

## **STUDENT TEACHERS' STRESS: ACADEMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVES**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study aims to investigate the level of stress among student teachers and significant relationship if any between stress and academic achievement with reference to demographic variables such as gender and educational qualification. This survey based research depended on the data collected from 900 student teachers of Theni District, Tamil Nadu, India. The results indicated that student teachers of Theni district have an above average level of stress. The male and female student teachers do not differ significantly in their level of stress. The student teachers having undergraduate and post graduate degree as their basic qualification also do not differ significantly in their stress. A significant negative correlation is observed between stress and academic achievement.

**Keywords:** Student Teachers, Stress, Academic Achievement.

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## Introduction

The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) defines Teacher Education as, “A programme of education, research and training of persons to teach from pre-primary to higher education level”. As Kilpatrick (1918) puts it, “Training is given to animals and circus performers, while education is to human beings. Teacher education encompasses teaching skills, sound pedagogical theory and professional skills. Thus, teacher education is a combination of teaching skills, pedagogical theory and professional skills”. Teachers’ competence, confidence, dedication, and general predisposition towards teaching profession are however influenced by the training they receive. Bhargava (2009) argues that the teaching process is multitasking. Due to the over-engaging and multi-tasking nature of the profession, student-teachers encounter a number of stress and anxiety. There are various areas which induce anxiety and cause stress to student teachers. Some of these are lesson planning, classroom management, heavy work load in practicing school and evaluation by supervisors and mentors. Writing a lesson plan formally and then proceeding in the classroom bothers much of student teachers because paper planning fails to match the proceedings in the classroom for the first few days and this is enough to make student teachers nervous as they have to be mentally readjusted or re-plan their written lesson plan. Thus, much is known anecdotally about the stressors on teachers, especially following the ever-increasing demands of change associated with developments in technology, and curriculum. No adequate literature is seen on stress of the teacher trainees in India. In this context, this study is an attempt to study the stress level and its influence on academic achievement of the student teachers.

## Objectives of the Study

The study attempted

1. To find out the level of Stress among student teachers of Theni district;
2. To find out significant difference, if any in the stress level of student teachers of Theni district with respect to the demographic variables such as gender and educational qualification and

3. To find out whether there exists any significant correlation between stress and academic achievement of student teachers of Theni district.

### **Hypotheses of the Study**

In tune with the above objectives, the following hypotheses were framed:

1. There is no significant difference between male and female student teachers in their stress.
2. There is no significant difference between student teachers having undergraduate and post graduate degree as their basic qualification in their stress.
3. There is no significant relationship between stress and academic achievement of student teachers of Theni district.

### **Research Method**

The present study is a descriptive and quantitative research involving normative survey technique.

### **Population and Sample**

The population of this study comprises of student teachers studying in the colleges of education at Theni District in Tamil Nadu. The investigator selected eleven teacher education institutions randomly, and obtained proper permission from the college administrators to collect the data. 900 student teachers were selected as the sample for the present investigation.

### **Research Tools, Data Collection and Analysis of Data**

The investigator used Student Teachers Stress Scale (STSS), developed and validated by Rajamanickam and Senthilnathan (2016). It is a five-point scale with 21 positive items. The response are "Exactly", "Often", "Sometimes", "Rarely" and "Never". The scores are 4,3,2,1,0 respectively. The above tool was administered to the student – teachers by the investigator. The overall scores obtained by the student teachers in their B.Ed Programme examination was considered as academic achievement score. The collected data were subjected to appropriate descriptive differentiate and inferential analyses.

## Analysis of data

**Table.1 - Stress Levels of the Student Teachers of Theni District**

Stress Levels	Score Range	No. of Students	Percentage
Low	0 -116	168	18.67
Moderate	117 -140	591	65.66
High	141 – 200	141	15.67

The Table 1 reveals that the levels of stress of student teachers of Theni district range from low to high. Out of 900 student teachers, 168 student teachers (18.67%) have low level of stress, 591 student teachers (65.66%) have an average level of stress and 141 student teachers (15.67%) have high level of stress. It is important to note that a maximum number of student teachers (591 – 65.67%) have moderate level of stress. Hence, it is concluded that 'the students teachers of Theni district have moderate level of stress.

### HYPOTHESIS 1 ( $H_0$ 1)

There is no significant difference between male and female student teachers of Theni District in their stress.

**Table 2**

**Means, Standard Deviation and 't' Value for the variable Stress of Male and Female Student Teachers of Theni District**

Gender	N	Mean	SD	't' Value
Male	256	128.03	11.36	0.194*
Female	644	128.20	11.10	

From the table 2, it is evident that the 't' value is 0.194, and it is not significant at 0.05 level. It shows that the mean stress scores of male and female student teachers do not differ significantly. Hence, the null hypothesis is not rejected. Further, the result shows that the mean stress score of female student teachers is higher than that of the male student teachers. It is, therefore concluded that the female student teachers have more stress than male student teachers.

## HYPOTHESIS 2 (H<sub>0</sub> 2)

There is no significant difference between student teachers having undergraduate and post graduate degree as their basic qualification in their stress.

**Table 3**  
**Mean, Standard Deviation and 't' value for the variable Stress of the UG and PG qualified student teachers**

Qualification	N	Mean	SD	't' Value
UG	738	127.86	11.54	1.572
PG	162	129.47	12.93	

From the Table 3, it is evident that the 't' value is 1.572, and it is not significant at 0.05 level. It shows that the mean stress scores of student teachers having UG and PG degree as their basic qualification do not differ significantly. Hence, the null hypothesis is not rejected. Further, the result reveals that the mean stress score of PG degree qualified student teachers is higher than that of student teachers with UG degree as their basic qualification. It is therefore concluded that the PG degree qualified student teachers are more stressed than the student teachers with UG degree as their basic qualification.

## Hypothesis 3 (H<sub>0</sub>3)

There is no significant relationship between stress and academic achievement of student teachers of Theni District.

**Table 4**  
**Correlation between stress and Academic Achievement of Student Teachers of Theni District**

Variables	N	r	Remarks
Stress And Academic Achievement	900	-0.052	Significant at 0.01 level

The Table 4 shows the relationship between stress and academic achievement of student teachers of Theni district. It reveals that the 'r' value (-0.052), is significant at 0.01 levels. It indicates that stress and academic achievement are correlated negatively, but significantly. Hence, the hypothesis, *is* rejected. Therefore, it is concluded that there is a significant negative correlation between stress and academic achievement of the student teachers of Theni district.

### **Major Findings of the study**

The following are the major findings of this study:

1. A vast majority of the student teachers of Theni district have an average level of stress.
2. Regarding gender, female student teachers have more stress than male student teachers.
3. The UG degree qualified student teachers have more stress than PG degree qualified student teachers.
4. There is a significant negative correlation between stress and academic achievement of student teachers of Theni district.

### **Conclusion**

The present study focused on teacher trainees' stress and its relation with their academic achievement. the result revealed that elevated stress level decrease the academic performance of student teachers. So the investigators want to conclude that instead of equipping the prospective teachers with knowledge and skills required for their routine teaching task in future, more fun based and at the same time challenging real classroom environment may be provided and that may break their stress and help them to explore themselves for a better professional achievement in future..

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