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IMPACT OF FOLK MUSIC ON ACADEMIC STRESS AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

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Abstract

Background: Academic stress is a psychological state that affects a student's physical and mental health adversely. Numerous studies suggest the positive impact of music on mental wellness among students. The current study is mainly focused on the impact of folk music on stress triggered by tasks such as achieving various academic goals, homework stress, lengthy periods of studying, high-grade expectations, study workloads, and cognitive burdens associated with everyday life among undergraduate students.

Materials and methods: This is an experimental study, in which a total of 50 undergraduate students were selected randomly from Shimla, Himachal Pradesh, to assess the impact of folk music on academic stress among undergraduate students. Using the Students' Academic Stress Scale (SASS) developed by Kim (1970), the two-group pre-test and post-test design is implemented in this study. Following the pre-test, students in the experimental group listened to folk music for 30 consecutive days (01 hour a day) while the control group's routine continued as regular days.

Results: It was found that the experimental group attained a score of M=49.56in the post-test, whereas the control group had a higher post-test score of M= 65.68 The resultant value of 't^'= 16.271 ($p<0.05$) is significant at the level of confidence 0.01

Conclusion: The findings revealed that folk music had a significant impact on academic stress among undergraduate students. Therefore, it can be said that listening to folk music makes students feel happy and calm, which lowers their academic stress and helps to improve their overall academic success.

***Keywords**: folk music, undergraduate students, the impact of music, academic stress, academic success.*

INTRODUCTION

The growth of a nation depends significantly on its system of education. Through education, young individuals not only acquire the skills (Martin,2016; Glewwe,2002; Henson,2002) and knowledge essential (Smith,2006; Weare,2003; Oosterbeek,2010; Hanushek,2007) for establishing a successful future (Glewwe,2002; Perry,2017), but also contribute an important role in leading and influencing society in an appropriate direction (Smith,2006; Lee,2000). Graduation is the point in the educational process where a student can start making decisions about their lives with more freedom. They may additionally start thinking about their career options by deciding what they want to accomplish in their life and begin working towards achieving that goal (Misra,2000). Students at this age experience mental pressure for a variety of reasons, including familial circumstances (Reifman,1990; Edwards,2001), economic conditions (Cheng,1993), personal issues, etc. (Baste,2014; Brand,2009). On the other hand, high academic expectations for themselves (Misra,2000), families (Tangade,2011; Yankovaskaya,2023), or society, such as high academic scores (Zelaski,1999; Cheng,1993), high marks (Deb,2010; Abouserie,1994; Kohn, 1986), fear of failing in examination (Bedewy,2015; Selman, 2010), etc., additionally contribute to academic stress among students (Yankovaskaya,2023; Chapell,2005; Fairbrother, 2003; Chyu,2022; Misra,2000; Adom,2020; Bedewy,2015). The highest level of academic pressure in students not only results in a variety of physical (Folkman, 1994; Pearlin, 1999; Stults,2014) and mental disorders (Winkelman, 1994; Selman, 2010; Perlberg,1986) but also inspires them to take dangerous actions like drug abuse (Leonard,2015) and suicide (Chyu,2022). In India, there were almost 13,000 student suicides in 2021, according to the NCRB's ADSI report 2021 (NCRB,2021). Out of which 864 students committed suicide due to failure in examination (NCRB,2021). One of the main factors of this surge in suicide among students, which is 4.5% to 5% each year, is academic stress. In this phase of academic stress, music plays a significant role in students' lives (Gallego,2020; Ozgundondu,2019; Harmat,2008; Li,2022). It not only provides students with mental and emotional satisfaction by entertaining them (Harmat,2008), but it also extensively contributes to a boost of motivation (Zheng,2022), confidence (Kiss,2021), and interest in work by enhancing students' moods (Li, 2022) in situations of mental and

academic stress and reducing the risk of different kinds of mental disorders (Liu,2023; Ince,2017; Ozgundondu,2019; Choi,2010; Hakim,2023; Kavurmaci,2020). Hence, this study is necessary for all human beings.

Academic stress is when an average student feels the mental strain and pressure from their academic routine or study-related tasks (Sohail,2013; Schaefer,2007; Adom,2020; Shuaibi, 2014) such as homework (OECD,2015), assignments (Redcliff,2003), presentations (Jain,2017), exams (Bedewy,2015), tests (Bedewy,2015; OECD,2015; Neuderth,2009), classes etc. The major causes of this condition are long-term study stress (Sohail, 2013; Baste,2014), a lot of work (Shah,2010; Jain,2017), high expectations of parents (Tangade,2009; Yankovaskaya,2023; Jain,2017), high grade and marks expectations (Zelaski,1999; Deb,2010), a poor relationship between the student and the teacher (Fairbrother, 2003), etc. Early stages of academic stress are advantageous for a student's academic progress (Devi,2019; Jain,2017), while higher stages and long-term academic stress result in feelings of fear (Acharya,2009; Polychornopoulou,2005), disinterest (Devi,2019), unhappiness (Bataineh,2013), mental instability (Kaur,2014), anger, aggression (Navokenna,2022), and frustration for the student (Glozah,2013; Michaela,2020). Because of this, the student performs badly in class (Chyu,2022; Kessler,2012; Mcarde,2014), suffers from a lack of psychological wellness (Glozah,2013; Michaela,2020), decision-making skills (Jain,2017), self-confidence (walburg,2014), and lack of motivation (Bataineh,2013; Liu,2011; 2015; Shinto,1998). It could potentially be harmful to students' mental health, causing many stress-related disorders (Michaela,2020; Selman, 2010; chapel,2005; Devi,2019; Jain,2017), exhaustion (walburg,2014), anxiety and depression (Liu,2023; Choi,2010; Son, 2019; Busari,2012), among others and compelling them to take drastic actions like suicide (Leonard,2015; Chyu,2022) in the absence of mental support.

The term 'folk music' usually refers to music that incorporates all the elements of a state, region, village, or community's culture, lifestyle, customs, behavior, food, etc. with their folk dialect (Justa,1986; Shree,1976; Sargam,2021; Shiksha,2023). Folk music is considered simple and ordinary music of ordinary people, in which classical rules are worthless (Chaudhary,2002; Sharma,2012). Its tune and tone are simplistic and natural, and its compositions are inspired by the social, cultural, and living conditions of a particular literary region (Sharma,2012; Shiksha,2023). That is why folk music is very popular as compared to classical music. So, of all the musical genres, folk music has been chosen for current research.

Music is such a beautiful creation with various melodious sounds (Bansar,2014; Langguth ,2011), which have a positive impact on a person's intellectual (Devi,2019), mental (Kavurmaci,2020; Son,2019; Ince,2017; Said,2020), and physical wellbeing (Choi, 2010; Ozgundondu,2019). The unmelodic and loud sounds might make someone feel uncomfortable (Bansar,2014; Langguth ,2011; Stansfeld,2003), while music's melodic and peaceful notes have a calming influence on emotions (Lefevre, 2004; Li, 2022; Taheri,2022; Devi,2019). Which can result in a variety of advantageous mental changes in people (Zheng,2022; Hou,2022; Said,2020; Liu,2023; Bansar,2014), whose beneficial impacts can be seen in individuals of all ages, including children (Hakim,2023; Said,2020), young adults (Chen,2021), students (Liu,2023; Navocanna,2022; Son,2019; Kvurmaci,2020), and elders (Chu,2014). Because folk music is also a genre of music, it has all the healing properties of music. That not only fascinates the students and gives them an overwhelming feeling of physical and spiritual pleasure (Su,2019; Ning,2023; IPL,2023; Lee,2020) but also has a beneficial effect on the state of numerous mental health conditions (Ning,2023; Akbar,2019; Dutta,2020). Therefore, folk music has become an essential subject matter for students, which helps to prevent various mental flaws as well as raise various moral values in students.

HYPOTHESIS

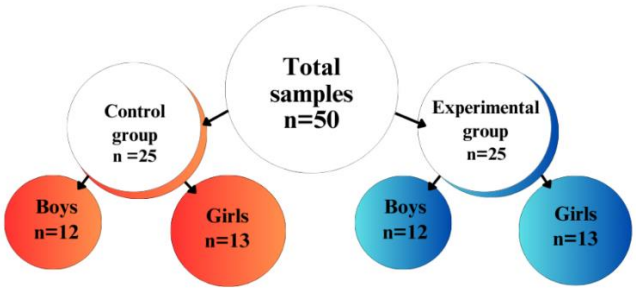
- H_0 There is no significant impact of folk music on the level of academic stress among undergraduate students.
- H_0 There is no significant impact of folk music on the level of academic stress among undergraduate boys.
- H_0 There is no significant impact of folk music on the level of academic stress among undergraduate girls.
- H_0 There is no significant difference between the impact of folk music on the level of academic stress among undergraduate boys and girls.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of the study is to investigate the impact of folk music on the academic stress among undergraduate students.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This is an experimental study in which academic stress is considered as a dependent variable and folk music is considered as an independent variable. To evaluate the impact of folk music on academic stress, 50 undergraduate students were randomly selected from two government colleges in Shimla, Himachal Pradesh, India - Rajkiye Kanya Mahavidyalaya, Center of Excellence - Sanjauli), (Control group = 25, boys = 12, girls = 13/Experimental group = 25, boys= 12, girls = 13), (Figure:1). The Students' Academic Stress Scale (SASS) developed by Kim (1970) and modified for Indian conditions by Rajendran & Kaliappan (1990), and Rao (2012) is used as a tool in this study, and folk music (Vocal) of Himachal Pradesh, India is used as a music intervention.



EXPERIMENTAL PROCEDURE

First, the folk songs used in the research were gathered from various sources. After this, the questionnaire (SASS) was filled in by the respondents in both the control and experimental groups to determine their level of academic stress before the experiment. Following the pre-test, students in the experimental group listened to Himachali folk songs for 30 consecutive days according to their musical tastes (01 hour each day), while the control group's routine continued as regular days. Electric speakers were used to play compositions of folk music among the participants. Following that, a post-test was conducted, and SPSS was utilized to assess the data that had been gathered in the manner of pre-test and post-test from the control and experimental groups.

DATA ANALYSIS

SPSS software is used to assess the qualitative data gathered from both the experimental and control groups using a pre-test and post-test method. The paired and independent samples t-test techniques were used to evaluate the impact of Folk music on academic stress, and their significance was assessed at a level of confidence 0.01 and 0.05.

RESULTS

This study was intended to determine the effects of folk music on academic stress among undergraduate students. Using the statistical analysis, substantial differences have been discovered, which is described below.

Table: 1 The pre-test means, SDs of both Control & Experimental groups

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Control	67.88	25	7.265
Experimental	67.32	25	5.914

Table 1 shows that, the experimental group attained a score of $M = 67.32$ in the pre-test, whereas the control group had a score of $M = 67.88$ in pre-test. Control group seemed to attain a slightly higher score ($M = 67.88, SD = 7.265$) than experimental group ($M = 67.32, SD = 5.914$) in pre-test. This indicates a very minimal difference in pre-test outcomes between control and experimental group (*figure 2*).

Table: 2 Independent test differences between pre-test of both groups' control and experimental

Pre-test	Paired Differences					eta squire	df	p
	Levene's p	t	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Control / Experimental	.285	.299	.560	-3.207	4.327	.001	48	.766

As indicated in Table 2 the Levene's value $P(.285) > 0.05$ is not significant and the resultant value of 't' $(48).299$ is less than the critical value ($t = 2.678$). This suggests that the 't' $(48) = .299$ is not statistically significant at the level of confidence 0.01. The mean difference test scores are $M = .560$, with a 95% confidence interval ranging from -3.207 to 4.327. The value of $P\ (.766) > 0.05$ is not significant and the eta squire statistic $(.001)$ indicate null effect size ($cohen, 1988$). Thus, it can be said that the level of academic stress among both groups (experimental and control) were essentially the same at the time of the pre-test.

Figure: 2 Comparison of pre-test, post-test outcomes, and the t-value outcomes between the control and experimental groups

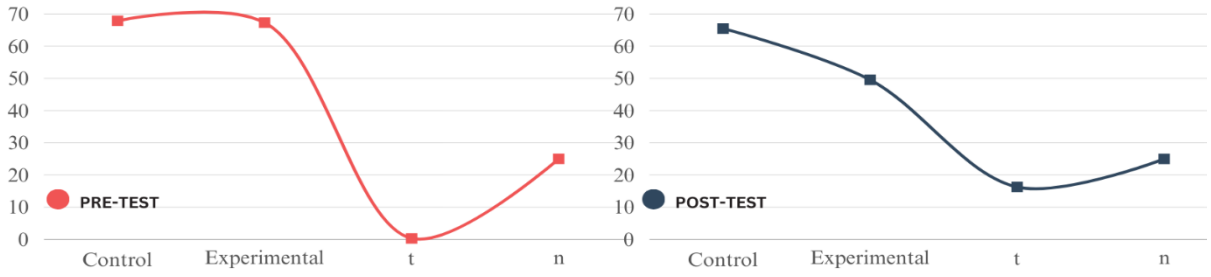


Table: 3 The post-test means, SDs of both Control & Experimental groups

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Post-test	control	65.48	25	4.012
	experimental	49.56	25	2.800

According to Table 3, the experimental group attained a score of $M = 49.56$ in the post - test, whereas the control group had a score of $M = 65.48$ in post-test. Control group seemed to attain a higher score ($M = 65.48,\ SD = 4.012$) than experimental group ($M = 49.56,\ SD = 2.800$) in post-test. This indicates that there is a substantial difference in post-test scores between control and experimental group (*Figure 2*).

Table: 4 Independent test differences between post-test of both groups' control and experimental

Post-test	Paired Differences					eta squire	df	p
	Levene's p	t	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Control / Experimental	.047	16.271	15.920	13.953	17.887	.84	48	.000

As indicated in Table 4, the Levene's value $P(.047) < 0.05$ is significant and the resultant value of 't' $(48) = 16.271$ is greater than the critical value of $'t'$ $(t = 2.678)$. This suggests that the $t\ (48) = 16.271$ is statistically significant at the 0.01 level of confidence. The mean decline in test scores is $M = 15.920$ with a 95% confidence interval ranging from 13.953 *to* 17.887. The $P\ (.000) < 0.01$ is highly significant and the eta squire statistic (.84) indicate a higher effect size (*cohen*, 1988). Therefore, it can be said that the difference between control and experimental group's post-test score is statistically significant.

Table: 5 showing means, SDs of control group

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Pre-test	67.88	25	7.265
Post-test	65.48	25	4.012

As shown in Table: 5, the pre-test mean value is $M = 67.88$, while the post-test mean value is $M = 65.48$. The pre-test score had been higher than the post-test ($M = 67.88, SD = 7.265$) ($M = 65.48, SD = 4.012$). This suggests that the pre-test and post-test outcomes of the control group are minimally differ from each other (*Figure 3*).

Table: 6 Paired differences between pre-test and post-test of control group

Control group	Paired Differences				t	df	eta squire	p
	Mean	Std. Deviation	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					
			Lower	Upper				
Pre-test / Post-test	2.400	9.201	-1.398	6.198	1.304	24	.06	.205

As indicated in Table 6, the absolute value of 't' $(24)1.304$ is less than the crucial value of $'t'$ $(t = 2.797)$. This suggests that the 't' $(24)\ 1.304$ is not statistically significant at the 0.01 level of confidence. The 95% confidence interval for the mean and standard deviation difference test scores is $M = 2.400, SD = 9.201$, with a range of -1.398 to 6.198 . The value of $P\ (.205) > 0.05$ is not significant and the eta squire statistic (.06) indicate no effect size (*cohen*, 1988). Thus, it can be said that the difference between pre-and post-test scores is not statistically significant in control group.

Figure: 3 The pre-test, post-test outcomes, and the t value of control - experimental groups

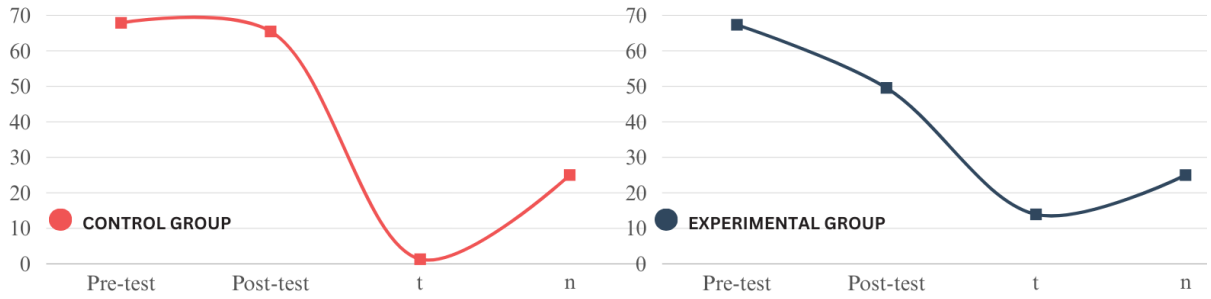


Table: 7 showing means, SDs of experimental group

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Experimental group	Pre-test	67.32	25	5.914
	Post-test	49.56	25	2.800

According to Table: 7, the pre-test mean value is $M = 67.32$, while the post-test mean value is $M = 49.56$. The pre-test score is higher than the post-test ($M = 67.32, SD = 5.914$) ($M = 49.56, SD = 2.800$) score. This suggests that there is a statistical difference between pre- and post-test scores of the experimental group (*Figure 3*).

Table: 8 Paired differences between pre-test and post-test of experimental group

Control group	Paired Differences				t	df	eta squire	p
	Mean	Std. Deviation	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					
			Lower	Upper				
Pre-test / Post-test	17.760	6.372	15.130	20.390	13.935	24	.89	.000

According to Table 8, the value of $t\ (24) = 13.935$ is grater then the critical value (t=2.797). This suggests that the $t(24) = 13.935$ is statistically significant at the 0.01 level of confidence. The mean and standard deviation decline in test scores is $M = 17.760$, $SD = 6.372$ with a 95% confidence interval ranging from 15.130 to 20.390. The $P(.000) < 0.01$ is highly significant and the eta squire statistic (.89) indicate a higher effect size ($cohen, 1988$). Thus, it can be said that the difference between pre and post-test scores of experimental groups is statistically significant, and it can be determined that listening to folk songs will have a significant impact on the level of academic stress among undergraduate students.

Table: 9 post-test scores of both groups' control & experimental among boys

Boys		Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Post-test	control	65.75	12	3.571
	experimental	49.58	12	3.059

As indicated in Table 9, the mean value of the control group among boys is $M = 65.75$, while the mean value for the experimental group among boys is $M = 49.58$. The control groups'(boys) ($M = 65.75, SD = 3.571$) score is higher than the experimental group (boys) ($M = 49.58$, $SD = 3.059$). This shows that there is a statistically substantial difference between the experimental group and the control group of boys (*Figure 4*).

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Table: 10 The difference between post-test scores of both groups control & experimental among boys

Boys		t-test for Equality of Means			t	df	eta squire	P
		Mean Differences	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					
			Lower	Upper				
Post-test	Control/ experimental	16.167	13.352	22	11.911	22	.86	.000

As indicated in Table 10, the $'t'\,(22) = 11.911\,(resultant\ value) > 't' = 2.819\,(critical\ value)$ is statistically significant at the 0.01 level of confidence. The mean decline in test scores is $M = 16.167$ with a 95% confidence interval ranging from $13.352\ to\ 18.981$. The $P\ (.000) < 0.01$ is highly significant and the eta squire statistic (.86) indicate a higher effect size. Thus, it may be said that there is a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups of boys on the post-test.

Figure: 4 The post-test outcomes of boys and girls in both the control and experimental groups

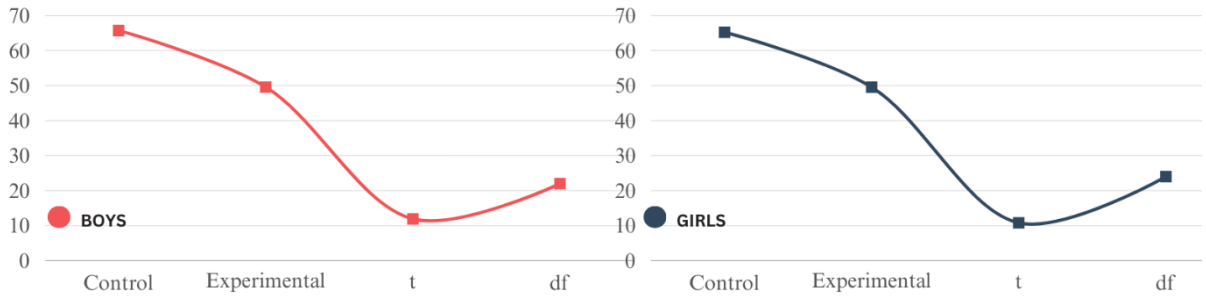

Table: 11 post-test scores of both groups' control & experimental among girls

Girls		Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Post-test	Control	65.23	13	4.512
	Experimental	49.54	13	2.665

According to Table 11, the mean value for the control group among girls is $M = 65.23$, while the mean value for the experimental group among girls is $M = 49.54$. The control groups'(girls) $(M = 65.23, SD = 4.512)$ score is higher than the experimental group (girls) $(M = 49.54, SD = 2.665)$. This shows that there is a statistically substantial difference between the experimental group and the control group of girls (*Figure 4*).

Table: 10 The difference between post-test scores of both groups control & experimental among girls

Girls		t-test for Equality of Means			t	df	eta squire	
		Mean Differences	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					
			Lower	Upper				p
Post-test	Control/ experimental	15.692	12.693	18.692	10.797	24	.82	.000

As indicated in Table 12, the $'t'\,(24) = 10.797 > 't' = 2.797$ is statistically significant at the 0.01 level of confidence. The mean decline in test scores is $M = 15.692$ with a 95% confidence interval ranging from

12.693 *to* 18.692. The P (.000) < 0.01 is highly significant and the eta squire statistic (.82) indicate a higher effect size. Thus, it may be said that there is a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups of girls on the post-test.

Table: 13 The post-test scores of experimental groups among boys & girls

Post-test		Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Experimental group	Boys	49.58	12	3.059
	Girls	49.54	13	2.665

According to Table 13, the boys' mean score was $M = 49.58$, while the girls' mean score on the post-test was $M = 49.54$. The boys' score ($M = 49.58, SD = 3.059$) is higher than the females' ($M = 49.54, SD = 2.665$). This demonstrates the statistically minimum difference between the experimental group's boys and girls. It means that there is just a slight difference in the test outcomes between boys and girls in the experimental group (*Figure 5*).

Figure: 5 The post-test outcomes of both the boys and girls in the experimental group

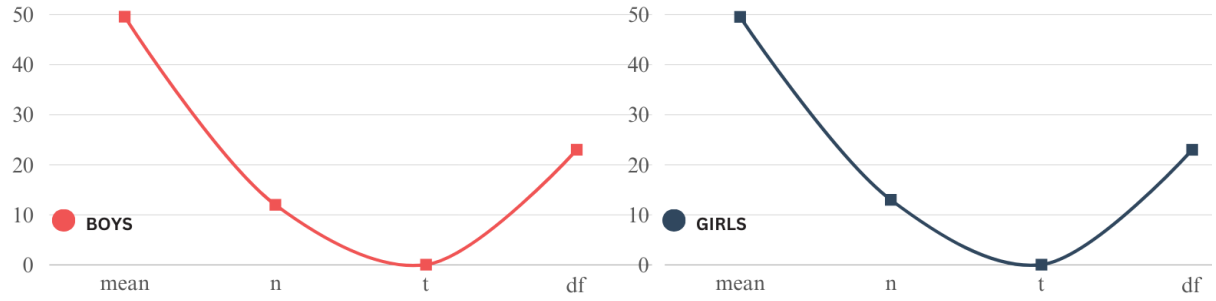

Table: 14 Independent Samples Test difference between post-test scores of experimental groups among boys & girls

Post-test	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	t-test for Equality of Means					
	P	t	df	p	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Experimental group	.461	.039	23	.969	.045	-2.324	2.413

Table 14 reveals that, the Levene's value $P(.461) > 0.05$ is not significant and the critical value of 't' ($t = 2.807$) > t (23) = .039 (absolute value). This suggests that the t (23) = .039 is not statistically significant at the 0.01 level of confidence. The mean difference test scores are $M = .045$ with a 95% confidence interval ranging from -2.234 *to* 2.413. The value of P (.969) > 0.05 is not significant and the eta squire statistic (.00) indicate no effect size (*cohen,* 1988). Thus, it can be said that the difference between boys' and girls' scores is not significant.

DISCUSSION

The objective of this study was to assess the impact of folk music on the level of academic stress among undergraduate students. Although a lot of research work has been done on this subject in the past, this study

on folk music and the stress caused by academic reasons among graduate students is in itself a new and innovative research work that is based on the current situation, and which will serve as a valuable resource for dealing with academic stress and sharing current information related to this subject among future researchers, the general public, and students. The results of the current study revealed that, the students in the control group scored almost the same in the pre-test and post-test, while the post-test scores of the students in the experimental group were found to be lower than the pre-test. This demonstrates that students in the experimental group reported a substantial reduction in academic stress due to listening to folk music. In contrast, the level of academic stress for students in the control group stayed relatively constant. Therefore, the null hypothesis, "There is no significant impact of folk music on the level of academic stress among undergraduate students", has been rejected and, it can be determined that listening to folk songs had a significant impact on academic stress among college students, which helps to reduce their level of academic stress and improve the probability to score better through academic achievements. The findings of the current study are supported by the findings of numerous studies (Ozgundondu,2019; Gallego,2020; Harmat,2008; Li,2022) that demonstrate listening to music has a significant effect on the level of academic stress among students. Numerous studies have revealed that music has a beneficial effect on students' levels of academic stress (Liu,2011; 2015; 2023; Ozgundondu,2019; Polychronopoulou,2005; Tangade,2011), mental pressure, and anxiety (Choi,2010; Walwarth,2008; Hakim,2023; Kavurmaci,2020). Similar to that, a significant difference between the post-test scores of the boys in the control and experiment groups was discovered in the current study. From this, it may be inferred that folk music significantly affected the boys in the experimental group's level of stress and pressure related to the study. Therefore, the null hypotheses, "There is no significant impact of folk music on the level of academic stress among undergraduate boys" is rejected and it may be stated that listening to folk songs had a significant impact on academic stress among undergraduate boys.

Not just among boys, but also among undergraduate girls, folk music has been found to have a significant impact on their academic stress. Therefore, the null hypotheses, "There is no significant impact of folk music on the level of academic stress among undergraduate girls" is rejected and it may be stated that listening to folk songs had a significant impact on academic stress among undergraduate girls. Which reduces their academic stress significantly. Kiss,2021, Li, 2022, Hakim, 2023, Kavurmaci, 2020, and many others demonstrated that music has a favorable effect on both boys' and girls' mental states. The results of the current study also showed no significant difference between males and females post-test, indicating that listening to folk music had similar effects on both categories. Thus, the null hypothesis, "There is no significant difference between the impact of folk music on academic stress among boys and girls," is accepted, and it can be said that listening to folk songs reduced both boys' and girls' levels of academic stress in the same way.

CONCLUSION

According to the results of the current study, it can be concluded that listening to folk songs reduces negative thoughts, enhances positive emotions, and boosts motivation among undergraduate students. Consequently, students feel a sense of happiness and peace in their hearts, which not only gives them a feeling of mental satisfaction but also protects them from many major mental disorders. Therefore, listening to delectable folk songs can lower the mental pressure of undergraduate students, which reduces the level of academic stress and helps them to achieve better academic results.

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