subjects and internships.

Students pursuing bachelor's degrees in engineering typically adhere to an organized program that prioritizes both theoretical ideas and real-world applications. Nevertheless, at the undergraduate level, practical experience is typically restricted to lab sessions and project work, with a greater emphasis on theoretical comprehension. As students move through semesters, their comprehension level steadily rises. The emphasis changes to specialization, research, and learning through projects at the master's level, leading to a more comprehensive integration of practical knowledge and a deeper conceptual understanding [23-24]. Bachelor's and master's degrees in medical fields need a lot of study time—typically eight to ten hours a day—including lectures, clinical rotations, and hands-on training. While postgraduate students exhibit higher levels of applied knowledge due to expertise and real-time patient care duties, undergraduate medical students gain understanding through theoretical learning paired with early clinical exposure.

High comprehension and elevated levels of anxiety are both influenced by the rigorous nature of medical education [25]. With an average of four to six hours of study time each day, bachelor's degree students in law education mostly concentrate on theoretical frameworks including constitutional law, case studies, and legal concepts. Internships and moot courts provide hands-on experience. Students participate in advanced research, legal analysis, and policy studies at the master's level, which improves information comprehension and application. The depth of learning in this stream is mostly determined by analytical and interpretive abilities [26]. Undergraduate students in the economics and commerce disciplines often spend four to five hours a day in the classroom studying theoretical ideas like financial systems, statistical tools, and economic models.

At this point, there is still little practical exposure, but it does contain case studies and fundamental analysing the

information. Students participate in research, econometrics, and advanced analytics at the postgraduate level, which greatly enhances their comprehension and application abilities. In these domains, experiential learning strategies improve knowledge and abilities development [27].

Due to increased specialization, research engagement, and exposure to real-world issues, master's degree students in all streams generally demonstrate a higher level of comprehension and practical application than bachelor's degree students. Students' academic success and preparedness for the workforce are greatly influenced by the ratio of theoretical to practical knowledge.

## 2. Traits of Various Types of Stress

Students pursuing bachelor's or master's degrees experience academic stress, which is a multifaceted phenomenon that shows up as a variety of psychological, emotional, behavioural, and physiological characteristics. These characteristics vary according to a person's personality, academic requirements, and surroundings. It is crucial to comprehend these kinds of stress in order to recognize their effects and create useful coping mechanisms.

- i. **Cognitive stress:** Disturbances in thought patterns and mental processes brought on by academic pressure are referred to as cognitive stress. Students who are under cognitive stress frequently have trouble focusing, remembering things, and making decisions. They could develop negative thought patterns like failure and self-doubt, overthink academic results, and stress about performance all the time. This kind of stress impairs one's capacity to solve problems and has an impact on academic productivity. Students in difficult disciplines like engineering and medical education, where complex concepts require constant mental engagement, are more likely to experience cognitive overload.
- ii. **Emotional Stress Traits:** Strong emotions and mood disorders are hallmarks of emotional stress. Academic expectations and performance pressure can cause anxiety, anger, irritation, and depression among students. Certain psychological qualities, such as high neuroticism, make students more vulnerable to emotional stress. Exams, results periods, and competitive academic settings are times when this kind of stress is particularly noticeable.
- iii. **Behavioral Stress Traits:** Behavioral stress shows up as visible behaviors and routines. Stressed-out students may procrastinate, neglect academic

assignments, have erratic study habits, and participate less in class activities. Other behaviors include unhealthy overeating or sleep deprivation, excessive use of cell phones and social media, and social disengagement. Behavioral stress has a direct impact on academic output and, if left unchecked, can result in subpar performance.

- iv. **Physiological (Physical) Stress Traits:** The tangible signs that result from ongoing academic strain are referred to as physiological stress. Headaches, exhaustion, tense muscles, irregular sleep patterns, and compromised immunity are common characteristics. During difficult situations like tests or presentations, students may also have elevated heart rates, perspiration, and stomach problems. Prolonged physiological stress can have a detrimental effect on general health and make it harder for students to handle the needs of their studies.
- v. **Social Stress Traits:** Interpersonal connections and social standards in the academic setting are the root causes of social stress. Students may experience pressure to uphold their peer group, satisfy family expectations, or compete with their peers. Fear of being judged, a lack of interaction, loneliness, and trouble establishing connections are examples of traits. Adolescents who move for university or find it difficult to adjust to new academic settings frequently experience social stress.
- vi. **Academic/Performance Stress Traits:** The demands of academia like assignments, tests, due dates, and evaluation schemes are closely linked to this kind of stress. Students may display characteristics including extreme competitiveness, perfectionism, anxiety over failure, and ongoing concern about grades. Performance stress often leads to burnout, especially among high-achieving students who set unrealistic academic goals.
- vii. **Environmental Stress Traits:** Outside influences including the classroom setting, instructional methods, structure of the institution, and supply of resources all have an impact on environmental stress. Feeling uncomfortable, inability to concentrate, discontent with the education environment, and decreased academic involvement are examples of traits. Stress levels may be higher for learners who are learning in settings with limited funds or intense competition.
- viii. **Technological stress:** Students are under stress from using technology as a result of the growing use of digital learning platforms. Technical dissatisfaction, screen fatigue, trouble adjusting to

online learning environments, and information overload are other traits. The incorporation of digital schooling has increased the prevalence of this kind of stress in recent years.

Because the characteristics of academic stress are interrelated and frequently overlap, a student who is under cognitive stress may also display behavioural and emotional symptoms. Environmental factors, academic stream, and personality attributes all influence the kind and degree of stress.

### 3. Reasons of Stress among Students of Various Streams

A complicated interaction of academic, psychological, social, and environmental factors leads to academic anxiety among students pursuing bachelor's and master's degrees. Due to variations in program structure, workload, and institutional expectations, these stressors differ among streams including engineering, medicine, law, and economics. To recognize stress patterns and carry out successful therapies, it is crucial to comprehend these causes.

- i. **Academic Workload and Curriculum Pressure:** The severe academic workload, which includes assignments, tests, projects, and ongoing evaluations, is one of the main causes of stress in all streams. While law and economics students deal with a lot of reading, case studies, and analytical work, engineering and medical students frequently encounter highly regimented, intensive curricula with frequent examinations. Time pressure, less free time, and mental exhaustion are all consequences of an excessive task. Research demonstrates that university students' academic workload is a significant cause of stress [28].
- ii. **Examination Pressure:** Exams are a major source of stress because they are essential to determining academic progress. Fear about failing, worry about performance, and pressure to get high scores are common among students. This is especially severe in highly competitive sectors where employment prospects are directly correlated with academic achievement, such as medical and the field of engineering.
- iii. **Time Management Difficulties:** Stress results from students' frequent struggles to strike an equilibrium between their social and educational commitments. Postgraduate students have to balance coursework and

research, and engineering and medical students in particular have to deal with extensive study sessions and little downtime. Procrastination, last-minute planning, and elevated worry are all consequences of poor time management. Researchers in [29] discovered a considerable correlation between college students' stress levels and poor time management.

- iv. **Parental and Societal Expectations:** Student stress is often increased by family expectations about academic achievement and job options. Particularly in professional disciplines like engineering and medicine, many students experience pressure to live up to their parents' expectations. Stress levels are further increased by societal expectations to land renowned positions.
- v. **Career Uncertainty and Future Anxiety:** Particularly for final-year students in all levels of study, uncertainty about future employment and career possibilities is a significant source of stress. While law students need to find internships and placements, engineering and economics students frequently face competition in the employment market. Specialization and residency opportunities cause stress for medical students.
- vi. **Lack of Practical Exposure and Skill Gap:** There is a disconnect between academic understanding and real-world application in some disciplines, especially at the undergraduate level. Students may experience stress and an absence of confidence as a result of feeling unprepared for real-world issues. While law students may struggle with actual legal abilities, engineering and economics students frequently cite stress owing to a lack of practical experience.
- vii. **Financial Constraints:** Student stress is largely caused by financial concerns such as everyday expenses, housing costs, and school fees. Due to longer study sessions and fewer earning options, postgraduate students in particular may experience financial strain. Stress related to money can cause anxiety, distraction, and poor academic performance. Research shows that student stress levels are strongly correlated with economic conditions [30]
- viii. **Institutional and Environmental Factors:** Stress is also caused by organizational

components like instructional strategies, a lack of educational support, poor infrastructure, and strict evaluation procedures. Students could experience overburdened by academic requirements or unhappy with the calibre of instruction.

- ix. **Personality & health differences:** Students' perceptions and reactions to stress are greatly influenced by their individual personality qualities. While students with elevated conscientiousness are better able to handle the demands of their studies, those with strong neuroticism are more likely to suffer from worry and mental strain. Stress is exacerbated by bad lifestyle choices such sleep deprivation, poor nutrition, and little exercise.

#### 4. Consequences of Academic Stress

Students pursuing bachelor's and master's degrees who experience academic stress suffer far-reaching effects that impact not just their academic achievement but also their mental and physical health, social relationships, and long-term job development. These effects are multifaceted and frequently connected, affecting students' general quality of life.

- i. **Psychological and Emotional Consequences:** The psychological well-being of students is one of the most important effects of academic stress. Anxiety, despair, impatience, and emotional instability are frequently brought on by high amounts of stress. Pupils may feel unmotivated, depressed, and powerless. According to research, university students' psychological suffering and diminished emotional well-being are closely linked to academic stress [31].
- ii. **Physical Health Consequences:** Numerous physical symptoms, including headaches, exhaustion, sleep difficulties, and compromised immunological function, are indicative of chronic academic stress. Additionally, students may have tense muscles, digestive problems, and an elevated heart rate. Chronic stress has been linked to major health issues like cardiovascular disease and hypertension. According to research, stress directly affects the body's physiology, which has an impact on general health and wellbeing [32].
- iii. **Behavioral Consequences:** Students' conduct is impacted by stress, which frequently results in bad habits and poor coping mechanisms.

Procrastination, avoiding academic assignments, inconsistent study habits, and social disengagement are typical behavioural outcomes.

- iv. **Long-Term Career and Personality Development:** Long-term effects on personality development and job advancement may result from academic stress. Prolonged stress might lower one's capacity for self-assurance, judgment, and professional competence. Additionally, it may result in fatigue, lower job satisfaction, and trouble adjusting to obstacles at work.

#### 5. Stress Identification Strategy and Remedies

Finding psychological, behavioural, and physical signs of academic stress requires both formal and informal procedures.

- i. **Self-Assessment and Psychological Scales:** Standardized self-report tools are among the most accurate methods for determining academic stress. Stress levels can be measured and significant stressors can be identified with the use of instruments such as the Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS-21), Student Stress Inventory (SSI), and Perceived Academic Stress Scale (PASS).
- ii. **Behavioral Observation:** Stress is strongly indicated by behavioural changes in students. Procrastination, absenteeism, decreased class involvement, social disengagement, and a drop in academic achievement are indicators of elevated stress levels. By tracking these behavioural patterns over time, educators and parents can recognize stress.
- iii. **Physiological Symptoms:** High levels of stress can be indicated by physical symptoms such headaches, exhaustion, sleep problems, appetite loss, and recurrent sickness. When stress becomes unmanaged and chronic, these symptoms frequently manifest.
- iv. **Academic Performance Analysis:** Stress may be indicated by a sharp drop in academic performance, missed deadlines, and subpar test scores. Tracking performance patterns aids in the early identification of stress-related academic problems.

v. **Counseling and Feedback Mechanisms:**

To recognize stress among students, institutions can use formal feedback sessions, mentorship programs, and counselling services. Students can voice their concerns and ask for advice by regularly interacting with faculty advisers and counsellors.

Individual efforts and institutional support are necessary for effective stress management.

- **Time Management and Study Planning:** Some of the better strategies to lessen academic stress is to manage your time well. Students should prioritize their work, make study plans, and divide difficult assignments into smaller, more manageable chunks. This increases productivity and lessens last-minute stress.
- **Development of Healthy Lifestyle:** Keeping up a healthy lifestyle is essential for managing stress. Both physical and mental well-being are enhanced by regular exercise, a healthy diet, and enough sleep. Exercise improves happiness and lowers stress hormones.
- **Mindfulness and Relaxation Techniques:** Students can effectively handle stress by engaging in practices like yoga, meditation, deep breathing, and mindfulness. These methods enhance focus, lessen anxiety, and foster emotional stability.
- **Counseling and Psychological Support:** Skilled counselling services give pupils advice on how to handle stress. Students can learn useful coping mechanisms through cognitive behavioural science methods, stress management classes, and therapy sessions.
- **Social Support and Peer Interaction:** Students who have solid social backing from peers, family, and friends are better able to handle stress. Asking for help and discussing issues lessens emotional strain and enhances coping skills. Peer talks and group study also improve comprehension and lessen pressure from academia.
- **Positive Thinking and Personality Development:** Students who cultivate emotional resilience and an upbeat attitude are better able to handle stress. Students' capacity to manage academic difficulties can be enhanced by training in personality development, communication techniques, and self-improvement exercises.

## 6. Conclusion

According to the review, academic stress is a major problem among North Gujarati bachelor's and master's degree students, and coping strategies and stress perception are greatly influenced by personality factors. Students' mental health, academic achievement, and general well-being are all influenced by the interplay between personality and academic stress. A comprehensive strategy combining educational institutions, legislators, and mental health specialists is needed to address academic stress. Stress management techniques and personality-based therapies can greatly improve kids' academic performance and mental well-being. To support students' academic achievement and well-being in North Gujarat, institutional policies and region-specific research are required.

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