



The Impact of Academic Pressure on Mental Health and Stress Levels Among Undergraduate Students in Bangalore: An Empirical Study

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Abstract

Most studies on academic stress in India centre on professional courses. Yet learners in standard three-year bachelor's degrees - especially those pursuing Arts, Science, Commerce, or BBA - are dealing with rising emotional strain. In cities such as Bangalore, education now runs alongside a relentless drive to achieve. Students outside specialized fields must juggle coursework while racing to build resumes, stand out early, and support themselves financially - pressures that chip away at mental resilience. Because of this shift, understanding how academic demands affect stress and psychological state among undergraduates in Bangalore becomes necessary. Data were collected using a fixed-format survey distributed widely among degree seekers across subjects, forming a numerical snapshot tied to current conditions. From surveys came measures of stress, mental health struggles, and demands tied to schoolwork, captured through established tools. Analysis followed, relying on averages, patterns across variables, consistency checks, and modeling links among factors. What emerged was a clear trend: as academic strain increased, so did reports of poor mental health and elevated stress. Findings suggest those facing heavier school pressures tend to experience greater emotional burden. These insights could guide teachers, policymakers, and schools when shaping efforts aimed at easing student load. With growing need, support systems - like skill coaching and coping strategies should become regular parts of campus life, shifting focus from grades alone toward overall wellness.

Keywords: academic stress, mental stress, undergraduate students, educational, mental health

1. Introduction

A shift has taken root across Indian campuses, one that unfolded quietly but changed everything. Once seen as places for growth and learning, universities now feel more like pressure chambers. Because expectations pile up, students carry heavier loads than before. When every grade becomes a measure of worth, anxiety spreads without warning. Over time, what was supposed to build minds begins eroding them instead. Now mental strain runs so deep it feels normal. Where reflection once lived, urgency lives today. Bangalore hits hardest when it comes to this trend - a vast city growing fast, packed with students chasing high marks. Its fame as India's tech hotspot

adds weight, layering expectation on young shoulders. Pressure builds quietly until it doesn't, spilling into serious mental health struggles across campuses. Cases of deep sadness, constant worry, sudden outbursts climb steadily; so do deaths by self-harm among learners. Reports from the National Crime Records Bureau show one student ending life each hour nationwide, exam failure driving an 80% spike in such cases over just twelve months. Faced with numbers like these, India's top court stepped in, calling the crisis what it is: an epidemic fueled by despair.[1-2]



- **The Starting Point of Disease Patterns in Moving City Populations**

One in ten grown-ups across India faces a treatable mental illness, according to findings from a 2015–16 nationwide review. Yet students chasing degrees in Bangalore show far higher numbers than that average. At one college focused on movement therapy, seven out of every ten learners showed signs of anxious feelings - many deeply intense - when tested using a standard emotional checklist. More than half also reported low moods lasting weeks or longer. When sadness takes hold, it almost always brings restless worry along with it: among those weighed down by serious gloom, nine in ten carry constant tension too. One big but overlooked reason for worsening mental health? The social and emotional toll of moving far from home. Every year loads of students from outside the city pour into Bangalore. Shifting from close-knit family setups to solo life in crowded hostels often sparks deep stress. At Kristu Jayanti College, a focused look at these relocated learners showed nearly eight out of ten battling depression. [3] What hit hardest wasn't coursework - it was missing home. That ache from being apart - physically, emotionally - drains focus, piles on pressure, weighs down every task [4]

- **The Hidden Cost of Hustle Culture and Underground Tutoring**

Life in Bangalore reshapes college years because tech dominates everything. Students juggle tough classes while chasing startups, landing jobs, and staying connected professionally - often at once. One survey showed over 60 percent deeply involved in this constant grind. Pushing nonstop eats up hours meant for rest, shrinks sleep, drains mental health. Missing downtime means the brain skips vital repair moments needed to process memories and balance emotions. What feeds the strain isn't just schools - it's also the swarm of private tutoring hubs dotting cities. Kids vanish into those spaces for hours, trading curiosity for endless drills that hollow them out well before college begins. Behind this push often lies something quieter but deeper: professors stretched thin by their own struggles. At colleges in places like Bangalore, teachers juggle back-to-back classes, shaky contracts, and constant reviews tied to results. [5-6] When

educators run on empty, patience fades, lessons stiffen, warmth drains - classrooms turn cold without anyone meaning for it to happen [7-8]

- **Structural Barriers and Court Orders**

Most students struggle silently, even though mental health problems are widespread on campus. In Bangalore, one focused look at barriers showed how trust within social circles often blocks help seeking - especially for young men. Shame tied to personal weakness runs deep. Talking about feelings feels pointless to many who see counseling as useless. Family norms add weight, making it harder to reach out. Beliefs passed down through generations shape resistance quietly. [9-10] Young males find themselves stuck more often than others. When schools kept ignoring mental health rules, stronger laws stepped in. By July 2025, India's top court ruled that student wellbeing falls under the Right to Life, as per Article 21, laying out a detailed 15-part plan requiring fast changes on campuses. [11] Then, early the next year - January 2026 - the Karnataka government put its weight behind it, releasing an enforceable directive: every school must hire trained counselors, form Student Wellbeing Teams (SWT), and keep non-academic time free from classroom pressures. [11-12]

2. Methods

- **Participants**

From Bangalore's undergrad population, data came through numbers - 123 minds measured. Streams mixed: some studied business, others commerce, computer apps, science. Eighty-seven were men, thirty-six women - not quite half even close. Most sat inside private college walls, just a few walked government halls. Young faces dominated - ages eighteen to twenty more common than those older ones nearby. First year carried the largest share, third year followed close behind, second trailed slightly. Numbers shaped the pattern; age and grade split it further down. [13-14]

- **Instruments**

A mix of questions asked people to rate their answers using three key sections. Each section used numbers from one to five, where one meant strong disagreement and five showed strong agreement. Ratings happened through a system that let

participants express feelings clearly. The scores came together to form an overall picture of personal feedback A scale built on six points checks school load, stress before tests, worry about due dates. It taps what parents demand, how classmates push each other, tough goals set by others.[15-16] One part tracks pressure from grades, another follows tension near finals. Family hopes show up here, along with rivalry among students. Challenges in reaching targets appear too, woven into daily strain. Each item reflects a different weight carried through terms. One way to check mental health? A short form built on ideas like those in DASS, with six questions. It looks at unease, low mood, trouble unwinding, being worn out inside, mind fog, also moments when everything feels too much. [17-18] Each point adds up to a snapshot - no jargon, just signals. Not every day is measured the same, yet patterns show through. Six dots on a map that point inward. How heavy things feel matters here. Starting off with five parts, this scale checks how school duties weigh on someone. Not just load but also how tough it is to handle things when pressure builds up. Sometimes tasks feel too heavy, even during regular days. It looks at whether efforts to manage tension actually work. The whole thing wraps up by showing where control slips away. [19-20]

• Process and Results Review

The data got processed and checked through tools like Pandas, SciPy, and Statsmodels in Python. Cronbach's Alpha measured how well each scale held together internally. Each survey item had its own summary stats pulled out. When comparing just two groups - like gender or school type - the analysis leaned on Mann-Whitney U tests. For looking at more than two groups - such as year in school - Kruskal-Wallis H became the method. Links between academic pressure, mental state, and stress levels emerged via Pearson correlations. OLS regression then mapped how much one influenced another across those areas. [21-22]

3. Results and Discussion

• Results

The reliability analysis confirmed excellent internal consistency across all measurement instruments. The Academic Pressure Scale yielded a Cronbach's

Alpha of 0.877 (Good), the Mental Health Scale scored 0.938 (Excellent), and the Stress Scale scored 0.925 (Excellent). The Overall Scale reliability was 0.962. [23-24]

Table 1 Demographic Profile of the Sampled Cohort

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	87	70.7
Gender	Female	36	29.3
Age Group	18-20	81	65.9
Age Group	21-23	39	31.7
Year of Study	1st Year	51	41.5
Year of Study	3rd Year	45	36.6
Institution	Private	117	95.1
Institution	Government	6	4.9

Figure 1a: Gender Distribution

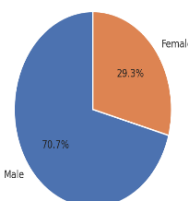


Figure 1b: Year of Study

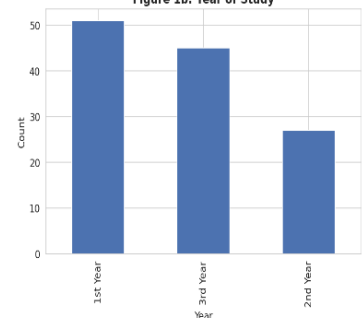


Figure 1 Gender distribution

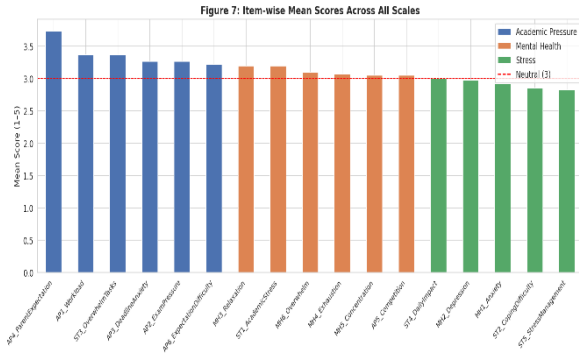


Figure 2 Descriptive and Item-Wise Analysis

An analysis of the specific stressors revealed that parental and teacher expectations generated the highest absolute mean academic pressure score (Mean = 3.73, SD = 1.33). This was followed closely by the perception that the academic workload is excessive (Mean = 3.37, SD = 1.40). Within the Stress Scale, being overwhelmed by academic tasks scored the highest (Mean = 3.37, SD = 1.34).[25-26]

Table 2 Scale-Level Summary by Gender

Gender	AP_Score Mean	AP_Score SD	MH_Score Mean	MH_Score SD	ST_Score Mean	ST_Score SD
Female	3.62	1.07	3.54	1.28	3.28	1.25
Male	3.19	1.12	2.85	1.33	2.95	1.20

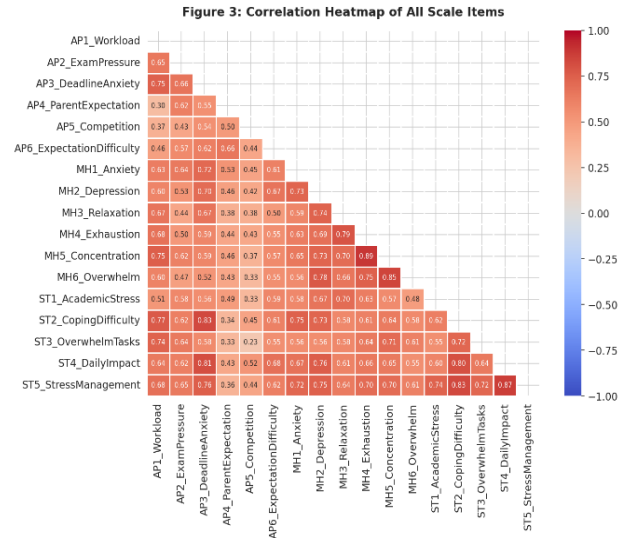
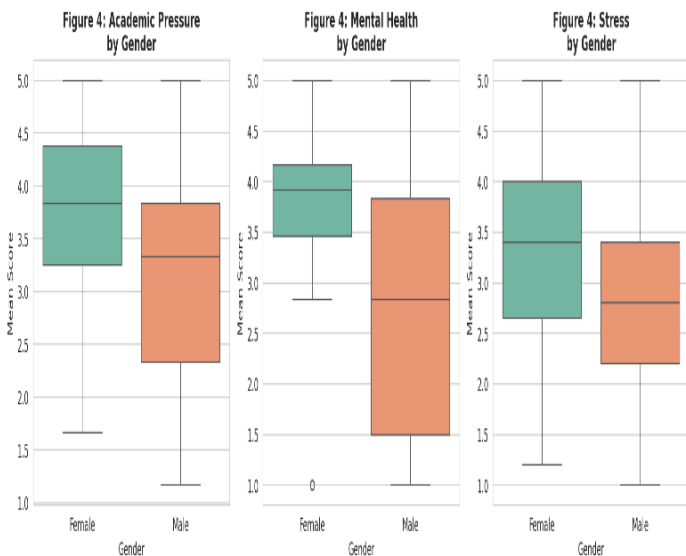


Figure 3 Gender analysis segment

Figure 4 Inferential Statistics and Correlations

Hypothesis testing revealed statistically significant demographic variances. The Mann-Whitney U test indicated a significant difference in Mental Health scores based on gender $U = 1120$, $p = 0.013$ with female students reporting higher levels of mental health impact. Furthermore, a highly significant difference was found based on institutional type; students in Government Colleges reported substantially higher mental health impact scores (Mean = 4.41) compared to Private College students (Mean = 2.98) $p \approx 0.005$. [27-28] Age and Year of Study showed no statistically significant impacts on mental health scores $p > 0.05$.

Table 3 Pearson Correlation Matrix (AP, MH, ST scores)

Variable	AP_Score	MH_Score	ST_Score
AP_Score	1.000	0.785	0.823
MH_Score	0.785	1.000	0.836
ST_Score	0.823	0.836	1.000



Figure 5 Pearson Correlation

All correlations were positive and highly significant $p < 0.0001$. Linear regression confirmed that Academic Pressure is a strong predictor of both overall Stress (R-squared = 0.678) and Mental Health

deterioration (R-squared = 0.616).[29]

• **Discussion**

One look at the data shows how school stress ties closely to emotional struggles in college students across Bangalore. Not just hinted by stories on campus - numbers now confirm it, linking tougher academic demands directly to poorer mental well-being. Hidden patterns emerge when results are studied: rising pressure doesn't happen alone - it drags mood, sleep, and focus down with it. What once seemed scattered reports now forms a clear picture through measurable trends. One key pattern stood out when each item was checked separately. Though pressure from parents and teachers brought the deepest ongoing worry - average score hitting Mean 3.73 - it wasn't those alone that linked hardest to serious emotional decline. Instead, what tied strongest to sharp drops in well-being were school-driven forces: piles of homework, tight due dates, nonstop grading loads. So even if family hopes weigh constantly in India's setting, it's really the flood and pace of classroom work pushing students toward breaking points. Numbers show clear patterns in who struggles most. Not girls, but young women in school face tougher emotional tolls - average score at 3.54 versus guys at Mean 2.85. Could it be how they're raised? Maybe so. When grades slip, these students might see themselves as falling short, not just failing a test - feeding sadness, deepening strain. Then there's where they study. State-run colleges report far heavier stress loads Mean = 4.41 on average - while private ones lag behind. Unequal support shows plainly here. What schools offer shapes what minds endure.[30-31]

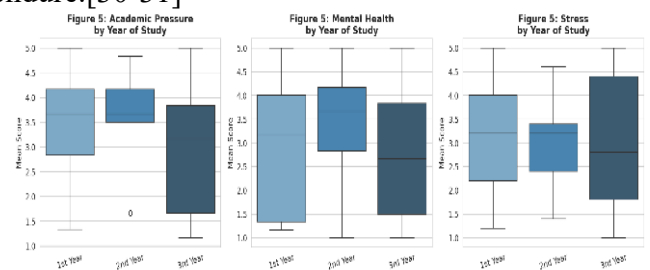


Figure 6 Year of study

That age and year of study didn't matter much feels unsettling. Not because it surprises - but because the



strain doesn't come in waves tied to specific stages. Pressure isn't something students grow into or out of. Instead, it sits quietly across all years, steady, unchanging. Undergrad life carries it from start to finish, like a constant hum beneath everything else. The burden does not fade after first-year struggles nor peak only near graduation. It just persists. Out here in Bangalore, what shows up in data fits well with earlier work across fields. When you look at med versus engineering learners, pressure pops up everywhere - shaped by how courses are built. A heavy load of material plus constant hospital tests drags down med students, bringing long-term strain that builds into full burnout or depression (60.94%). On the flip side, those in engineering deal with sharp spikes in worry (hitting 78%) thanks to fast-moving projects and an unsteady tech employment scene. Long grind or sudden peaks - either way, many pupils land near breaking point, worn thinner by the city's never-slow pace.[31]

Conclusion

The synthesis of this localized empirical data, national epidemiological baselines, and current regulatory shifts underscores a vital reality: academic stress among undergraduates in Bangalore is a complex, systemic failure of an educational ecosystem that has historically prioritized institutional ranking over human psychological development. The data categorically proves that excessive workloads and tight deadlines are the primary drivers of mental health deterioration in this demographic. To sustainably protect the mental health of the student population, a multi-tiered approach must be adopted. Institutions must critically evaluate and de-escalate syllabus volume to ensure that the curriculum load does not organically force sleep deprivation and cognitive burnout. Moving away from high-stakes, monolithic summative examinations toward continuous, formative assessments is essential. Furthermore, given the severe counselor-to-student ratios and deeply entrenched ingroup stigmas, universities must expand hybrid and digital therapeutics. Culturally adapted, mobile-based Cognitive Behavioral Therapy platforms offer a scalable, anonymous mechanism to address anxiety and depression. Finally, the

successful implementation of the Supreme Court's and the Karnataka Government's mandated wellness guidelines will depend entirely on dismantling toxic hustle paradigms and shifting the burden of resilience from the isolated student to a robust, empathetic educational infrastructure.

Acknowledgements

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