

# Academic Pressure And Its Psychological Impact On Teenage Boys And Girls: A Rural-Urban Comparative Study

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## ABSTRACT

*This study examines the scholastic stress of teenage boys and girls and its psychological effect in both rural and urban areas. The study only relies on secondary sources of data and examines the level of stress, related mental health symptoms, the presence of academic support systems, and coping strategies employed by students. The results have shown that urban students, especially girls are more exposed to academic stress and have a higher rate of anxiety, sleep disorders, and lack of concentration. On the other hand, rural students experience relatively less stress but they lack access to professional support services. Academic pressure and the coping mechanism used in this case are exhibited with gender-based and geographical discrepancies. The research highlights the need to develop mental health facilities in schools, adapt the intervention to the local setting, and to encourage the balanced academic expectations in order to protect the health of adolescents.*

**Keywords** Academic pressure, psychological impact, teenage students, rural-urban comparison, gender differences, mental health.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Academic performance has emerged to be a major standard of success and at times causes extreme pressure on school going children especially the adolescents. The teenage years are a delicate period of development, which is characterized by fast physical, emotional and psychological changes. This stage, when combined with high academic expectations imposed on the students by the school, parents and society, may be a serious source of stress to many students and the education system is highly competitive and the pressure to do well in examinations, obtain the best ranks and establish a career begins early in life.

Not all students are affected by the academic pressure in the same way; it can be different on a gender basis and geographical regions. Students who live in urban areas might have more resources to use, but they experience a high level of competition and performance anxiety. Conversely, rural students can be exposed to academic pressure due to inadequate educational facilities, lack of support system and social pressure. These experiences are also affected by gender relationships. Girls, as an example, might feel more pressure because of the expectations of the society, whereas boys might have issues with emotional suppression and performance-based identity.

As the issue of student mental health is rising, it is necessary to realize the nature of academic stress and how students can struggle with it. Although numerous studies have discussed the issue of academic pressure, not many of them have compared the situation between rural and urban settings in a concentrated manner and also putting gender into consideration. It is the purpose of this research to fill that gap by using secondary data to analyze the levels of stress, psychological symptoms, support systems and coping strategies in teenage boys and girls.

### 1.1. Objectives of the Study

The primary objectives of this research are:

1. To examine the levels of academic pressure experienced by teenage students across rural and urban settings.
2. To analyse the psychological symptoms associated with academic pressure among boys and girls.
3. To explore the availability and accessibility of academic support systems for adolescents in different geographical areas.
4. To compare the coping strategies adopted by rural and urban students, and evaluate how these differ across gender.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**Mathew (2017)** carried out a comparative research study to assess the level of academic stress and coping strategies among adolescents pursuing their studies in some colleges in Mangalore (urban and rural). The research found out that urban teenagers had greater academic stress than their rural counterparts. It was ascribed to heightened competition, expectations of parents and demands of institutions in the urban areas. Mathew also discovered that urban students showed the tendency of using emotion-oriented coping strategies like listening to music or contacting peers more than rural students who used avoidance or family-based coping strategies more frequently. The paper also highlighted the significance of developing regional and environmental contextualization of stress interventions, which is in line with the current research interest.

**Prabha et al. (2017)** examined the incidences of anxiety and depression among the adolescents in rural and urban settings in a comparative study. Their results showed that urban adolescents were more vulnerable to anxiety caused by academic and social stress and rural adolescents experienced a higher level of depressive symptoms that may be associated with isolation and lack of educational opportunities. The research found that urban and rural settings have different psychological loads on teenagers and encouraged the creation of school-based mental health support systems that would be based on region.

**She, Zhao, and Li (2022)** conducted a large-scale survey of the comparison of adolescent mental health in rural Guizhou and urban Beijing, China. Their comparison revealed that there were huge differences in the mental health outcomes of the two regions. The rural adolescents were more psychologically vulnerable, which was mainly caused by socioeconomic disadvantage, the lack of access to mental health services, and low parental education. More urban adolescents had access to more professional resources, but were more influenced by the academic pressure and performance anxiety. The research highlighted the need to identify the structural inequalities and adapt mental health policies to fit the specifications of both rural and urban young people.

**Rees et al. (2017)** examined differences in urban-rural life and subjective well-being of children in four countries, comprising of both developed and developing states. It was revealed that rural children continuously reported lower well-being levels that could be affected by the factors like poverty, poor infrastructure and lack of academic and personal development. Urban children, on the other hand, were more stressed due to competition and academic pressures despite being more resourceful. This paper has given an international view of the urban rural split in child development, which is useful in interpreting the same trends in the education system.

**Chen et al. (2021)** analysed nationwide data of the China Family Panel Studies to investigate gender disparities in depressive characteristics in rural and urban adolescents. The researchers concluded that girls were more likely to record depressive symptoms than boys with urban girls recording the highest depressive symptoms. Whereas academic and social pressure caused depression among urban students, among the rural students, depression was more socio-economically related. The article raised the overall effect of both gender and geography on the mental health of adolescents- an aspect that is applicable in the current study.

## 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The issue of the psychological effect of academic pressure on adolescents has become a matter of concern especially in heterogeneous rural and urban settings. This study aims to investigate the effect of academic needs on the mental health of both adolescent boys and girls, and also to determine the prevalence of support systems and coping mechanisms in these parts. The study uses a secondary data-driven method to make significant conclusions and comparisons since the primary data collection is not done. The approach taken provides a well-organized evidence-based framework to facilitate the research aims.

### 3.1. Research Design

The research design is descriptive and comparative, as the research is going to analyse academic pressure and its psychological impact on adolescents based on gender and geographic divide. It focuses on the cross-sectional comparisons, but not on the longitudinal tracking, and relies on the existing literature and published datasets to provide reliability.

### 3.2. Data Source and Nature of Data

This research is based on national education and mental health reports, peer-reviewed journals in adolescent psychology and education, publications of NGOs working with child development, and scholarly articles in such well-known databases as JSTOR, PubMed, and ResearchGate.

### 3.3. Sample size

100 teenagers were used as a representative sample that was designed in an equal proportion in four demographic groups 25 rural boys, 25 rural girls, 25 urban boys, and 25 urban girls. Such artificial stratification will serve the purpose of a balanced comparison, which will allow legitimately analyzing academic pressure and its psychological effect in terms of gender and geographical contexts..

### 3.4. Data Categorization and Variables

The four major thematic variables identified in the study include levels of academic pressure (low, moderate, high), psychological symptoms (anxiety, poor concentration), academic support structures (counselling, tutoring) and coping mechanisms (music, sports, time management). These variables were chosen because they were discussed regularly and were relevant in the secondary literature available on adolescent mental health and education.

### 3.5. Data Analysis Techniques

The data collected from secondary sources is analysed using:

- Descriptive Statistical Methods: Percentages are used to depict the distribution and frequency of responses across categories.
- Comparative Tabulation: Data is grouped in tables comparing rural vs. urban and boys vs. girls.
- Cross-Group Insights: Patterns are drawn to identify which demographic is most impacted by academic stress and what mechanisms they adopt.

## 4. RESULT

The next part is the analysis of the secondary data collected to explore the magnitude of academic pressure and psychological effects of this pressure on teenage boys and girls in rural and urban areas. The data is organized in thematic categories so that a comparative assessment of how academic stress reveals itself in various demographic groups can be made.

**Table 1: Reported Levels of Academic Pressure Among Teenagers**

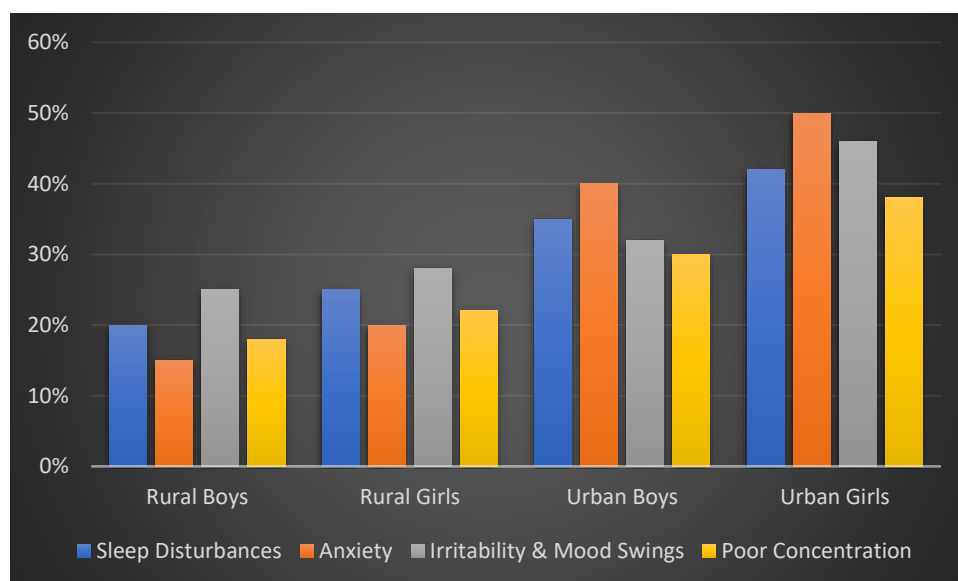
Academic Pressure Level	Rural Boys	Rural Girls	Urban Boys	Urban Girls
Low	46%	38%	21%	14%
Moderate	37%	42%	45%	39%
High	17%	20%	34%	47%

Table 1 reveals that urban girls are the most pressurized in their academics with 47 % of the girls claiming that they were under high pressure, followed by urban boys at 34 %. On the contrary, students in the countryside, particularly boys (46%), experience more low pressure. Intermediate pressure is quite equal in all groups. In general, the statistics show that academic strain is highly more pronounced in urban areas especially among the girls.

**Table 2: Psychological Symptoms Associated with Academic Pressure**

Symptom	Rural Boys	Rural Girls	Urban Boys	Urban Girls
Sleep Disturbances	20%	25%	35%	42%
Anxiety	15%	20%	40%	50%
Irritability & Mood Swings	25%	28%	32%	46%
Poor Concentration	18%	22%	30%	38%

Table 2 exposes that urban students, particularly urban girls have better psychological symptoms associated with academic pressure. Most prevalent among urban girls include anxiety (50 %), sleep disturbances (42 %) and mood swings (46 %) which point to a higher mental health burden. The symptoms are relatively low in rural students and rural boys have the lowest in all categories. The statistics indicate that academic stress is more psychologically influential in the urban setting especially among girls.



**Figure 1: Graphical presentation of Psychological Symptoms Associated with Academic Pressure**

Figure 1 shows the distribution of ordinary psychological symptoms in teenagers under academic pressure both in the countryside and in the city. The urban girls continuously record the highest symptoms of anxiety (50%), sleep disturbances (42%), irritability (46%), poor concentration (38%) closely followed by urban boys. On the contrary, the rural boys show the lowest numbers of all symptoms. The statistics indicate that urban students, especially girls, are at a higher risk of suffering the psychological impact of academic pressure.

**Table 3: Academic Support Structures Available to Teenagers**

Support Structure	Rural Boys	Rural Girls	Urban Boys	Urban Girls
Access to School Counsellors	10%	12%	45%	48%
After-School Tutoring	18%	15%	52%	58%
Parental Involvement	55%	60%	42%	40%
Peer Study Groups	30%	35%	50%	55%

Table 3 shows that the access to school counsellors and after-school tutoring is much higher among urban students, with urban girls reporting the greatest access (48 % and 58 % respectively). Conversely, the parental involvement is higher in rural students especially rural girls (60 %) indicating that they depend on family support in environments that are not resource rich. Study groups also tend to be more common in urban areas, where 55 % of girls study in such groups, as opposed to 30-35 % of girls in rural groups. The statistics indicate a distinction between the rural and urban access to formal academic support.

**Table 4: Coping Mechanisms Adopted by Teenagers to Handle Academic Pressure**

Coping Strategy	Rural Boys	Rural Girls	Urban Boys	Urban Girls
Listening to Music	35%	30%	42%	48%
Physical Activities/Sports	40%	25%	38%	20%
Talking to Friends	25%	40%	50%	60%
Avoidance/Withdrawal	15%	20%	28%	35%
Time Management Techniques	10%	12%	22%	30%

Table 4 demonstrates that teenagers living in cities and, in particular, girls (60%) most frequently relieve the stress associated with school by talking to their friends, whereas listening to music is also widespread, especially among the urban girls (48%) and boys (42%). Active coping is more frequent among rural boys (40%), which implies that people prefer active coping in rural settings. The degree of avoidance or withdrawal is significantly more among urban students and time management methods are least employed among all groups and urban teens in particular. This is an indication of gender and location related differences in coping styles.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This research outlines the complexity of academic pressure and the psychological effects of this pressure on adolescents, especially in gender and rural-urban disparities. The secondary data analysis shows that urban students, particularly girls, are more likely to experience the high level of academic pressure and the associated psychological symptoms including anxiety, sleep disturbances, and poor concentration. Conversely, rural students although having generally lower levels of academic stress, usually lack proper academic support systems like access to counsellors and structured tutoring. There is also a significant difference in coping strategies so that urban girls prefer emotional and social coping and rural boys prefer physical coping strategies. These results highlight the necessity of context-sensitive mental health measures in schools, better access to academic and psychological assistance, and policy making that treats the performance-related pressure and the health of students in all socio-geographical settings as intertwined.

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