



Academic pressure and depression

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Abstract

The research illustrates the effects of academic pressure and depression on university students, college students, and students of schools. It seems that academic pressure helps to bring out the best outcomes of the students but more often it breaks down the mental health of the students when they fail to take the overloads of academic pressure. The study highlights the unfavorable impacts of depression due to academic pressure and how to resolve this intense problem. However, this research concentrates on how academic pressure is associated with depression, how competition leads students toward depression, how depression affects students to perform well in the classroom, why teachers' unclear lectures trouble students to get a better understanding that leads the students toward depression and the vulnerable result-based education system which affects students psychologically. To test the quality of these speculations, a cognitive survey has been conducted using both primary and secondary thoughts. It is built upon the basis of my research where my hypothesis is correct. At the very beginning stage of my research, I assumed the fact that competition among students, teachers unclear lectures, overloads of projects, assignments, presentations, exams, and result-based education systems are the major factors for academic depression. After completing my survey and investigation from both primary and secondary sources, I have found that these reasons are highly responsible for academic depression which partially matched my hypothesis.

Keywords: Depression, excessive academic pressure, teacher's responsibility, mental health illness, anxiety disorder, amiable relationship with teachers and students, result-based general education

Introduction

Depression is a common but serious psychological disorder that affects millions of people around the world. It also breaks down the morality and physical condition that interrupts students from different disciplines to perform regular activities of their customary life. This depression comes into human life for various reasons. Academic Pressure is the most vicious reason through which students get into trouble and as a result they get depressed. There are numerous ways, depression dominates the conscious, subconscious, and unconscious minds of human beings. Among all other reasons, academic pressure has become a recurrent factor responsible for hideous depression which leads students to a decrepit situation. However, academic pressure can harm students, such as "mental health illness", "anxiety", "tension", and "hopelessness" (Kaur, 2012) [10]. Academic stress has multiple components including environmental factors, perception factors, and demand factors (Kohn & Frazer, 1986) [6]. First of all, the environmental factors refer to the dismissal of the students from the class, the noise level of the classroom, and the number of students in the classroom. Secondly, the perception factors refer to lectures in non-native languages, fast-paced lectures, unclear assignments, and incorrect answers in the classroom. Finally, the demand factors refer to the psychological factors which include tension for academic grades, excessive homework, and difficulty with teachers or instructors (Chen, W. 2018) [8]. All these aspects prove the fact that academic stress, which has been prevailing upon almost every student, is severely responsible for depression. Few students can better deal with the height of academic pressure and others get destroyed.

In a research paper by Vikas S. Minchekar and Rahul Gajanan Kamble, we have acknowledged that academic

pressure can be a burning cause of suicide and suicidal attempts for college students. In most cases, it has been observed that a student from a marginal community (Proletariat group, according to Karl Marx), if gets admitted into a private university where the majority of the students belong to the elite class, remains in a dilapidated situation for adaptability. Some students from that marginal group get affiliated with the elite class students, and the rest lose themselves in the desert air. Apart from these real scenarios, some other reasons are also responsible for depression.

For instance,

- Continuous Examination at both College and University Levels.
- Failing to answer the questions of teachers in the classroom in front of fellow mates.
- Showing progress reports in school, college, and university subjects due to academic stress
- Difficulty in understanding the course instructor's teaching method.
- Competition with classmates.
- Completing teacher's assignments and fulfilling parental expectations.

Literature review

This paper illustrates a vivid description of the depression through which one student gets exploited while dealing with the vulnerable academic procedures of learning where the involvement of the students in innovating something new is not important but imposing pressure upon the students to finish the academic programs only, is emphatically practiced. Students are facing many challenges in their academia such as assignments, examinations, presentations, quizzes, projects, etc. Academic stress creates a negative impact on students' learning capacity and academic performance, as mental health problems, such as depression

and anxiety, sleep disturbances, and substance (Michal C. Poscoe, 2019). They do not want to down their grade. For this reason, they always try to submit their work on time. Many students get depressed because of the excessive pressure of the institution. The entire education system should be guided in such a way where rational, imaginative, and enchanting criteria are to be followed to make learning more interesting to the students. However, depression is a kind of mental deformity that abruptly rebukes students to acquire knowledge and makes them distressed and crestfallen. Academic events, likewise, uncanny cogitation for academic grades, high expectations of the students regarding good results, and fear of facing strict academic activities are responsible for the academic stress of the students which makes them depressed. Based on our country, the academic result is useful in a sense that determines a student's possibility to get a good job. However, good grades also help the students to get international scholarships and lead them to become highly educated. So, many students get depressed when they fail to achieve a good academic result. This is a truth universally acknowledged that a student's academic result always determines their fortune. But this academic learning which is mostly based on books does not allow the students to get accumulated with the practical world where skill is necessary to secure a better future. The prevailing connotation of a grading system is needed to showcase a student's supreme efficiency. Students with academic pressure possess a negative attitude because of various reasons, such as, "Career development" and "High expectation of academic results" (Ray, Halder & Goswami, 2012) ^[4]. All the students should concentrate on becoming skillful, diligent, and intelligent because, in many situations, quantitative grades diminish student's interest in learning, reduce academic risk-taking, and decrease the quality of thinking. Through this work, students can incorporate themselves into research work and get to learn several ideologies of many minds around the world which makes them skillful. This kind of learning procedure can reduce the tension regarding grades in the minds of the students and direct them to focus on creative thinking (Ashley Lamb-Sinclair, 2017). It expands the imaginative power of the students as well. Now and then it is considered that excessive academic pressure is responsible which leads students toward depression. Further, adolescents who had academic stress were at 2.4 times (95% CI =0.9-2.4) ($P < 0.001$) higher risk of depression than adolescents without academic stress (P. Jayanthi, M. Thirunavukarasu & Rajamanickam Rajkumar). Moreover, this paper will focus on this recurrent issue where students are getting depressed by academic pressure and how this hectic problem should be solved. This vibrant problem regarding academic pressure can be resolved if proper initiatives should be taken. For example, teachers should encourage students to be strategic about taking workloads, preparing assignments, delivering presentation speeches, and all other academic activities (Nahum, 2017) ^[1]. Further, peer pressure is also a recurrent issue deliberately functional as a factor that affects adolescent behavior. (Tripathy, 2018) ^[12]. Another significant reason for depression is the rates of young people who tend to get depressed are the highest among all psychological disorders in the age group and these kinds of disorders affect millions of youngsters. (Makinde, *et al.* 2020) ^[13]. It is almost common that students' depression is

responsible for walking through the darkest path of the world, A student's self-reliance gets devastated when that student gets involved in drinking alcohol, illogical drug intake, and negative body image, which is harmful to the well-being of a child or a young person. There may be many reasons for involving themselves in such decrepit obsessions, But, academic pressure plays a vital role beyond these negative practices. (Tripathy, 2018) ^[12]. Furthermore, in India in Maharashtra, from 2011-2015, according to the National Crime Record Bureau, most of the suicidal cases happened due to academic pressure. The approximate percentage was 14%, nearly 1230 students. An article published in the (Hindustan Times, 2017), clearly mentioned that Tanya Rana, a 19-year-old female who was a medical student committed suicide for academic pressure and failing to compete with her peers. Another student named Arjun Bharadwaj, 24 years old, a student of Management also committed suicide. The report of (India Spend, 2017) concluded that an IIT aspirant named Arijeet Pramanick got depressed about failure in exams and committed suicide. After these observations, it is almost clear that academic pressure, parental expectations, failing exams, difficulty in coping with the urban environment especially the students who come from rural places, and competition with classmates are valid reasons for experiencing depression. Excelling academically to reach the high expectations of teachers, peers, and parents triggers depression. Competition among students leads them to stress and depressive syndrome. However, the human mind is not stable these days. As a result, concentrating on academic activities, and most importantly focus is absent among students. For this reason, a sense of fear works and it manifests intense anxiety. Out of this anxiety, students suffer from fear of failure in academic exams; if not they get good scores after following the instructions of the teachers, and become severely depressed.

Research Questions

In my research, I will attempt to examine the effect of academic pressure on different university students. My research will address the following questions

1. How depression is associated with academic pressure?
2. Does competition lead students toward depression?
3. Does the difficulty of understanding lectures of the teachers' trouble the Students and lead them toward depression?
4. How does depression affect the academic performance of the students?
5. What kind of initiatives should be taken to reduce academic pressure so that depression can be subdued?

Hypothesis

The idea perceived by most of the researchers is that excessive academic pressure leads students toward depression. There are many reasons for this. When I started my research work, I expected to get the perception that depression is the ultimate result of academic pressure. While going through the process of justifying the fact I found several reasons for academic procedures like tight deadlines for assignments, overloads of school work, anxiety about academic grades, etc. are most of the cases responsible for depression. In this competitive world with numerous challenges, competition in academic exams among students is very common nowadays. Earlier, I assumed to believe the

fact that this competitive mind is very complex and harmful for students which leads them toward depression. Later, through my survey, I got the proof that 40% of people believe that the competitive environment creates anxiety and that all students cannot cope with it. Another assumption was about the teacher's unclear lectures which make things difficult for the students to get a better understanding of any issues discussed in the class. Some teachers deliver fast-paced lectures and also use non-native languages that are difficult to understand. For this reason, probably students fail to get good grades. As a result, depression grabs them severely. The inability of the students to perform in the class may also be the result of severe depression. I assumed that both teachers and students were responsible for this. Through my observation from a different article, I found that incorrect answers of the students make them feel ashamed, the teacher's unequal favoritism toward the high achievers, students' reluctance to learn, and the teacher's negligence towards the students are responsible for students' depression. I expected to see a vital change in the vulnerable academic procedures of the learning process prevailing around my circumstances. My assumption regarding the solution to this problem suggested that this problem, depression to academic pressure, is thoroughly extensive and expanding rapidly. I assumed that this problem would be resolved if the govt. and the governing authority of mass education considers this.

Throughout my research, I expect to find out all the possible ways through which students especially from universities are driven toward depression by unproductive, destructive, and excessive academic pressure. Afterward, I will concentrate on some constructive ways to find out the solution to this vital problem.

Data presentation and analysis

What is academic pressure?

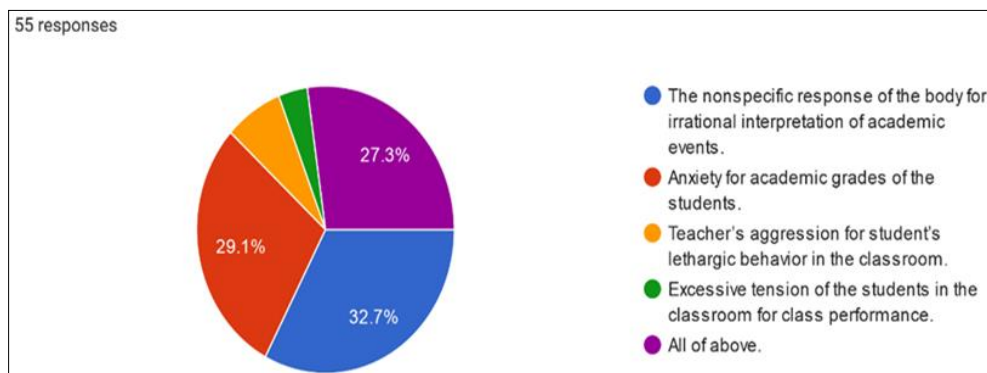


Fig 1

It is perceived in most cases that the more students get engaged with study, the more they become enlightened. However, severe academic pressure, imposed by the educational institution only for completing the syllabus, causes possible hindrances to the student's free thinking. Ultimately the result becomes horrifying for the students. However, while conducting my survey I asked my target community "What is the definition of academic pressure". From the chart of the result of my question, it is very clear that according to the maximum students, the definition of the academic result is- "The nonspecific response of the

Research Methodology

As my research was qualitative, I completed it through observational methods and practical and cognitive methods of collecting information from my target community. After the selection of my research title academic Pressure and depression, I tried to find out the reasons behind academic pressure and depression. My assumptions, for example, competitive minds of the students in academic exams, teacher's unclear lectures, overloads of academic projects, presentations, assignments, and exams, and demerits of result-based education which I thought the reasons for academic depression of the students, inclined me to search for some articles and research works done by several writers to find out more information relevant with my research topic and justify my hypothesis. Later, I found some articles on the internet related to my research work and collected all the information from those articles. Those research works of several writers which matched in some point with my research topic were all the secondary sources.

After completion of collecting information from secondary sources, I found it necessary to make a survey based on some questionnaires that were both expedient and coherent to testify to my assumptions or hypothesis. To do so, I prepared those questionnaires and served them to my target community people likewise, some teachers and university students. Finally, I got 55 respondents. Most of them claimed that academic pressure is responsible for students' depression. As a result, I got my concept clear. My assumptions became truly justified and matched with the practical world, mob psychology regarding academic depression, and ultimate research findings. This entire proceeding was finished as my primary task was to find out the reasons behind academic depression which were my chief concerns.

body for irrational interpretation of academic events" and it is the majority one which is 32.7%. Then 29.1% of the students said that academic pressure is nothing but anxiety for the academic grade. Some of the students think that it is the teacher's aggression for the student's lethargic behavior in the classroom and it is 7.3%. A small number of students think that academic pressure raises excessive tension of the students in the classroom which deprives them of performing in the class. The rest of the students think that academic pressure is the ultimate result of all of the causes.

How does academic pressure make students depressed?

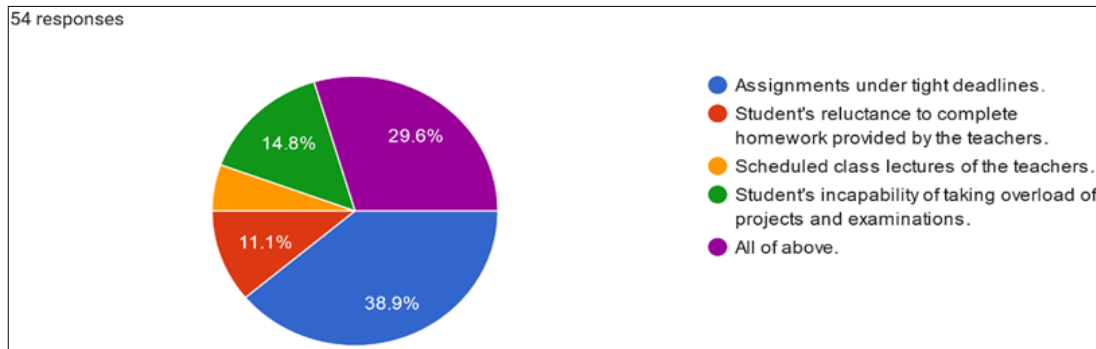


Fig 2

The most possible causes of depression are faulty mood regulation by the brain, genetic vulnerability, and stressful life events.

At first, I asked my target community how academic pressure makes students depressed. The response was very clear that assignments under tight deadlines which is 38.9%, are the majority. Then approximately 14.8% of them said that student’s incapability of taking an overload of projects and examinations is the reason behind it whereas 11.1 % of the students said that student’s reluctance to complete homework provided by the teachers is a kind of academic pressure which makes students feel depressed. Then, 5.6%

of them said scheduled class lectures of the teachers make them feel depressed. As the second highest result, 29.6% of the students said all above the reasons make them feel depressed which is a little over a quarter. Further, there is an upper-mentioned pie chart that represents the data. The data collection shows that the majority of students at different universities in Bangladesh participated in how academic pressure makes students depressed. Most of them believed that assignment under tight deadlines is the main reason for it and the option, all above has also been reported by a little less than the majority. Therefore, students prohibited the assignments under tight deadlines.

How does competitiveness in academia make students depressed?

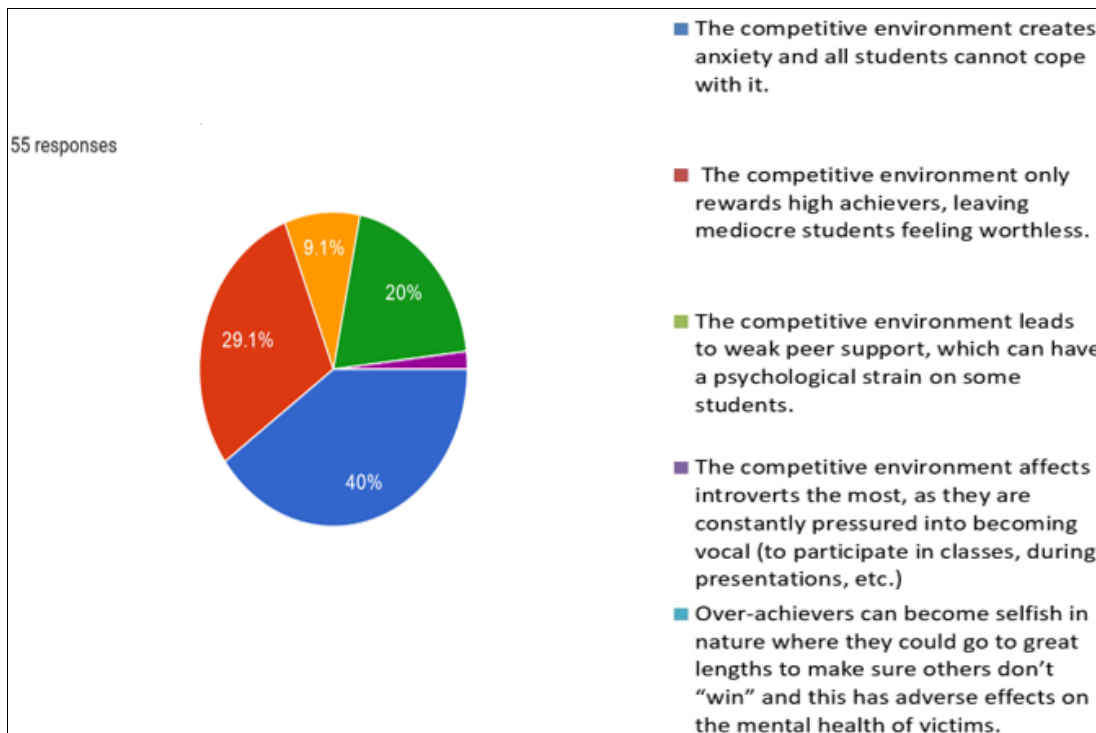


Fig 3

Competition among students in academic exams is very common around the world. I used to believe in the fact that a competitive mind is very complex and drives students to run after getting the highest numbers in academic exams. While chasing after numbers, some students deny understanding the subject matters of a course and sometimes fail to secure their good positions. As a result, they get

depressed. To find out the demerits of the competitive minds of the students, however, I asked my target community “How does competitiveness in academia make students depressed?”. Approximately 40% of the students said that the competitive environment creates anxiety and all students cannot cope with it. In addition, 29.1 percent of the students said that the competitive environment only rewards

high achievers, leaving mediocre students feeling worthless while 20 percent of the students supported that the competitive environment leads to weak peer support, which can have a psychological strain on some students and the

remaining 9.1 percent were agreed with the fact that the competitive environment affects introverts the most as they are constantly pressured into becoming vocal (to participate in classes, during presentations, etc.)

Do you think students' incapability of understanding the teacher's lectures is responsible for their depression?

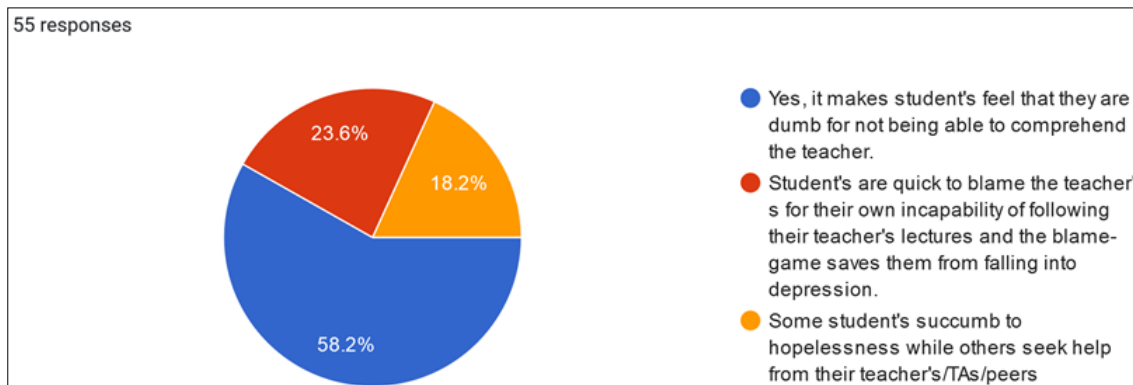


Fig 4

It is the truth universally acknowledged that a teacher is the forerunner of a nation. So, the teacher's contribution to the growth of students' skills is important. But, if a teacher, only showcasing his/her intellect, uses third-degree or difficult words while delivering lectures, not concerned about the students' capacity of understanding, then it becomes a burden for the students. As a result, students fail to pass examinations and get depressed.

However, the above pie chart describes that student's incapability of understanding the teacher's lectures is responsible for their depression. About the majority of

students believed that it makes students feel dumb for not being able to comprehend the teacher which was 58.2%. According to 23.6% that means nearly a quarter of the students supported that students are quick to blame the teachers for their incapability of falling into depression while 18.2% said that some students succumb to hopelessness while others seek help from their teachers/TAs/peers. We can therefore say that the majority of students believe that their incapability of understanding teacher's lectures is responsible for their depression.

Do you think that school workload troubles students psychologically? Why?

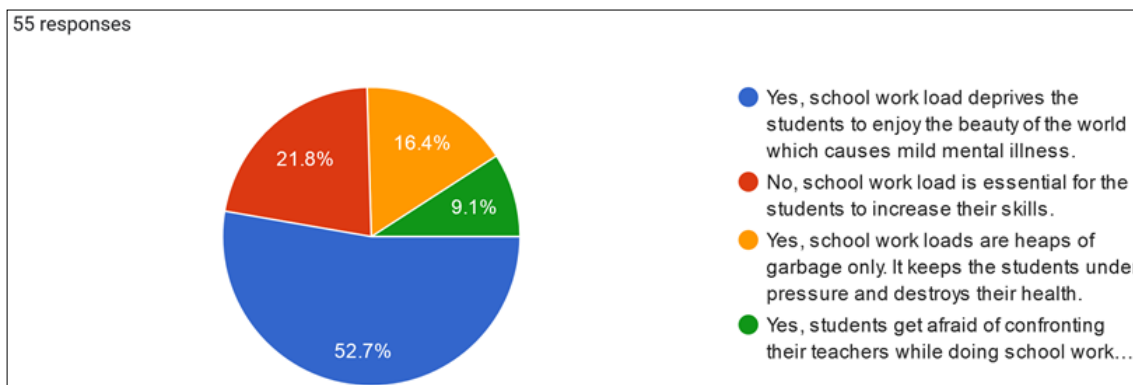


Fig 5

From my perspective, students should acquire knowledge blissfully. They should learn for excellence without having any tension or anxiety for the future. But, if they have to take overloads of academic work, they will become socially awkward and paralyzed psychologically.

During my survey, I asked my target community "Do you think that school workload troubles students psychologically? Why? The response was that approximately 52.7 % which was the majority of the students believed that school workload deprives the students of enjoying the beauty of the world which causes mild mental illness while 21.8% of the students which means that nearly a quarter of the students also believed that school

workload is essential for the students to increase their skills. On the other hand, 16.4% of the students said that school workloads are heaps of garbage only. Last but not least, 9.1% of the students supported that students get afraid of confronting their teachers while doing school work which leads them toward depression. If we analyze the answers, we can say that almost 80% of the students think that school workload troubles them psychologically though the reason for it may vary. It does not mean that the schools should not give workloads to the students, but it says to decrease the workloads of students so that the students do not feel it as a burden.

Do you agree that result-based education affects the mental health of students adversely?

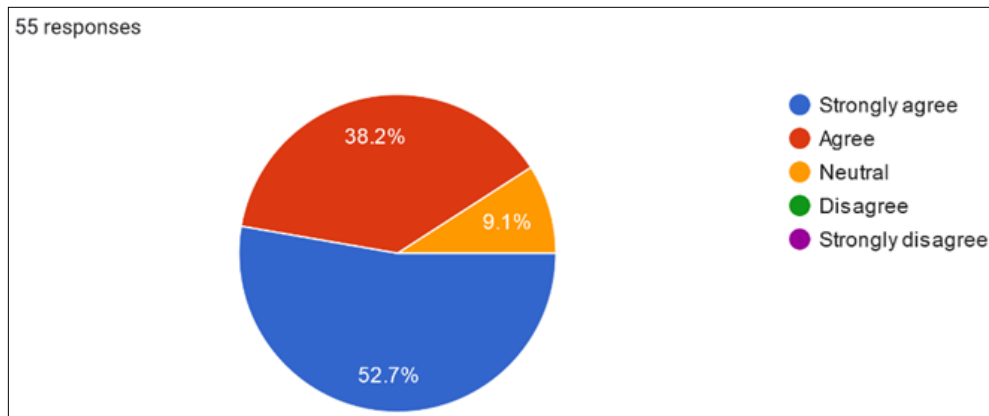


Fig 6

Before starting my survey, I was inclined to believe the fact that a result-based education system and its outcome diminish the student's inspiration for excellency and engage them in academic stress. However, I had multiple dilemmas regarding the fact that without better results, it is impossible to get preferences from the job recruiters. For this reason, I wanted to justify the fact by surveying my target mass community to determine whether result-based education is significant or not. Finally, the pie Chart above shows that result-based education affects the mental health of the students adversely. 52.7% of students which was the majority of the students strongly agreed with this statement. 38.2% which was a little over a third of the students selected agreed and 9.1% of students were neutral.

Summary of research findings

Throughout my survey, I have left no stone unturned to justify my assumptions with more information regarding academic pressure and depression from my target community by serving them some questionnaires and getting the answers to those questions. The congenial performance of my respondents has helped me effectively to prove whether my assumptions were correct or not. After getting the answers to my questions regarding the possible reasons for academic depression from my target community, I understood the fact that severe academic pressure breaks the mental health of the students.

However, from my entire survey proceedings, I have found most of the students believe that assignment under tight deadlines is a reason for academic pressure that makes students depressed. Afterward, the competitive environment creates anxiety and all students cannot cope with it. Further, the majority of the students believe that the school workload deprives them students to enjoying the beauty of the world which causes mild mental illness. Furthermore, teachers' unclear lectures which make it difficult for the students to get a better understanding are also considered as a reason for students' depression. Moreover, result-based education affects the mental health of the students adversely and a high percentage of students strongly agreed with this statement.

The preconceived idea of my research matches my findings. At the very beginning of my research, I assumed the fact that competition in examinations among students, result-based education, excessive academic pressure, and unclear lectures the teachers are responsible for student's depression.

After completing my survey through some questionnaires, I have found that my preconceived idea regarding my desired research article matches my assumption or my hypothesis.

Recommendations

The perception of depression should never be perceived as negligence. Academic procedures should be maintained in balanced, cognitive, and logical ways because education is the backbone, highly sophisticated, and fundamental right of the nation. Some proper initiatives may work positively to reduce this existing problem. For example,

- Teachers should be aware of the increasing academic pressure in the classroom, which can increase the level of student's depression.
- In a classroom, punitive policies should be abandoned.
- Unclear directions of the vulnerable teachers should be justified minutely.
- Proper timing and spacing of assignments should be maintained.
- In a classroom, teachers should relate academic learning with practical things.
- The institution should engage students in professional activities besides academic learning.
- Counseling sessions must be needed.

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