



**EFFECTIVENESS OF A STRUCTURED TIME-MANAGEMENT AND STUDY-SKILLS
TRAINING PROGRAMME ON ACADEMIC STRESS, COPING BEHAVIOUR, AND
ACADEMIC CONFIDENCE AMONG HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN
SELECTED SCHOOLS OF BHOPAL, MADHYA PRADESH**

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Abstract

Background: Higher secondary school students frequently experience substantial academic demands related to examinations, competition, extensive curricula, parental expectations, career decisions, and time constraints. Ineffective time management and inadequate study strategies may intensify academic stress and encourage maladaptive coping while reducing students' confidence in managing academic tasks. Structured training in time management and study skills may provide a practical school-based approach to improving students' academic and psychological functioning.

Methods: A quantitative evaluative approach with a quasi-experimental pre-test–post-test control-group design was adopted for this illustrative research article. A total of **50 higher secondary school students** from selected schools of Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, were allocated into an experimental group ($n = 25$) and control group ($n = 25$). The experimental group received a structured time-management and study-skills training programme, while the control group continued with routine school activities. Academic stress, adaptive coping behaviour, and academic confidence were assessed before and after the intervention using structured measures. Descriptive statistics, paired t tests, independent t tests, and appropriate association tests were used.

Results: At baseline, the two groups showed broadly comparable outcome scores. Following the intervention, mean academic stress in the experimental group decreased from 31.84 ± 5.62 to 21.36 ± 5.08 , while adaptive coping increased from 48.72 ± 7.14 to 61.48 ± 6.53 and academic confidence increased from 51.16 ± 7.42 to 65.28 ± 6.81 . The post-test differences between the experimental and control groups were statistically significant for academic stress ($p < .001$), coping behaviour ($p < .001$), and academic confidence ($p < .001$).

Conclusion: The illustrative findings indicate that structured training in time management and study skills may be effective in reducing academic stress while improving adaptive coping and academic confidence among higher secondary school students. School-based programmes focusing on practical study planning, prioritization, goal setting, examination preparation, and adaptive coping may contribute to student well-being and academic functioning.

Introduction

Higher secondary education represents an important developmental and educational stage during which adolescents face increasing academic and psychosocial demands. Students are expected to manage extensive curricula, regular examinations, assignments, competitive academic environments, career decisions, entrance examinations, parental expectations, and responsibilities outside school.

Academic stress develops when students perceive academic demands as exceeding their available personal, psychological, or educational resources. A manageable degree of academic pressure may encourage students to organize their efforts, but persistent or excessive stress may negatively affect concentration, motivation, emotional well-being, sleep, academic performance, and school engagement.

One important factor influencing students' academic experience is their ability to manage time effectively. Students who have difficulty planning their schedules may postpone assignments, engage in last-minute preparation, spend disproportionate amounts of time on low-priority activities, or fail to allocate sufficient time for revision and rest.

Study skills are similarly important. Effective learning requires more than the number of hours devoted to studying. Students need strategies for setting goals, organizing study materials, maintaining attention, taking meaningful notes, understanding rather than merely memorizing content, revising systematically, and preparing effectively for examinations.

Coping behaviour determines how students respond when academic demands become stressful. Adaptive strategies such as planning, problem-solving, seeking appropriate support, positive reframing, and relaxation may reduce the psychological impact of academic demands. In contrast, avoidance, excessive procrastination, withdrawal, and other maladaptive responses may aggravate stress.

Academic confidence refers to the student's perceived ability to manage learning demands and perform academic tasks successfully. Students with greater academic confidence may be more willing to attempt challenging tasks, persist after setbacks, and employ problem-solving strategies.

A structured intervention combining time-management and study-skills strategies may therefore simultaneously influence three related outcomes:

Better time management and study strategies

→ **Reduced academic stress**

→ **More adaptive coping**

→ **Greater academic confidence**

The present study was undertaken to evaluate such an intervention among higher secondary school students in selected schools of Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.

Need for the Study

Adolescence is a period characterized by considerable biological, emotional, cognitive, and social development. Higher secondary students must navigate these developmental changes while facing increasing educational expectations.

Students in Classes XI and XII may experience stress related to:

- board and school examinations;
- competitive entrance examinations;
- career selection;
- parental expectations;
- comparison with peers;
- high academic workload;
- difficulty completing assignments;
- inadequate preparation;
- procrastination;
- ineffective study habits;
- fear of academic failure.

Academic stress cannot always be addressed simply by asking students to “study harder.” Students may require practical skills that enable them to study **more efficiently and systematically**.

Time-management and study-skills training is particularly relevant because it focuses on modifiable behaviours. Students can learn to prioritize tasks, formulate realistic study plans, reduce procrastination, divide large academic tasks into manageable

components, use active-learning techniques, and prepare systematically for examinations.

A structured school-based programme is also relatively feasible because it can be delivered to groups of students without requiring intensive individualized psychological treatment.

The present research therefore attempts to determine whether a structured intervention can reduce academic stress while simultaneously strengthening adaptive coping behaviour and academic confidence.

Statement of the Problem

“Effectiveness of a Structured Time-Management and Study-Skills Training Programme on Academic Stress, Coping Behaviour, and Academic Confidence Among Higher Secondary School Students in Selected Schools of Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.”

Objectives

1. To assess the pre-test levels of academic stress, coping behaviour, and academic confidence among students in the experimental and control groups.
2. To evaluate the effectiveness of the structured time-management and study-skills training programme on academic stress among students in the experimental group.
3. To determine the effectiveness of the programme on adaptive coping behaviour.
4. To determine the effectiveness of the programme on academic confidence.
5. To compare post-test academic stress, coping behaviour, and academic confidence between experimental and control groups.
6. To determine the association between selected demographic/academic variables and the study outcomes.

Research Hypotheses

H1: Students receiving the structured training programme will demonstrate significantly lower post-test academic stress than students in the control group.

H2: Students receiving the structured training programme will demonstrate significantly higher adaptive coping scores than students in the control group.

H3: Students receiving the structured training programme will demonstrate significantly higher academic-confidence scores than students in the control group.

H4: There will be significant pre-test–post-test improvements in academic stress, coping behaviour, and academic confidence within the experimental group.

The hypotheses were tested at the **0.05 level of significance**.

Research Methodology

Research Approach

A **quantitative evaluative research approach** was adopted.

Research Design

For this illustrative article, a **quasi-experimental pre-test–post-test control-group design** was used.

The design can be represented as:

Experimental group: $O_1 \rightarrow X \rightarrow O_2$

Control group: $O_1 \rightarrow — \rightarrow O_2$

Where:

- O_1 = Pre-test
- X = Structured time-management and study-skills training programme
- O_2 = Post-test

Setting

Selected higher secondary schools of **Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh**.

Population

Higher secondary school students studying in Classes XI and XII.

Sample Size

Total sample = 50 students

- Experimental group = 25
- Control group = 25

Sampling Technique

Eligible participants were selected using a suitable school-based sampling procedure and assigned to study groups according to the adopted quasi-experimental protocol.

Inclusion Criteria

Students who:

- we're studying in Classes XI or XII;
- were enrolled in selected schools;
- were available during data collection;
- were able to understand the intervention and assessment language;
- provided assent/consent as applicable; and
- had parental/guardian consent when required.

Exclusion Criteria

Students who:

- were unable to attend the intervention sessions;
- we're experiencing an acute condition preventing participation; or
- had incomplete primary outcome assessments.

Results

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N = 50)

Variable	Experimental n (%)	Control n (%)	Total n (%)
Age			
15 years	5 (20.0)	6 (24.0)	11 (22.0)
16 years	10 (40.0)	9 (36.0)	19 (38.0)
17 years	8 (32.0)	8 (32.0)	16 (32.0)
18 years	2 (8.0)	2 (8.0)	4 (8.0)
Sex			
Male	12 (48.0)	13 (52.0)	25 (50.0)
Female	13 (52.0)	12 (48.0)	25 (50.0)
Class			

Variable	Experimental n (%)	Control n (%)	Total n (%)
XI	13 (52.0)	12 (48.0)	25 (50.0)
XII	12 (48.0)	13 (52.0)	25 (50.0)

The groups were broadly comparable in terms of age, sex, and class distribution.

Pre-Test Academic Stress

Table 2. Comparison of Pre-Test Academic Stress Scores

Group	n	Mean	SD	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Experimental	25	31.84	5.62	0.27	.788
Control	25	31.40	5.89		

There was no statistically significant difference between the groups at pre-test ($p = .788$), indicating broadly comparable baseline academic-stress scores.

Effect on Academic Stress

Table 3. Pre-Test and Post-Test Academic Stress Scores

Group	Pre-test Mean $\pm$ SD	Post-test Mean $\pm$ SD	Mean Change	<i>p</i>
Experimental	31.84 $\pm$ 5.62	21.36 $\pm$ 5.08	-10.48	<.001
Control	31.40 $\pm$ 5.89	30.24 $\pm$ 5.67	-1.16	.214

The experimental group demonstrated a substantial reduction in academic stress following the intervention, whereas the control group showed only a small change.

Effect on Coping Behaviour

Table 4. Comparison of Coping Behaviour Scores

Group	Pre-test Mean $\pm$ SD	Post-test Mean $\pm$ SD	Mean Improvement
Experimental	48.72 $\pm$ 7.14	61.48 $\pm$ 6.53	+12.76

Group	Pre-test Mean $\pm$ SD	Post-test Mean $\pm$ SD	Mean Improvement
Control	49.16 $\pm$ 6.82	50.24 $\pm$ 6.91	+1.08

The experimental group demonstrated a considerable improvement in adaptive coping behaviour after participation in the programme.

Effect on Academic Confidence

Table 5. Comparison of Academic Confidence Scores

Group	Pre-test Mean $\pm$ SD	Post-test Mean $\pm$ SD	Mean Improvement
Experimental	51.16 $\pm$ 7.42	65.28 $\pm$ 6.81	+14.12
Control	50.68 $\pm$ 7.18	51.92 $\pm$ 7.04	+1.24

Academic confidence increased substantially among students who received the structured training.

Post-Test Comparison

Table 6. Comparison of Post-Test Outcomes Between Groups

Outcome	Experimental Mean $\pm$ SD	Control Mean $\pm$ SD	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Academic stress	21.36 $\pm$ 5.08	30.24 $\pm$ 5.67	5.83	<.001
Adaptive coping	61.48 $\pm$ 6.53	50.24 $\pm$ 6.91	5.91	<.001
Academic confidence	65.28 $\pm$ 6.81	51.92 $\pm$ 7.04	6.83	<.001

All three post-test outcomes differed significantly between the experimental and control groups.

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