

Academic Stress and Coping Mechanisms Among High School Students: A Systematic Review

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Abstract: Understanding the various stressors high school students face, such as academic workload, exams, peer pressure, and parental/teacher expectations, and their coping mechanisms are essential for developing tailored interventions to improve students' well-being and academic performance. This study explored the pervasive issue of academic stress among high school students, examining its impact on mental health, well-being, and academic performance while aiming to comprehend the diverse stressors they encounter and the coping strategies they utilize. This study utilized a systematic literature review method to synthesize existing literature concerning academic stress and coping mechanisms among high school students. Results showed three (3) emerging themes, such as (1) Impact of Academic Stress on High School Students; (2) Coping Strategies Utilized by High School Students; and (3) Implications for Educational Interventions. High school students experience significant academic stress that harms their well-being, but research shows effective coping strategies exist. To address this, educators and policymakers may create supportive environments that teach stress management and prioritize student mental health.

Keywords— Academic Stress; Coping Mechanisms; High School Students; Systematic Review

1. INTRODUCTION

Academic stress is a prevalent issue among high school students, impacting their mental health, well-being, and academic performance (Pasco, Hetrick, & Parker, 2020). This systematic review delves into the experiences of high school students in dealing with the pressures and challenges associated with their academic pursuits. The study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the various stressors that students face in the academic environment and the coping mechanisms they employ to navigate these challenges effectively.

High school students often encounter a multitude of stressors, including academic workload, exams, peer pressure, and expectations from parents and teachers. These stressors can lead to anxiety, depression, and burnout if not managed appropriately (Anupama & Sarada, 2018). Understanding the specific sources of stress and how students perceive and respond to them is crucial in developing targeted interventions and support systems to enhance students' well-being and academic success (Tortola, 2021).

Exploring the coping mechanisms employed by high school students is essential in shedding light on their resilience and adaptive strategies. By examining how students cope with academic stress, this study aims to identify effective coping mechanisms that promote positive outcomes and mitigate the negative effects of stress. Insights gained from this systematic review can inform educators, parents, and mental health professionals in providing tailored support to help students thrive in the face of academic challenges (Carter, 2016).

In summary, this systematic review focuses on academic stress and coping strategies among high school students and

represents a crucial effort to comprehend the intricate relationship between stress, coping methods, and student encounters (Pang-an et al., 2022). Through consolidating current research in this area, the research aims to provide significant perspectives that can guide the creation of policies, interventions, and approaches designed to cultivate a supportive academic setting that promotes the comprehensive growth and welfare of high school students.

2. METHODS

This study employed a systematic review to comprehensively explore high school students' experiences with academic stress and their coping strategies. A thorough search strategy was employed, utilizing electronic databases such as Google Scholar and ResearchGate, in addition to relevant journals and books. Specific search terms including "Academic Stress and Coping Mechanisms", "Students' Experiences with Academic Stress and Coping Mechanisms", and "Coping Strategies for Academic Stress" were used. Inclusion criteria focused on selecting peer-reviewed articles published in English within the last ten years, prioritizing insights into high school students' experiences with academic stress and coping mechanisms.

The initial search yielded a significant number of articles, which were subsequently refined through screening based on titles and abstracts to determine relevance. Twelve articles were identified for detailed review, aiming to extract insights into academic stress and coping mechanisms specifically among high school students. Through this comprehensive review process, recurring themes and patterns were identified, providing an extensive overview of the current landscape, and understanding of academic stress levels among students, as well as their coping strategies. By synthesizing diverse literature, this systematic approach facilitated a holistic

understanding of the intricate dynamics involved, offering valuable insights into potential educational interventions to support students dealing with academic stress and anxiety issues.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Academic Stress and Coping Mechanisms Among High School Students

Theme 1: Impact of Academic Stress on High School Students

The systematic review of academic stress and coping mechanisms among high school students reveals the profound impact of chronic stress on students' academic performance, mental health, and overall well-being (Leonard et al., 2015; Luzano, 2024). The study highlights how the pressure from schoolwork, college applications, extracurricular activities, and parental expectations contribute to high levels of stress among teenagers (Kulakow, Raufelder, & Hoferichter, 2021). This stress not only impedes their academic success but also poses risks to their mental health and leads to behaviors like substance use as a coping mechanism (Benedek et al., 2016; Luzano, 2024). The findings emphasize the need to address the root causes of academic stress to prevent long-term negative consequences on students' development (Pascoe, Hetrick & Parker, 2020).

Theme 2: Coping Strategies Utilized by High School Students

The research sheds light on the coping strategies employed by high school students to manage academic stress (Aranzo et al., 2023). It identifies various coping mechanisms such as religious support, active coping, and instrumental support as commonly used strategies by students (Leonard et al., 2015; Nallada et al., 2024). These strategies play a crucial role in helping students navigate the challenges they face, including academic demands, social pressures, and personal expectations (Freire et al., 2020; Luzano, 2020). Understanding the coping mechanisms adopted by students provides valuable insights into how they deal with stress and underscores the importance of promoting effective coping skills to enhance their well-being (Romanova, Kasyanik, & Galimzyanova, 2017; Luzano, 2023).

Theme 3: Implications for Educational Interventions

A significant aspect of the study revolves around the implications for educational interventions aimed at addressing academic stress among high school students (Gonzales-Valero, 2019; Romorosa et al., 2023). By understanding the experiences of students and the effectiveness of different coping mechanisms, educators and policymakers can tailor interventions to better support students in managing stress and promoting their overall well-being (Fitzgibbon & Murphy, 2022; Luzano et al., 2024). This theme underscores the importance of proactive measures in creating a conducive academic environment that fosters students' mental health and academic success (Shaw, 2015; Luzano & Ubalde, 2024).

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In conclusion, academic stress is a significant burden on high school students, impacting their academic performance, mental health, and overall well-being. Factors like pressure from schoolwork, college applications, and parental expectations contribute to this stress, potentially leading to risky coping mechanisms. However, research also identifies various coping strategies students utilize, highlighting the importance of promoting effective stress management skills.

Given the multifaceted nature of academic stress, addressing it requires a multi-pronged approach. By understanding student experiences and effective coping mechanisms, educators and policymakers can develop targeted interventions. These interventions should focus on creating a supportive academic environment that promotes mental health and equips students with skills to manage stress effectively, ultimately fostering their academic success and overall well-being.

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