



Navigating the Turbulent Waters: Grade 11 Students Confront Academic and Parental Demands

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to assess the experience of Grade 11 students at Tanjay City Science High School in coping with academic demands and parental expectations. This study adopted a qualitative phenomenological research method to assess the lived experience of Grade 11 students at Tanjay City Science High School. This study aimed to assess the effect of academic demands and parental expectations on the emotional well-being, motivational level, and coping mechanisms of students. Ten Grade 11 students at Tanjay City Science High School were purposely selected to participate in this study. After conducting the semi-structured interview, the data were analyzed systematically using thematic analysis. Based on the findings of this study, several important findings were established. First, academic demands are often overwhelming to students. These academic demands include heavy workloads, strict deadlines, and pressure to perform. Second, parental expectations significantly affect students' overall motivational level. Third, academic demands and parental expectations have negative effects on students. These negative effects include stress, anxiety, sleep deprivation, and emotional exhaustion. Furthermore, students experience self-pressure and comparison, which affects their self-esteem and confidence. Despite the negative effects of academic demands and parental expectations on students, students are capable of effectively coping with academic demands and parental expectations. Therefore, it is the conclusion of this study that academic demands and parental expectations may also have a positive effect on students. Academic demands and parental expectations may additionally have a negative effect on the academic performance and well-being of students.

Keywords: Academic demands, Parental expectations, Emotional well-being, Motivational level, Coping mechanisms, Grade 11 students, Tanjay City Science High School

Introduction



Senior high school journey where most students begin to encounter massive responsibilities is Senior High School, particularly in Grade 11. The level is followed by more schoolwork and more demands from teachers. Due to these requirements, students may encounter pressures that impact their daily lives, performances, and well-being (Pérez-Jorge et al., 2025; Cheng et al., 2025; Benítez-Agudelo et al., 2025). Consequently, most students encounter difficulties in coping with the new road and the fast pace of activities within schools.

Apart from schoolwork, Grade 11 students must meet parental expectations. A lot of parents push their kids to do well in school or pursue particular career paths. These parental expectations have a major effect on how students view themselves and their level of confidence in their skills. Although these expectations can encourage and inspire students to achieve, when they are interpreted as pressure, they may also lead to elevated stress and anxiety levels (Grolnick & Pomerantz, 2009). Students may be overwhelmed if parents become too demanding because of their expectations, but supportive parents can make students feel more confident and feel free to do things that they're capable of.

When the academic demands are accompanied by those of parents, this can be a daunting task for many grade 11 students at Tanjay City Science High School. This is mainly because these demands often compel the student to juggle academic, social, and family responsibilities all at once. Consequently, some students may experience time management, sleep deprivation, stress, and anxiety, while others develop mechanisms of dealing with these strains in their own unique ways. Appreciating how students respond to these demands is crucial for a variety of reasons. These include the ability to understand the impact of such demands on their mental, emotional, and physical well-being. In addition, it makes us aware that most senior high school students have to deal with the same challenges in secret from the adults surrounding them.

There are previous studies which have examined academic pressure and parental expectations as separate factors that affect students' welfare. However, limited research has explored how these two pressures operate at the same time, specifically among Grade 11 senior high school students. This insufficient integrated analysis marks an important gap in comprehension how the combined result of academic demands and parental expectations affects the students' stress levels, coping mechanisms, and overall school experience.

In view of this, the aim of the study is to undertake an in-depth analysis of the experiences of Grade 11 students at Tanjay City Science High School as they grapple with academic pressure and parental expectations simultaneously. Even though there have been studies on academic pressure and parental expectations independently, it has been quite apparent that a gap exists with regard to a study that investigates the simultaneous effect of the two pressures, particularly among Grade 11 senior high school students. This is important because these two pressures normally occur at the same time and may interact with each other in such a way that it affects the students' stress levels. It is, therefore, the aim of this research to address this existing gap by shedding light on the deeper understanding of how these converging factors affect students' lives. The results of the present study are expected to provide valuable insights for teachers, parents, and schools to create more supportive and nurturing environments and to develop effective strategies for intervention programs that would ultimately benefit students' well-being and success in school. By means of this study, the researchers hope to contribute to more caring practices within the educational community.

Methodology

The present research aims to assess the experiences of Grade 11 students regarding academic pressure and parental expectations by employing a qualitative research methodology. The main purpose of this research is to gain deeper knowledge regarding the perceptions, feelings, and experiences of Grade 11 students regarding academic demands and parental expectations by gathering descriptive data from the participants. With this research methodology, the researchers aim to assess the influence of academic demands and parental expectations on the motivation, coping strategies, academic performance, and overall well-being of the participants.

To gather more meaningful data from the participants regarding academic demands and parental expectations, the researchers employed two stages of interviews with the participants. During the first stage of the interview, the researchers aimed to assess the general academic demands of the participants, the subjects or topics that the participants find most difficult to deal with, the influence of excessive homework on the daily lives of the participants, and the expectations of the participants from their parents.



After one week of the first interview with the participants, the researchers conducted a second interview with the same participants to gain deeper knowledge regarding the responses provided by them during the first interview and to assess the coping strategies of the participants regarding academic demands and parental expectations. The data gathered from the participants during the interviews were accurate and comprehensive because the researchers conducted two interviews with them.

The participants of this research are selected as Grade 11 students from a selected senior high school. The researchers employed semi-structured interview questions to assess the experiences and perceptions of the participants regarding academic demands and parental expectations while allowing them to freely express their feelings and experiences regarding the research topics.

The ethical considerations were fully observed in this study. The participants were made aware of the purpose of the research and were asked to give informed consent to participate in the study. The participants were also aware that the study was for academic purposes only and that they were given the freedom to withdraw at any time if they wished to do so. Confidentiality and identity protection were ensured by not disclosing the real names of the participants and using participant codes (e.g., Participant 1, Participant 2) in presenting the data. The data collected during the interview was properly taken care of and was used solely for academic purposes. The psychological wellbeing of the participants was also observed during the interview process, especially since it involves academic pressure and parental pressure.

Research Design

The present study makes use of a qualitative phenomenological research design in order to obtain and investigate the experiences and perceptions of Grade 11 students on academic pressures and parental expectations. Phenomenological research is a type of qualitative study that focuses on understanding people's experiences and how they perceive and interpret them (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The rationale for selecting this type of research design is rooted on the fact that the primary objective of this study is to understand how Grade 11 students experience and perceive academic pressures of senior high school and parental expectations.

By employing this research approach, the researchers are able to acquire detailed information regarding the thoughts, feelings, struggles, and coping strategies of Grade 11 students regarding the heavy demands of schoolwork, the difficulties of some subjects, and the expectations of parents regarding their grades and future career paths. The phenomenological research approach helps the researchers to focus on the experiences and perceptions of Grade 11 students regarding the academic demands of high school and the expectations of parents by emphasizing the ways in which Grade 11 students balance academic demands and parental expectations.

The main purpose of this research is to determine the negative and positive effects of academic and parental pressures from the point of view of Grade 11 students. By comprehending the experiences of Grade 11 students regarding academic and parental pressures, this research aims to acquire valuable insights into the ways in which academic and parental pressures affect the lives of Grade 11 students.

Research Environment

The study was carried out within a chosen Senior High School in the Philippines, wherein Grade 11 students are exposed to a rigorous academic environment. The chosen school has various specialized strands wherein students are given the tasks of completing research works, performance outputs, and other requirements pertinent to their chosen strands. Since Grade 11 is considered a transition year to senior high school, the environment is considered suitable for this study as the experiences of the students are directly associated with academic pressures and parental expectations.

Grade 11 students are considered a crucial period of academic and personal development wherein they are given the chance to make significant decisions regarding their chosen future professions or academic courses. At the same time, these Grade 11 students are exposed to parental expectations regarding their academic performance.



To make the participants comfortable enough to share their genuine thoughts and experiences regarding their academic pressures and parental expectations, the interviews were carried out within a quiet and private area within the chosen school premises, wherein the participants were able to share their feelings openly without any fear of interruptions or pressures from other people.

Research Participants

The research participants included students from Grade 11 from a particular Senior High School in the Philippines. The use of purposive sampling was employed to select students who would be willing to discuss their experiences regarding their parents' expectations and academic pressures. Purposive sampling is a non-probabilistic form of research sampling, which relies on the researcher selecting participants who possess specific characteristics, attributes, or standards that the researcher believes to be relevant and significant to the research goals and objectives (Nyimbili & Nyimbili, 2024). Purposive sampling relies on the judgment of the researcher to identify and select individuals who can provide the most significant and relevant information that can assist the research objectives, as opposed to random sampling, which ensures that all members of the population have an equal opportunity to be selected as research participants (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The use of this form of research sampling is particularly important in qualitative research, as the purpose is to obtain a deeper understanding of the experiences, perspectives, and insights of the selected research participants rather than making a generalization of the findings to a larger population (Patton, 2002). The selection criteria focused only on students who would be willing to participate in the research and who could candidly discuss their experiences regarding their parents' expectations and academic pressures. Ten students in all took part in the study to guarantee that the data would be thoroughly discussed and that the researchers could handle the data efficiently. The study included both male and female students with different specialized strands and varying degrees of academic pressure in order to guarantee that the participants could give the researchers a variety of experiences regarding the impact of academic pressures and parental expectations.

Research Instrument

A semi-structured interview guide that the researchers will create will be the primary research tool used for the study. This instrument has been determined to be the most suitable for the study because it was created with the intention of examining the experiences that Grade 11 students have concerning parental and academic pressures, as well as the ideas, emotions, and coping mechanisms that the students use in relation to the same. Background information, experiences with school-related difficulties, perceptions of parental pressures, impact on daily life and emotional well-being, and coping mechanisms for both academic and parental pressures are among the sections that make up this instrument. Additionally, a few questions in the instrument's design allow students to share more details about their experiences.

The interview guide was first validated by three experts to determine its content validity, clarity, and relevance to the research goal to establish the research instrument's credibility and dependability. The degree to which an assessment instrument's components are pertinent to and representative of the targeted construct for a specific assessment purpose is known as content validity (Almanasreh et al., 2019). Three students from the same grade level who were not the real research study participants pilot tested the interview guide after the validation process. The pilot testing was done to find any questions that were unclear, vague, or misleading, and to make sure that the target participants would understand the instrument before it was actually used (Polit & Beck, 2006). This instrument has been found to be flexible, but it makes sure that all the parts of the study are addressed.

Rigor of the Study

In order to make the study credible and reliable, a number of steps were carefully followed to ensure the study was trustworthy. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are the four main criteria used to assess trustworthiness, which is the foundation of rigorous qualitative research. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), these four criteria are the qualitative counterparts of the quantitative ideas of internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity. Two rounds of interviews were conducted among the participants to ensure the accuracy of the data obtained from the participants. Throughout the entire research period,



many strict steps were carefully followed in accordance with these criteria to ensure the reliability and validity of the study.

In order to ensure the accuracy of the data, the second round of interviewing was conducted a week after the first round of interviewing. This allowed the participants to reflect deeply about the study, and the researchers obtained a chance to validate the findings of the study, thereby enhancing the study's legitimacy as described by Lincoln and Guba (1985). By making the data collection more consistent, the study used a semi-structured interview schedule for all the participants, enabling all the participants to address all the significant issues of academic pressures and parental expectations.

By following a systematic approach to the entire research period, the researchers of the study ensured the dependability of the study, which Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe as the consistency and stability of the findings over time and across conditions. All the responses obtained from the participants were carefully examined, and the researchers of the study remained objective by considering only the participants' points of view, thereby upholding the confirmability criterion, which refers to the degree to which the findings are shaped by the participants and not by the researcher's own bias or personal interest (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The study guaranteed the findings of the study to be fair, unbiased, and true representations of the actual experiences of the participants, i.e., the Grade 11 students. The study has clearly presented the context of the study, participants of the study, and data collection methods, making it possible for other researchers to replicate the study, which reflects the transferability criterion of trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). By following a systematic approach to the entire research period, the findings of the study are credible, dependable, confirmable, and transferable — fulfilling all four criteria of trustworthiness as established by Lincoln and Guba (1985) and are therefore a true and authentic representation of the actual experiences of the participants of the study.

Data Gathering Procedures

The researchers were able to obtain information on the experiences of Grade 11 students when it came to academic demands and parental expectations through interviews. The data gathering process, which was qualitative in nature, had three stages to ensure that enough data was obtained. The first stage consisted of seeking permission, selecting participants, and informing them about the study. The second stage consisted of obtaining answers through interviews, and the last stage consisted of writing, verifying, and grouping the data while keeping participants' information confidential.

Before Data Gathering

Before the actual data gathering, the researchers sought permission from the administration of the selected Senior High School in Tanjay City, Science High School (TCSHS) to conduct the study among the Grade 11 students of the school. Once permission was granted by the school administration, a purposive sampling method was adopted to identify the potential participants of the study by considering the inclusion criterion of their willingness to share their experiences about academic pressures and parental expectations.

The students were informed about the objectives, purposes, and reasons behind the study, and they were assured that it was voluntary study and that they could withdraw from the study at any point of time without any negative consequences. Verbal consent was obtained from the students prior to the actual interview process. Prior to the actual data gathering, the semi-structured interview instrument was reviewed to ensure that all the questions are aligned with the objectives of the study and are clear to the participants.

Actual Data Gathering

After the completion of the interviews in the first and second rounds, the audio data was transcribed into text. This ensured that all the data gathered by the interviewers was accurately documented. The data gathered during the first and second interviews was analyzed by the researchers. The analysis was done by carefully going through the transcripts of the interviews. The analysis helped the researchers identify the common themes, clarifications, and new pieces of information provided by the interviewees.



The data gathered during the interviews was analyzed by performing a thematic analysis. The analysis helped the researchers identify the relevant themes in the data gathered. The data was analyzed by the researchers while ensuring the confidentiality of the interviewees. To ensure the confidentiality of the interviewees, the researchers decided not to use the real names of the interviewees. The interviewees were given different codes instead.

The data analyzed by the researchers was interpreted in the context of the theoretical framework of the research. This helped the researchers draw conclusions based on the data analyzed. The conclusions drawn by the researchers served as the basis for the conclusions, recommendations, and implications of the research.

After Data Gathering

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Data Analysis

For this purpose, the qualitative data analysis method was used to effectively assess the responses provided by the participants and gain an in-depth understanding of the responses provided by the participants. For this purpose, the data collected through the semi-structured interviews were assessed using the thematic analysis method, which is a prominent method to assess the data collected through the qualitative research study. It was considered an appropriate method to assess the responses provided by the participants because this method allows the researcher to effectively assess the responses provided by the participants by exploring the meanings associated with the responses provided by the participants. For the credibility and trustworthiness of this research study, the expert validation of the interview tool was conducted by using the instrument with three validators, and the pilot test of the instrument was conducted with three students from the same grade level who were not the actual participants of this research study. After this process, the data collected through the interviews were assessed step by step using the thematic analysis model developed by Braun & Clarke (2006).

Step 1: Data Familiarization

The recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim. The researchers read the data comprehensively and repeatedly to obtain a thorough familiarity and understanding of the data.

Step 2: Generating Initial Codes

Significant statements, phrases, or ideas were identified and given initial codes by the researchers. The initial codes were given based on the significant aspects of the data.

Step 3: Searching for Themes

The researchers further analyzed the initial codes and grouped them based on their similarities or commonalities. The initial codes were grouped together to form potential themes that represent a general meaning.

Step 4: Reviewing Themes



The researchers reviewed the potential themes to ensure that the final themes accurately reflected the data or the initial codes.

Step 5: Defining and Naming Themes

Each theme was clearly defined or named by the researchers to identify the essence of each theme. An explanation was given to clearly identify what each theme is all about.

Step 6: Reporting the Findings

Finally, the researchers identified the themes that were reported or presented through a structured narrative format. The data or quotes from the participants were included to strengthen the findings.

Ethical Consideration

This study was done with ethical consideration to ensure the welfare of all the participants. This is done in the following ways: first, informed consent was sought from the participants before they took part in the study. This was done by ensuring they understood what the study was about and that they had the freedom to choose to participate. Second, confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by not disclosing any of their information to any other person. Third, the participants had the freedom to stop at any time they wished without any problems. Finally, the study was done for purely academic reasons without any harm to the participants.

Findings and Discussion

The major findings of this study are presented in this section. Through an interview with the students, especially those in Grade 11, and a thorough analysis of the answers, the researchers are able to determine the various ways that academic demands and parental expectations affect the students' lives. The themes that are presented provided a clear and deeper understanding of the experiences of the students.

Theme 1. Overwhelming Academic Demands

As the theme suggests, overwhelming academic demands refer to the students coping with academic pressures. This pressure takes place when projects, research, reports, and other voluminous tasks are given to the students simultaneously. These tasks give them the feeling of burnout and sometimes stress in their education.

Participant 1 said: *"Balancing my academic work with responsibilities such as SSLG activities and extracurricular involvement makes it more difficult."*

Participant 6 added: *"Usually tasks overlap and I don't have time for my family."*

Participant 9 also added: *"When deadlines pile up, it affects my sleep."*

Participant 10 answered: *"It feels like every day there's something different to study, and on top of that, there's constant pressure."*

This is evident from the remarks made by the participants, which demonstrate that the buildup of academic pressure leads to stress and makes it difficult to manage obligations. As an illustration of time pressure and academic hardship, Participant 9: "When deadlines pile up, it affects my sleep." Research indicates that an excessive amount of academic work is linked to students' worse well-being and increased stress levels (Pascoe, Hetrick, & Parker, 2020). Students may experience emotional weariness and burnout if they are subjected to ongoing academic expectations without enough time for recovery (Salmela-Aro & Upadaya, 2014). This demonstrates how students' academic experience and mental health can be greatly impacted by excessive academic demands.

Furthermore, the constant exposure to such high demands within academia could have a further effect on the ability of students to cope with stress. This is due to the fact that, when students are not provided with adequate time to relax and rejuvenate, they might not be able to cope well with concentration, motivation, and productivity regarding their assignments. This could result in poor performance and a lack of feelings of accomplishment despite their best efforts. In addition, there is a possibility that, due to the lack of support, students might not be able to cope well with their tasks, and hence, there is a need to promote time management skills within academia.



Theme 2. Sleep Deprivation

As the theme suggests, sleep deprivation is the inability to get enough sleep as a result of strain and academic obligations. To do their schoolwork, participants reported sleeping for only one to two hours, staying up late, and sleeping very late. This topic indicates that students sacrifice their physical well-being in order to meet the demands of their studies. They may be able to fulfill deadlines by staying up late, but this harms their focus, energy, and general well-being. Chronic sleep deprivation might eventually result in burnout and poorer academic performance, which runs counter to the very objective that students are attempting to accomplish. In addition, this constant pressure to deliver and perform tasks within set and limited time constraints may result in low levels of motivation and productivity among students. Rather than encouraging productivity in learning, this pressure may cause students to rush through their work and thus lack adequate understanding and comprehension of what they are learning. Students may also lack adequate time for other activities and may end up having little to no time for rest and other activities such as recreation and socialization.

Participant 2 said: *"I often stay up late, sometimes until three in the morning."*

Participant 4 added: *"Sometimes, I only sleep for 1 to 2 hours."*

Participant 8 also added: *"I end up sleeping very late, sometimes already at dawn."*

The participants' comments make this quite evident, demonstrating how academic obligations interfere with normal sleep cycles. As an illustration of extreme sleep limitation, Participant 2 stated that "I often stay up late, sometimes until three in the morning." Lack of sleep has been shown to have detrimental effects on memory, learning, and emotional stability (Curcio, Ferrara, & De Gennaro, 2006). Additionally, kids who do not get enough sleep have higher stress levels and worse academic performance (Hershner & Chervin, 2014). This demonstrates how lack of sleep can harm one's psychological health and academic performance.

In addition, constant exposure to various demands from school will not only affect the physical well-being of the students, such as their sleep patterns, but will also have a significant impact on their emotional stability and cognitive processes. When they experience excessive demands, it is possible that their ability to focus, learn, and perform well in school will be negatively affected. This could result in a vicious cycle where high demands lead to stress, which in turn leads to subpar performance, which in turn leads to more demand and stress. Lastly, excessive demands may cause students to lose interest and motivation.

Besides this, it is also possible that these factors will be worsened by the demands that the students have, whether it is from themselves or from others like their parents and teachers. It is possible that they will become less interested in themselves, their relationships, and their activities and become more focused on their school-related responsibilities and demands. It is also important to remember that students' general well-being and development can also be significantly impacted by demands from the school, apart from their performance. Heavy burden that students endure as a result of several requirements, overlapping tasks, and concurrent deadlines. Tasks frequently overlap, deadlines occur simultaneously, and there are several requirements that need to be met in a short amount of time, according to the participants. Students have knowledge overload as a result, which makes time management challenging.

This theme shows how students' stress levels are greatly influenced by the amount and timing of their academic obligations. Students may feel under pressure, emotionally exhausted, and unable to fully focus on each activity when academic obligations pile up all at once. Even though learning requires academic rigor, students' general wellbeing may suffer from excessive and unequal workloads.

Moreover, excessive academic pressures can not only influence the mental and emotional well-being of students but can also influence their daily activities and life in general. This is because, with numerous assignments, projects, and exams going on at the same time, a student may be forced to skip sleep, leisure activities, and even social activities in order to keep up with the academic pressures. In the end, such pressures may lead to burnout and tiredness, which can make it even harder for a student to manage their academic activities efficiently. In addition, such pressures can influence the academic capacity of a student in the future, thus the need for effective strategies to help.

Theme 3: Parental Expectations as a Source of Pressure



As the theme suggests, Parental Expectations as a Source of Pressure refers to the stress that students experience as a result of their parents' high expectations for their academic performance. Participants stated that they needed to excel in nearly every topic, graduate with honors if possible, and receive at least a 95 in each subject. This subject emphasizes how students' motivation and emotional states can be impacted by outside expectations. Excessively high expectations can lead to constant pressure to succeed and a fear of failing, even though parental encouragement can be helpful. Students' mental health may suffer if they become unduly preoccupied with attaining numerical criteria rather than growth and learning. Additionally, it can lead to a feeling of comparison to others or inadequacy, in that they are not able to meet these expectations all the time. It is possible that instead of feeling motivated to study, they might develop a feeling of anxiety and a sense of low self-worth. This can eventually affect their academic engagement in that they might become more inclined towards avoiding mistakes rather than trying to enhance their knowledge in a given field. Moreover, it can become more difficult for them to cope adequately with academic demands due to the lack of proper communication between parents and students regarding academic goals and limitations. In addition to that, it can affect not only the academic life of a student but also their personal life to a certain extent. They might have to compromise their hobbies, friends, and leisure activities to meet parental expectations. This can eventually lead to a feeling of alienation on their part. This can affect their emotional state in that they might become more inclined towards irritability and frustration. These changes may have a lasting impact on the way the student thinks about success and failure. It is possible to see the development of a pattern of perfectionism. It is vital to grasp the dynamics of the situation to be of assistance to the parents.

Participant 10 said: *"They expect at least a 95 in every subject."*

Participant 2 added: *"They want me to stand out and perform above average."*

Participant 8 also added: *"I feel like I need to excel in almost every subject."*

The remarks made by the participants make this very evident, demonstrating how parental expectations influence student emotional and academic reactions. According to research, teenagers who perceive high parental expectations as pressure are more likely to experience stress and anxiety (Luthar & Becker, 2002). Additionally, placing too much focus on learning goals rather than performance outcomes may lower intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). This demonstrates how parental expectations can affect mental health and motivation.

Furthermore, it should be noted that parental demands for success are not restricted to academic achievement alone but can extend to other areas of a child's life. The child might have to reduce the amount of time spent on hobbies, other activities, and socializing in order to focus on attaining high grades. This can result in a feeling of alienation, low life satisfaction, and burnout as they try to balance these two aspects of life. In the end, it can affect a child's understanding of success and failure as they are more likely to define it in terms of performance rather than self-growth.

In addition, coping mechanisms for students may also be impacted by the aforementioned pressure. This may lead students to exhibit positive coping behaviors, for example, effective time management and seeking help from fellow students and teachers, while others may exhibit negative coping behaviors such as procrastination and excessive self-blame. This variability in coping behaviors underscores the importance for parents and teachers to provide an environment that fosters positive coping behaviors for students so that they may reach their academic success while at the same time observing their mental and emotional health.

Theme 4: Self-Imposed Pressure and Comparison

As the theme suggests, self-imposed pressure and comparison refer to the internal standards that students set for themselves as well as the comparisons they make with other people. By describing themselves as "jack of all trades but a master of none," participants conveyed emotions of being average and compared their performance with that of their siblings, who had higher grades. This theme shows that pressure does not only come from external sources but also from within. Continuous comparison can lead to a lack of self-worth and discontent with one's accomplishments. Students may concentrate more on perceived flaws than on their strengths, which can have a detrimental impact on their self-esteem and drive. Moreover, self-pressure may also lead to a cycle of seeking perfection. In this case, the students may set goals that are hard to attain. In the end, the students may be under constant pressure. This may cause them to feel like failures even when they are successful. In the long run, the students may start to see themselves only



as achievers. However, it is vital to comprehend the influence of self-imposed pressures. It is vital because it helps the students have a new perspective. It allows the students to appreciate their achievements and have confidence in themselves.

Participant 1 said: *"After transferring... I now feel average."*

Participant 8 added: *"I see myself as a 'jack of all trades but a master of none.'"*

Participant 9 also added: *"I compare myself to my older sister."*

The participants' comments, which emphasize the emotional impact of comparison, make this very evident. Social Comparison Theory, which states that people evaluate their skills by comparing themselves to others, lends credence to this (Festinger, 1954). These comparisons have the potential to lower self-esteem and cause distress when they are negative. Additionally, studies reveal a connection between anxiety and depression symptoms in teenagers and upward social comparison (Vogel et al., 2014). This demonstrates how students' psychological health can be greatly impacted by comparison and self-imposed pressure.

Moreover, the need for students to constantly compare themselves with their peers might also influence their academic behavior and motivation. Some students might feel pressured to succeed more than their peers, and this might lead to overpreparation and exhaustion for some students. However, some students might end up feeling hopeless or demotivated, and this might affect their academic performance and growth as students. The emotional effects of comparisons on students underscore the need for students to thrive in a supportive environment where they focus on their development and not on comparisons with others.

In addition, social comparison can influence the social lives of the students. When a student compares themselves to others and thinks of themselves as "less capable" or "behind," they tend to pull out of group activities or be reluctant to seek help. They may feel apprehensive about contributing to class discussions. This can further intensify their feelings of alienation. Thus, it is essential to understand the influence of social comparison on the lives of the students so that teachers and parents can develop strategies to build self-confidence and intrinsic motivation in them so that they can cope with internal and external pressures.

Theme 5: Emotional and Psychological Impact

As the theme implies, emotional and psychological impact describes the mental and emotional impact that students bear as a result of extreme academic obligations, lack of sleep, and other types of pressure. In addition to causing physical tiredness, the buildup of chores, expectations, and comparisons also causes mental distress. The constant pressure to live up to both internal and external norms can leave students feeling nervous, overburdened, insecure, and mentally exhausted. This subject highlights how academic stress affects students' psychological health in addition to their performance. Persistent pressure can affect students' motivation, self-perception, and general mental health. Feelings of unworthiness, exhaustion, and self-doubt can result from the psychological effects of always trying to live up to expectations. As a result, this theme highlights how crucial it is to understand the psychological effects of academic pressure. In addition, the emotional and psychological effects of the academic pressures may also have an impact on the students' ability to deal effectively with daily challenges and have a positive outlook. When the pressures become overwhelming, the students may have difficulties concentrating, thinking clearly, and may have emotional difficulties. In the long run, the students may lose confidence and may feel they have no power over their own abilities. Such cases only prove the significance of having a supportive environment where the students are not only under pressure to succeed academically.

Participant 4 said: *"I become emotionally unstable and lose motivation."*

Participant 1 added: *"There was almost no day when I did not cry."*

Participant 8 also added: *"It feels like a heavy burden."*

The remarks made by the participants, which express feelings of inadequacy and a diminished sense of self, make this quite evident. According to research, anxiety, emotional tiredness, and depressive symptoms are linked to prolonged academic stress (Pascoc et al., 2020). Additionally, long-term stress may harm students' self-esteem and mental health



(American Psychological Association, 2019). This demonstrates that psychological and emotional effects are important outcomes of academic pressure.

Moreover, these emotions could also affect the motivation of the students in their respective academic activities. When students are constantly under pressure, they could start to lose confidence in their capabilities, which could eventually lead to a decrease in their active involvement in class activities.

Theme 6: Coping Strategies and Resilience

Coping strategies and resilience refer to the techniques that students use to deal with emotional strain and stress. Participants mentioned drawing, taking breaks, and listening to music as strategies to decompress. Using these methods repeatedly could help students manage their emotions and mental health. This is achieved through the inclusion of activities that help them relax and have fun, which reduces their anxiety levels and prevents their stress levels from building up too high. Further, the building up of resilience through adaptive coping may help students manage their academic pressures and challenges well in the long term. This is based on the idea that students who are able to build up their coping skills may be better able to handle their academic pressures and challenges well in the future, indicating an increased ability to bounce back and remain positive. This subject shows that students actively look for strategies to manage their stress even in the face of emotional and academic difficulties. They are able to recover focus by taking short pauses and engaging in hobbies. Students who use these coping mechanisms demonstrate resilience since they don't give up when things get tough.

Participant 1 said: *"I try to unwind instead of forcing myself to work."*

Participant 3 added: *"Listening to music and resting helps."*

Participant 5 also added: *"Drawing, sketching, and organizing my tasks."*

The remarks made by the participants, which demonstrate proactive efforts to lessen stress, make this quite evident. According to research, taking part in recreational activities like music and the creative arts can help people manage their emotions and lower their stress levels (Thoma et al., 2013). Furthermore, children who use adaptive coping mechanisms are more psychologically resilient (Compas et al., 2017). This demonstrates how constructive coping mechanisms can mitigate the detrimental consequences of academic pressure.

In addition, using these positive coping strategies could help the students cope with a sense of balance despite the demands of their school responsibilities. For instance, listening to music, drawing, and spending time with friends could help relieve stress and allow these students to focus again. This is not only helpful for these students but could also help them become more productive once they go back to their school responsibilities.

Furthermore, using these coping strategies could help these students avoid more serious emotional and psychological problems. By being able to cope with stress, these students could learn to cope well with challenges and have a more positive outlook on their school experiences. This is why it is essential to encourage these students to develop and practice these coping strategies as part of their daily lives.

Conclusion

Based on the research findings, it is evident that academic pressure and parental expectations play an important role in the academic performance and motivation of students. These factors are very influential in academic learning of students. On one side, academic pressure and parental expectations can motivate students to achieve academic excellence, become more disciplined, and assume more responsibilities to fulfill the requirements set by the school in terms of academics. On the other hand, academic pressure and parental expectations can also have a negative effect on the academic performance of students.

According to the research study, academic pressure and parental expectations can lead to emotional exhaustion in the case of students, and thus students become less focused on the learning process. Students become more focused on fulfilling the academic requirements and meeting the deadline set by the school. As a result, the intrinsic motivational level of students to learn and perform in academics gradually reduces. Academic pressure and parental expectations



can also affect the ability of students to cope with the academic requirements and needs. According to the research study, emotional support and understanding from parents and teachers can play an important role in coping with academic pressure. This can also be another factor that affects the self-confidence of students.

Thus, it is very clear that academic pressure and parental expectations can have both positive and negative effects on students. Academic pressure and parental expectations can motivate students to achieve academic excellence. On the other hand, the pressure and demand of the academic field can also have a bearing on the academic behavior of students, emotional state of mind, and intrinsic motivational level of students. Therefore, it is imperative to create an environment that is conducive to both academic and emotional well-being.

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