

ASSOCIATION BETWEEN STUDY LOAD OF THE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES AND SUBJECTIVE MENTAL HEALTH DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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INTRODUCTION

Studying in schools during the COVID-19 quarantine took place through remote connection. Studies show that quarantine can affect not only academic performance but also emotional and mental health.

AIM

The aim of the study was to evaluate the association between the learning load and subjective mental health of the fourth-grade students in two gymnasiums of Ukmerge.

METHODS

A survey was conducted from December 2020 to January 2021. 172 fourth-grade students of two schools of Ukmerge were invited to participate in the study. A total of 119 anonymous questionnaires were filled out by the students, of which 87 questionnaires were suitable for the study (response rate – 72%) – 67.8% of the respondents were female, 32.2% were male. Data analysis was performed using the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 24.0. The chi-square (χ^2) criteria, the z-criteria, and the Spearman correlation coefficient (r) were calculated.

RESULTS

The workload of students after school is too high, on average students spend from 16 to 22 hours per week on homework. Number of hours spent on homework during weekdays and weekends was evaluated (Table 1). Most students name their study load after school as moderate (40.2%) or high (46%).

Table 1. Number of hours spent on homework on weekdays and weekends depending on gender.

Gender	<1 Hours		1 – 2 H		3 – 4 H		5 – 6 H		≥ 6 Hours		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Weekdays												
Female	3	5.1	14	23.7	30	50.8	10	16.9	2	3.4	59	100
Male	5	17.9	9	32.1	9	32.1	3	10.7	2	7.1	28	100
Total	8	9.2	23	26.4	39	44.8	13	14.9	4	4.6	87	100
$\chi^2 = 8.059$, IIs = 4, $p = 0.089$												
Weekends												
Female	4	6.8*	26	44.1*	16	27.1	11	18.6	2	3.4	59	100
Male	8	28.6	3	10.7	11	39.3	3	10.7	3	10.7	28	100
Total	12	13.8	29	33.3	27	31.0	14	16.1	5	5.5	87	100
$\chi^2 = 16.295$, IIs = 4, $p = 0.003$												

* $p < 0.05$ compared with male.

The mental health of the students was observed. Stress and anxiety, felt by the female students over a 2-week period distributed to 3–4 days (23.7%), 5–6 days (27.1%), and 7 or more days (23.7%), while male students over the 2-week period experienced stress and anxiety 3–4 days (21.4%) and 7 or more days (42.9%).

Lastly, the association between study load and subjective mental health was evaluated (Table 2).

Table 2. Correlation between students' workload and subjective emotional health.

Subjective mental health	Workload self-evaluation	
	r	p
Had no interest or care	0.165	$p > 0.05$
Feeling depressed	0.314	$p < 0.05$
Stress/anxiety	0.420	$p < 0.05$
Low energy	0.393	$p < 0.05$
Insomnia	0.210	$p > 0.05$

CONCLUSIONS

The study load of students after school is higher than recommended. Respondents often feel stress, anxiety at school. There was a statistically significant moderate correlation between study load during the COVID-19 period and subjective mental health derangements.