



## International Journal of Research Publications

### ACHIEVING DESPITE THE ODDS: SHAPING THE SCUFFLES OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL ACHIEVERS OF PHILIPPINE SCHOOL DOHA

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#### ABSTRACT

**Background:** Academic pressure is the mental weight carried by students, which is a direct result of factors such as excess schoolwork, peer influence, parental pressure, and societal expectations. The purpose of conducting this study was to pinpoint how parental academic pressure affects achievers' mindset and behavior with their studies and how it leads to their eventual success. **Methods:** This study utilized a phenomenological approach that centers on the relation of lived experiences amongst a particular group, which is contingent to the impacts of parental involvement to the academic pressure of achievers. **Findings:** The attitudes, namely role compliance, internal motivation, and situational indifference, were the impacts of parental academic pressure. These impacts formed the drive to succeed and allowed the achievers to reach academic success. Without parental academic pressure, the achievers would not have formed these outlooks. **Conclusion:** Parental academic pressure is a direct result of the students' upbringing, values, and familial intimacy. It materializes as a sense of responsibility and motivation towards the betterment of their educational endeavors. This bottles down to the fact that despite the achievers' struggles stemmed from parental academic pressure, their insolences towards this bearing conveys them their educational realization. **Recommendations:** The paper recommends having teachers and parents included as respondents. Furthermore, including achievers from different grade levels will give more varied responses.

**Keywords:** Parental Academic Pressure, SHS Achievers, Parental Pressure, Familial, Stability

#### INTRODUCTION

Academic pressure is mental pressure instilled onto the students' brains due to overload of excess schoolwork, peer influence, and high parental and societal expectations. Adolescents go through a stage of transition both on an individual and social level, which is why they are particularly vulnerable to problems associated with academic stress. Therefore, it is crucial to recognize the sources and impact of academic stress to attain adequate and efficient intervention strategies (Reddy et al., 2018). The researchers conducted this study to discover how parental academic pressure affects the lives of senior high school awardees in Philippine School Doha. This study focused on the reasons for and perspectives of the participants' experiences with parental academic pressure. It used the specific question "What are the impacts of parental involvement to the academic pressure of SHS achievers?"

One of the main reasons for this pressure is the traditional school system, which comes with the demand for students to uphold its standards. We currently live in a culture where aspects relevant to success, such as academic achievement and job performance, are placed on a pedestal of high importance (Red Oak Recovery, 2018). Because of the expectations coming from the system or society itself, it influences the way the parents think, and fuels parental academic pressure.

Further expounding on parental academic pressure and expectations, a study reported that 66.0% of the students interviewed found parental pressure for better academic performance to be the most accountable for academic stress (Deb et al., 2016). An even more striking excerpt taken from a research study conducted by Columbia University psychologists mentioned that teenagers from affluent and low-income families carry

emotional weight and experience unhealthy mental states at precisely the same rates (Luthar & Latendresse, 2005). Even though their struggles and hardships differ, it is still worth considering. Parents end up putting much weight on their children's shoulders, which affects the way their child thinks. Consistency in achieving goals has always been a determiner of one's success. At an early age, the notion of becoming a failure in life due to the inability to achieve one's goals becomes engrained in the child's mind until adolescence (Malik, 2019).

Another concept to consider is rewards and punishment, which is a concept that is evident ever since childhood to instill discipline. In an article, it states that in exchange for the children's academic success, parents give rewards in the form of love. However, once children face failures, parents withdraw affection as a form of punishment (Lahey, 2018), which would create a negative effect on a child's mental health that would evolve even beyond adolescence. Furthermore, this type of treatment only fuels mental health problems such as perfectionism, fear of failure, low self-esteem, depression, and anxiety. It may also result in adverse reactions such as resentment, anger, and rejection toward the parents. (Taylor, 2018). Even worse, this kind of attitude may grow into self-deprecation and discontentment with one's self.

This study aimed to ascertain the possibility of whether academic pressure affects the lives of not the general student population but specifically the individuals who are academic achievers in the Senior High School department. Those of whom are going through a transitional period of adolescence into adulthood, which is a vulnerable stage in a person's life. Out of many possible sources of academic pressure, this thesis focuses on understanding the phenomenon of Parental Academic Pressure and the impacts or attitudes manifesting from the upbringing environment of the achievers which is dependent on the different types and levels of parental involvement to the academic affairs of the SHS achievers. This research paper was able to bring about an in-depth view of the experiences these SHS achievers have gone through that enabled them to reach academic success. Since the researchers themselves are achievers who experience pressure from their parents, this study shows its significance and relevance to society.

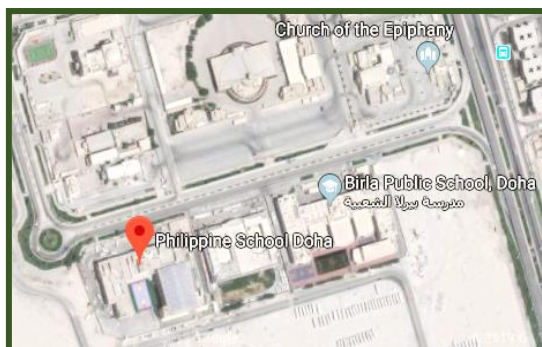
Academic struggles for students are prevalent in current times. Many students experience vast amounts of hardships that are not usually shed light on, and sometimes, the build-up of everything, along with the academic pressure, becomes too much for them to handle. If the people that were supposed to be the foundation of their support system don't manifest encouragement and understanding, it could worsen the child's mental and emotional state. So that the struggles of academic achievers do not get underestimated, it's crucial that the researchers must raise awareness on this particular issue. With this paper, teachers and parents are given the chance to create a healthier learning environment and relationship that humanizes students.

## METHOD

### Research Design

The research study used a phenomenological research design since the study centers on the reasons for the participants' experiences – particularly on the aspects that affect academic pressure.

Creswell (2013) described phenomenological research as an approach to qualitative research that focuses on the commonality of a lived experience within a particular group. The phenomenological study is conceptually useful to arrive at a description of the nature of a phenomenon. Its use is to eliminate biases and contingencies, construct the universal meaning of the experience, and have a more intellectual insight on a particular aspect. This research method serves as a vehicle for understanding context, diversity, nuances, and milieu – the structure of experience as they present themselves to consciousness, without relying upon any preconceived theory, assumption, the reason of deduction, formulated hypothesis or foundationally based laws.



**Figure 1 Location of Philippine School Doha at Doha, Qatar taken from Google Maps**

### Research Locus and Sample

The respondents in this study were 1st-semester student achievers of the Senior High School Department S.Y 2018-2019, from Philippine School Doha (PSD). Four individuals from the 11th grade and three graduating students from the 12th were selected using qualitative purposive strategy sampling.

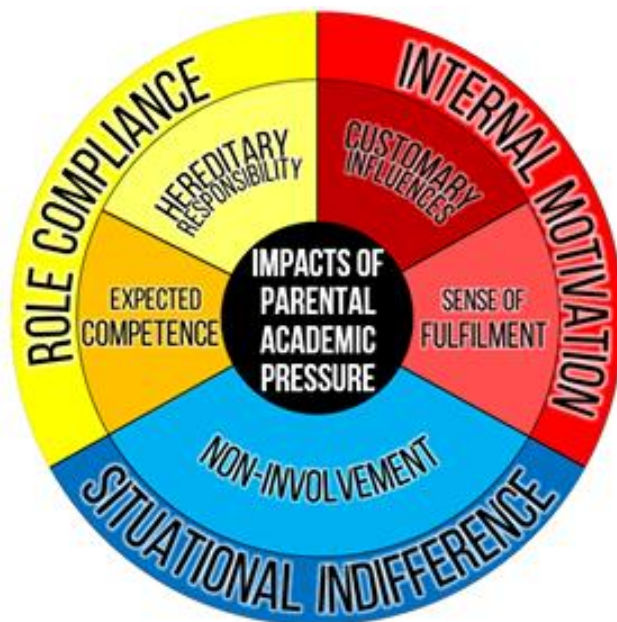
The selection of the study participants was chosen based on the following criteria: (A.) Senior high school students in grades 11 and 12, and (B.) 1st-semester honors listed in the Laureola awardees with over 92 highest general average. Adolescents were chosen in the respondents' selection process by the researchers on account of several reasons. To begin with, Senior High School is a new addition to the K-12 basic education program. It's a brand-new environment to be analyzed by researchers. Furthermore, the adolescence stage is a significant transitory period accompanied by psychological, physical, and social changes characterized by increased vulnerability to parental involvement or criticisms (Ma et al., 2018). This study's objective is to scrutinize the experiences of senior high school students requiring firstly, researchers to be meticulous in the study field and second, respondents to be conscious academically conscious in the occurrence of familial, academic pressure in their lives to address the research problem extensively.

### Data Collection and Ethical Consideration

A two-part instrument is used, designed to obtain its intended knowledge and consider moral implications for a thorough description of the study to result. The respondents' demographic data is gathered before the start of the interview using a - Robotfoto: which refers to personal data folios of research respondents, which include their confidential and professional information (de Guzman & Tan, 2007). The second part of this instrument is a semi-structured interview arranged by the researchers for the aim of a smooth and detailed conversation. The interview proper is conducted with confidentiality assurance, built-in clarification inquiries, and stated validations as analysis proceeds. The interview discourse is audio recorded to collect raw data and analyze its transcription precisely.

### Data Analysis

Colaizzi's process is utilized for phenomenological analysis to examine qualitative data in this study. It contends to sustain contact with experience as given and achieved by phenomenological description, through the following analytical steps (Schoenhofer, 2016): *Familiarization; Significant statement extraction, Meaning formulation, Theme clustering, Visual or linguistic result integration, Development of exhaustive data; Emergent theme validation through member checking*. The study used the process of reduction to solidify the thematization process by thoroughly analyzing the respondents' responses reflecting their lived experiences through their contact with parental academic pressure. Subsequently, clustering the results into themes and integrating them into visual data, the simulacrum.



**Figure 2. Attitudes towards Parental Academic Pressure**

motivation which deals with how the parental academic pressure pushes them to excel, and non – involvement under Situational Indifference which talks about the achievers' apathy towards the parental academic pressure.

### FINDINGS

Academic pressure talks about the overwhelming expectations laid out to a student in regards to their academic performance, which can be caused by peers, parents, or even the student himself/herself. There are many factors affecting students' attitudes towards parental academic pressure. These factors serve as catalysts that either support or impede studies. These could range from their study habits to their study techniques, which in turn, could be affected by elements such as cultural upbringing and self-efficacy. Parental academic pressure can be interpreted in different ways and given various contexts depending on culture, education, familial stability, financial stability, etc. *This would pinpoint how parental academic pressure affects achievers' mindset and behavior with their studies and how it leads to their eventual success.* The expected competence and hereditary responsibility - both dealing with how standards and familial obligations affect their role as a student – under Role Compliance, customary influences and sense of fulfilment under Internal

The findings dictate that the following are the most common elements that affect parental academic pressure. Based on the responses, parental academic pressure impacts the students' perspective and causes attitudes towards their studies and achievement. The parental academic pressure pushes them to achieve – whether positive or negative – resulting to their success. As mentioned in previous studies, it is not the parental academic pressure itself that creates the struggles of these achievers but their perception towards it (Prabu, 2015). The direct or indirect expectations given to them creates a positive and negative impact on them, creating a mindset that they must achieve if they do not want to be considered a failure or disappointment, considering the emphasis of their culture on filial piety and honor. The achievers yearn to achieve even more because of this mindset, and it leads to their academic success.

## ROLE COMPLIANCE

Parental pressure occurs when parents lay massive expectations on their children on the premise that they have assigned duties to uphold, for they have specific roles. Today, it is evident among students, especially for achievers, that they are having issues with dealing with these expectations.

*"Some are reasonable, and some are not for they are just comparisons with other students." (R2)*

This shows how social constructs can cause a struggle for people within a community. These expectations can either encourage a person to do better or dispirit them from doing individual endeavors.

*"Their expectations are somewhat reasonable, but then, sometimes, it is too high for me to achieve or reach those expectations, it started with my mother saying that "You should be the top 1.", or "You should have an average of 96 or 95 for you to go to college.". They are quite reasonable because it made me realize that I can achieve those expectations if I work hard and lower my pride." (R1)*

This factor can be classified into aspects such as hereditary responsibility and expected competence. On the one hand, hereditary responsibility defined how students adapted to the need to become self-sufficient or independent. Based on the responses we have gathered, many achievers cited that they had to learn how to depend less on other people as they grew older.

*"Yes, of course. As the eldest, I am tasked to be a role model for my brother. Additionally, all the expectations fall onto my shoulders." (R3)*

This demonstrates how students can get pressured and stressed from being passed down specific roles without their consent. Adolescents are just thrown into the world and are expected to follow duties given to them immediately.

The role was given to a student, along with the way the expectations of their parents laid out to them, influenced their drive for studying. Most respondents revealed that before, their parents helped them with studying, but now that they are older, parents had less time for them, and they developed a need to become independent and opted to study by themselves. This reveals how responsibility can further turn into anticipated competence that students ought to abide by.

*"Back then, when I was younger and in 3rd grade. But after my mother got a job in a call center in Abu Dhabi, she had less and less time for me. I became independent and opted to study by myself." (R3)*

On the other hand, expected competence described that the student is affected or driven by their family's ambitions or achievements. A variety of responses mentioned the idea of honoring the family by achieving academic success. A respondent said that students are "pressured in a way that they should exceed or accomplish the same things they have" (R2).

The students conformed to their family's definition of success or attainment.

*"I am pressured because my parents give me the responsibility to support my sister to college and provide for her when the time comes, and I will become the breadwinner of the family. It pressures me because it implies that I need to be successful and I have no room for failure" (R5)*

Moreover, the comments or criticisms given by the parents caused emotional distress. This is a pressure continually carried by students. Students constantly situate the barraging of emotions at the back of their minds. Most of the respondents also mentioned that they do not want to become disappointments to their families and parents, so much that they strive to do their best in school. The fear of disappointment increased the presence of pressure to succeed in academic affairs, as expected, within the students.



*"It bothers me because once I achieve something, the next achievement they expect is something higher. I've already been experiencing this since I was in the first grade, so it bothers me a bit, but I've gotten used to it. It only bothers me because of the pressure that I feel every time they talk to me or every time they tell me that I should achieve something or I should be an achiever" (R1)*

The pressure to strive for more significant achievements increased and incremented the stress felt by the students. This mostly led to self-deprecation and doubtful thoughts regarding whether or not it is possible to achieve higher demands and standards. However, although the students are pressured, they understand that there must be a reason for why their parents have high expectations for them:

*"They want me to do better, and they're very vocal about it because they want to make sure that I'm doing good in school and that I am not wasting the money they are paying, especially since there are a lot of expenses present in this school" (R1)*

These responses showed how the parents' expectations impact the students' performance and initiative towards their studies. Since the weight of their parents' words affected them much, they pushed themselves to work harder and do better. The importance of the family's definition of success and the responsibility of independence drove the students to succeed academically, not to fall short of anyone's expectations.

*"It's understandable that they'd want something out of me the fact that they don't give me any expectation is what pressures me the most. They're excellent parents that don't give me anything to worry about except for the fact that I have a responsibility to uphold them. It's very vague, so I have to live up to the pressure. I need to be good. I need to achieve well." (R6)*

Furthermore, although the expectations aren't explicitly stated, the parents' treatment caused a sense of responsibility within the student's mindset to achieve the implied standards expected from the students by their parents.

## INTERNAL MOTIVATION

This component described the motives considered by the student when studying. This is classified into customary influences and a sense of fulfillment.

*"We do not experience financial struggles because they can provide our needs and some of what we want. This motivates me to work harder to be able to provide for myself someday." (R2)*

This aspect of academic pressure talks about how students have their realizations. In a way, the pressure becomes an inspiration and acts as a stimulus for the students to persevere in their studies.

*"I don't need to worry about money like school fees or the food that I need to eat. This makes me focus on my studies more and will lead me to more success." (R5)*

Material or financial availability also affects an aspect of academic pressure since it influences students' mindsets toward educational endeavors, whether or not they are struggling financially. The lack of resources or emotional response is a potential catalyst for academic pressure.

*"I was held back from taking the exams because we were not able to pay the tuition fee on time. This motivated me to work hard so I will become successful in life, and therefore I will not reencounter these problems." (R4)*

Factors that either assisted or impeded students are taken into account. The influence on the student's upbringing, familial, and economic stability and incentives given by the family are considered in this category. One aspect of internal motivation is a sense of fulfillment that describes the self – satisfaction the students feel whenever they received achievements. It is dependent on their own goals alone. This stems from the gratification and validation students sought from parents, peers, or themselves. A sense of fulfillment also entailed whether the student's familial, academic, or economic needs are fulfilled. It took into account the provisions the family provides for said student and the incentives, whether internal or external, they receive.

*"I could say that our family lives comfortably because I think we have enough money to answer our needs. And, it affects my studies in a way that I could get resources right away because my mother prioritizes*

*everything school-related, so, if I ask her for materials, she will give it because she knows that it would make my academic performance better." (R1)*

This response detailed the effect of the proper provision of materials for academics. Based on the respondent's answer, it can be seen that academic requirements and resources contributed significantly to the attainment of high academic performance. Furthermore, this area displays how being achievers can become a source of happiness for the students. It gives them a sense of gratification and pleasure that they cannot get elsewhere. It is because of these feelings that students develop a desire to achieve. Albeit considering the possibility of failure to meet these set goals induces academic stress.

*"Because I want them to know that I'm doing this for them. I want them to give me the attention to the fact that I have worked hard because it would make me happy. Them giving me attention and recognizing what I did for them." (R6)*

*"I am discouraged when I am not recognized, especially because my parents are one of my inspirations and the first people I want to impress besides my teachers and peers." (R5)*

Some respondents said that they are motivated because when they achieve, they feel that they have done well and have made their parents proud. It is when their parents have given them rewards that they feel most fulfilled.

*"Who wouldn't want to receive things when you achieve stuff? Everyone wants to be appreciated, and for me, I am especially motivated by appreciation." (R5)*

With this development in light, the incentives' worth is tied directly to the student's achievements. This extends to their feelings of self-worth. As a result of this, the burden to accomplish more becomes linked to one's perception of self-respect. The weight of having to adhere to what is considered to be the norm or standard for them, imposed by themselves as a response to their parent's incentives, results in even more pressure.

*"All of the gifts my mother gives me are expensive, so I do not want to waste the money they give to me. I do not want to waste the worth of the gifts, so I study harder. I have to do something to repay those gifts." (R6)*

However, with this provision of resources, entails an indirect or implied pressure concerning the students. Due to the support they are receiving, regardless if it is material or emotional, students feel the need to make no room for mistakes lest the efforts of their parents are wasted. Another aspect of internal motivation is customary influences that deal with the students' upbringing and parental guidance. This could range from expectations that their parents have directly or indirectly set or the traditions that were set around their environment, which could easily affect their behavior. Most of the responses leaned towards study routines that the students have grown used to that stem from their parents' upbringing and their realizations.

*"Not really because ever since I was young, my dad has been telling me to strive for the top and always to study. Once we get home, I eat then study, that is the cycle, and if it gets disrupted, then it makes me uncomfortable. This is why I just do what I do best, which is read." (R4)*

These responses detailed the circumstances the students live. The various gratifications and expectations laid out to them affected their study habits and perspectives. These showed the consequences of a particular cultural upbringing and stability within the family. The family's situation and condition affect the student's perception of academic achievement. Moreover, this factor showed how upbringing could affect a person's study habits. How parents choose to raise their children and how they let their child get used to certain things can influence that child's attitude towards studying.

*"I do things on my own because I got used not to mind them. I just want to respect how they work, and I do not want to disturb them. So, their jobs do not affect my studies because it is up to me, not up to them when it comes to studying" (R1)*

The absence of parental involvement also led to the presence of pressure because of an implied sense of independence and responsibility.

*"Our parents are our first teachers, so they molded your personality, your whole self from the start. It is encouraging to see what they have accomplished. The money they have motivates me as well so, in the future, I can buy whatever I want as well. In that small thing, you are encouraged to do better in everything that you do to accomplish what you want in life" (R3)*

Respondents also mentioned that one instigator they have for striving to do well in academic endeavors is the fact that this could be a way for them to pay back their parents' hard work and sacrifice intended to give them a good future. The debt of gratitude from the comfortability of their parents ensured resulted in the sense of pressure.

*"As a daughter, I want to give them the best because I do not want to add to the burden, they carry so this motivates me to work harder in school so I could provide for them in the future and give them honor at the same time." (R5)*

Students also persevere in an attempt to emulate their parents and their diligence. They want to be like their parents in the future and be successful people.

*"It affects my studies because they are very interested in their jobs. I want to be like that, too in the future. I have to be able to be interested in what I am doing. I have to know I am interested in studying, so I will be able to apply that in the future." (R6)*

The methods used in parenting influenced the outlook of the students towards achievement and the stresses that come with it. Given that feedback from the parents also impacted the students' attitudes toward pressure. They have developed optimistic mindsets that help them become the best students.

*"As I have said, it relies on having a proper mindset. You need to be positive towards the negative feedbacks they give. I think they only say those things because they love and care about me. Parents are the greatest examples." (R3)*

Additionally, some achievers also said that it is because of the fear of punishment. They are scared that they might get reprimanded if they cannot cope with their parents' expectations. The prime example of success is considered to be the parents; they are the standard their children hold themselves up to. The thought of not meeting these standards put weight and pressure, which resulted in an intense fear of failure and disappointment.

## **SITUATIONAL INDIFFERENCE**

Non-involvement from the parents could also be a considerable influence on the students' behavior – positive or negative. It could reflect on the parents' association or lack of thereof in school activities, in the students' workload, etc. This kind of upbringing could lead to students' independence in carrying out their study techniques. On the other hand, non – involvement could also come from the students themselves.

The non-involvement or absence of the student's parents pressured them to develop a sense of duty and independence all by themselves. This behavior encouraged the student to branch out and develop various different interests from their parents, including their aspirations and expectations. The gap between their hopes and their parents' expectations resulted in the indifference of the student to the standards set by their parents.

*"Most of the time, they do not. Whenever I ask them for help, they will just say to search for the answer on the internet." (R7)*

These students point out that extrinsic factors such as allowance and extra tutoring are not something they heavily depended on; instead, they are additional means of help to their studies and could still perform well with or without them. This showed how non – involvement affected the independence of the students with their studies, especially in handling their different study techniques and strategies.

*"I am thankful for it, and I think it is a part of motivating you, but it is not a big deal for me because I go to school to study and to learn and not for the allowance." (R5)*

## **DISCUSSIONS**

In school, there is a variety of academic pressure seen that is consequent from academic anxiety, competition, normative expectations in the school environment, the need to strive for perfection, and most conventionally, parental pressure. Academic pressure is the weight caused by school and education (Hussain et al., 2015). Academic stress is not limited to higher levels of education only. It is also present in younger students; however, even if there is a similarity in their situations, there is still a range of how the students are

affected (Kaur and Brown, 2013).

Academic pressure is the academic frustration involving anxiety of academic failure or the possibility of said failure. Besides, the cascading workload, unexpected class recitations, convoluted examinations, and class competition, students also have to deal with teachers' and most especially, parents' expectations. All these weights could aggravate beyond the students' stress threshold due to the fear of failing to achieve their goals (Lal, 2014).

Parental academic pressure echoes the insight of a student's academic conflict and frustration. As stated, the said pressure happens when the student is given stringent demands under a short time. Parental academic pressure is significant in determining educational achievement since stress allows for a variety of expected positive and negative school performance in school (Lal, 2014).

Parental academic pressure in the students can be strenuous to both parents and students. Stress can be a struggle for students, especially for achievers, due to the fierce competition in the academic field of this fast-developing world. It is the quintessence of high academic expectancies that transcends the available necessities of the students. Parental academic pressure for parents and children causes unease for their career and future, especially with the thought of failing to gain their achievement and fulfill their needs (Sarita and Sonia, 2015).

The stress from the overwhelming anticipations coming from teachers, parents, and the students themselves is a burden for the achievers. Keeping up with these different parental expectations and, for some, the lack of parental involvement, are some of the main factors that cause stress. Additionally, extremely high personal standards are also the chief contributor to pressure (Sarita and Sonia, 2015). These pushing factors may cause students to strain themselves to attain high achievements.

Moreover, the family has become the nurturing ground for parental academic pressure due to the, at times, excessive expectations shouldered by the students, which usually leads to parents admonishing their children to focus on their studies to garner exceptional grades extensively. Deb et al. proposed that parental academic pressure has significant differences in the educational levels of the parents' occupation and academic performance. As an example, fathers with low educational attainment tend to inflict stricter study habits, which will result in excellent academic performance (Sarita and Sonia, 2015).

For others, parental academic pressure could lead to positive results such as an increase in motivation, efficiency, creativity, and intellectual development; however, it could also lead to adverse outcomes such as mental health risks (Hussain et al., 2015). However, although parental academic pressure brings stress to achievers, it usually leads to the success of these students in their academics, whether it is for simple tasks and quizzes or their general academic average itself. The pressure felt by the students allows them to push and strive harder to achieve expectations; thus, they can reach these goals and meet parental expectations at the end.

## **ROLE COMPLIANCE**

Role compliance deals with the responsibility placed on the students. Expectations push the students to achieve in their academics to stand as role models to their younger siblings or to uphold the success in their families. Additionally, it also emphasizes the expectations the parents have set for their children in regards to being successful in their academics. It is characterized further as expected competence and hereditary responsibility. Adolescents feel a sense of duty to support and provide assistance to family members, which means that although expectations already beset them, children still want to juggle household responsibilities with academics as they feel that they must do so (Milan and Wortel, 2015). This duty further develops into a pressure to do well in their studies. The responsibility strains the students into thinking that they must achieve much, academic-wise, for they will be the ones to support and sustain their families in the future. Additionally, there is a tendency in Asian ethnic groups to regard academic success as a form of repayment to parents. The debt of gratitude is passed down to children in all Asian families, resulting in the perceived responsibility to reciprocate the efforts of parents (Sarma, 2014). This phenomenon is evident in students who are the only child in their respective families. These students want to return the favor as they realize that most of the efforts of their parents are for them. Students want to dedicate their time to educational endeavors for the sake of their families because they believe that it is one of the few ways they can help their families (Retuya et al., 2017).

Parents expect their children to deal with the exigent demands of both family and academics. A study mentioned that Asian immigrant parents hope their children to fulfill their filial obligations and not engage in activities that will dishonor the family (Park, 2016). These conditions imply that parents desire for their children



to achieve a high level of academic performance while adequately performing a considerable amount of household responsibilities. Circumstances compel students to become the “perfect child”; one that does well in school helps with domestic errands, and obeys all regulations set by his or her parents.

Furthermore, parents who experience a higher level of stress are more likely to be authoritarian, harsh, and restrictive to their children (Mathur, 2014). This shows that violent interaction may develop fear in children, for they will relate the disappointments of their parents with punishments. Subsequently, there is involuntary compliance with parental expectations regarding academic achievement. In a way, this is coercion, as students aim to succeed in the scholarly field to avoid maltreatment. They are not inspired to do well but pressured as they become afraid of the consequences of not living up to expectations. Meanwhile, some parents wish to fulfill their unfulfilled dreams through their children, so the former develop high expectations for the latter (Deb et al., 2015). Parents often demand their children to pursue a career path that they highly regard, even when their children have inclinations towards a different field. These children are the students who feel pressured to acquire many achievements to springboard them towards a particular career path.

In association, many children struggle with issues regarding balancing academic demands and family obligations (Woodard, 2016). It explains how obligations to the family can be associated with the weak psychological and emotional states in children. Parental expectations mixed with familial responsibilities may generate high academic achievements, as it prevents children from being distracted, but they may become less independent (Rahman, 2014). There is a positive relationship between parental expectations and academic achievement of students (Boonk et al., 2018; Wilder, 2014). These expectations do not diminish as a child grows older, but direct parental involvement in studies does decrease (Wilder, 2014). Despite being a motivator, the family is also a significant stressor for students. Parents pressure their children to achieve academic success as their families put an excellent value on school success. Parents may treat their children as pawns or puppets and control them so that they may attain academic success (Nguyen, 2015; Jones, 2015). Parents may expect their children to do many things because they want their children to have good resumés so that they may compete in the working industry (Jones, 2015). This way of thinking can be considered being too future-oriented and can cause pressure to the children as it causes them to overthink.

Moreover, Asian backgrounds can influence students to feel that they should achieve academic success. The culture puts a high value on educational endeavors (Quach et al., 2015; Nguyen, 2015; Wu, 2014). Asian parents have expectations because the academic success of their children and subsequent career success can become a source of pride for their families; it is because of this that Asians have the highest expectations for their children among different racial groups (Rahman, 2014). Expectations from Asian parents stem from their excellent value for familial honor, so parents have specific career goals for their children so that success may show a good family upbringing (Park, 2016). Students are obliged to be achievers because they may feel that they would be disappointments to their families if they do not adhere to expectations, which causes academic pressure.

In relation, because of the belief in family accountability, Asian parents get the impression that they need to urge their children to do their very best (Chui and Wong, 2017). It is a custom in the Asian culture for parents and children to have a reciprocal relationship wherein parents push their children to study more and achieve more so that their successful children will feel more obliged to take care of them in the future (Park, 2016). In association, Expectancy-Value Theory refers to the expectations for students to follow a standard to fulfill familial obligations (Cherng & Liu, 2017). The theory explains how children of immigrants feel pressured to achieve academic success as a form of repayment.

Children can also experience pressure to continue a family legacy or business. These pressures often come from authoritarian parents who usually decide without considering their children's needs. (Lythcott-Haims, 2015). In association, overwhelmingly high expectations from parents can cause emotional stress and enormous pressure in children because they become aware that they will let their parents down if the expectations are not reached (Rahman, 2014). Relatedly, a study showed that when children are unable to achieve standards, they are accused of being lazy and sometimes even punished (Sarita and Sonia, 2015). Students aspire to achieve a high level of achievement because pressured into academic success.

Furthermore, pressuring students can harm their performance and quality of life, in general. The students feel that they should not let their parents down, so they follow their parents, but this can result in an unfortunate situation. Expectations cause stress when one is unable to meet the demands or identify with expectations (Sarma, 2014). Students may develop adverse psychological conditions due to excessive importance placed on achievements (Periasamy, 2018). Despite all this, it is not the stressors themselves that cause stress to

the person; instead, it is the perception and reaction to these stressors that cause anxiety (Prabu, 2015). In the same way, it is not the parental expectations that are pressuring the students, but their perception of them.

## INTERNAL MOTIVATION

Intrinsic motivation talks about the drive rooted in the parental academic pressure given to the students. It allows the students to push further with their studies so they will be able to achieve academically. Causes can either be upbringing – the way the students were raised – or their own goals that they want to attain. It is divided into customary influences and a sense of fulfillment. Familial values influence individuals in daily decision making and behavior. It affects them in different aspects, including academic endeavors.

Parents have a desire for their children to do well in school, which is why they are willing to sacrifice many things and get involved for the sake of the educational endeavors of their children. This involvement in school-based activities may influence the students and raise their academic achievement. (Logan, 2015; Stovall, 2015; Licata, 2014). In relation, students recognize parental sacrifices and feel an obligation to repay their parents and motivate them to achieve academic success (Nguyen, 2015). For example, Asian parents take great pride in the success of their children and are willing to make significant sacrifices to encourage the academic endeavors of their children. As a result, their children tend to internalize a sense of responsibility to their parents and feel driven to meet high parental expectations (Sarma, 2014).

Furthermore, it is not necessary for parents to vocally express expectations. Children may develop a high regard for achievements themselves based on their experiences and surroundings. Family background can make students feel motivated to pursue higher education to benefit their families and to build economically wise decisions. Students can use the status of their families as motivation to push through the barriers of schooling to make their families proud, and indicate that they would feel guilty had they not taken advantage of these opportunities (Goldthrite, 2016).

Consequently, financial instability can also play a role in student achievement, for students can feel obliged to do well in school to make the most out of their parents' efforts to send them to school (Camacho-Thompson et al., 2016). On another note, productivity is increased by using extrinsic rewards such as a bonus. However, the actual quality of work performed is influenced by intrinsic factors (Cherry, 2016). Also, a study showed that adolescents want to be perceived as adults who can make decisions of their own. They desire for their parents to support them in their choices and not to control them over what choices they should make. This study concluded that adolescents who had more parental support displayed identification of self-worth and self-esteem, which in turn produced better performance in all areas (Rucker, 2014).

Moreover, youth residing in disrupted families are more likely to report lower levels of academic success because of less parental monitoring within the family, and psychological problems that are developed due to trauma. Children in stepfamily homes have lower academic achievement compared to children in intact families. This links parental separation and maltreatment in families to student performance. Parental divorce has adverse effects on children in terms of psychological adjustment, academic achievement, behavioral disorders, and self-concept (Lakota, 2018; Arnold et al., 2017; Seijo et al., 2016). In association, the family background can predict academic self-efficacy in students, which means that students who come from a generally peaceful and intact family can do well academically as they feel capable of doing tasks (Kim, 2014). Causes include the sense of indebtedness that they develop from not having to worry about basic needs or having to deal with family problems.

Additionally, intrinsic motivation is the act of doing something without any apparent rewards. It is doing something because it is exciting and enjoyable, rather than because of pressure to do it (Locke et al., 2018; Santos-Longhurst, 2017; Jacobsen et al., 2014). Internal motivation entails desiring to do an activity to derive spontaneous satisfaction. People want to do things for their own sake, so they perform activities voluntarily, even in the absence of rewards (Jacobsen et al., 2014). Students can actively participate in educational endeavors because they feel that they are doing it for their own sake. Intrinsically motivated students often get higher examination scores in comparison to their unmotivated counterparts (Emmanuel et al., 2014). Academic pressure may be seen in students who are already achievers as they may develop the desire to do well in their academic endeavors continuously. They may strain themselves just so that they can persistently have a sense of fulfillment.

In relation, internal motivation is associated with enhanced learning, performance, and creativity (Di

Domenico et al.,2017). It plays a critical role in development and education as it nurtures curiosity, challenge, and mastery in different fields (Heilat and Seifert, 2019). This explains why students can achieve more when they are internally motivated; because they can challenge themselves to acquire more knowledge through different learning techniques. A study found that students who obtain self-determination are more likely to participate in learning activities and are more willing to put in the effort to seek experiences. It showed that internal motivation could lead to the development of life purpose. It can allow people to reflect upon themselves and evaluate what is truly important to them (Shin et al., 2018). Furthermore, self-efficacy can determine the effort they put into reaching his/her goal (Yavorsky, 2017). In the same manner, if a student wants to feel that he/she can do tasks, they will put much effort into completing them. People possess an internal need to feel capable, that they have what it takes to do specific tasks. An individual can only meet this need by taking on challenging activities (Dykstra, 2016), like educational endeavors for students.

## **SITUATIONAL INDIFFERENCE**

Situational indifference talks about the student's apathy to the parental academic pressure given to them. Although they feel pressed to work harder, they stay indifferent towards the stress that comes with it. Alternatively, it also talks about the lack of participation and involvement the parents have in the academic life of their children, which can lead to an academic indifference in students. Academic apathy is the absence of motivation and lack of interest or goals in scholarly works (Bosserman, 2018). It is one of the most significant concerns regarding the ability to be successful.

Student indifference and lack of motivation is a big problem as it affects their potential for school achievements (Graves,2018; Schou, 2015; Swan and De Lay,2014). A study says that as apathy affects academic success, it consequently affects their ability to compete in the demanding global marketplace, too. The study showed that 65% of the students rated themselves as "highly apathetic" when it comes to school-related works, and it shows us that academic apathy can be seen in many students (Schou, 2015). This can explain how students still manage to obtain low-level academic achievement despite more accessible access to learning resources such as modern technology. Apathy is caused by many interrelated factors, and it can lead to natural consequences (Swan and De Lay,2014). There must always be a good reason for students to become indifferent.

For instance, apathy may come from the discouragement students get when reviewing the standards and expectations set by society. Students choose to fail rather than to be seen as "below average." Becoming indifferent is an effort of the students to shield themselves from risk and failure, as well as avoid painful experiences (Ozuna,2015; Swan and De Lay,2014). Apathy is often the result of self-preservation from overwhelming emotions or a reduced sense of self-efficacy (Ozuna,2015). Moreover, indifference may be passed around and developed through imitation (Schamber, 2018; Abolfazli et Al.2016). Parental behavior towards educational endeavors may influence the attitude of their children towards learning (Schamber,2018). Children may imitate their parents' actions and may become indifferent to school activities. Students can also influence their fellow pupils to exert fewer efforts in their studies.

Students may also develop indifference when they are put in an inhospitable learning environment that discourages them from learning. Their relationship with the people around them as well as the physical environment can influence their attitudes towards school activities (Parker,2018; Swan and De Lay,2014; Sarkova et. al. ,2014). Another reason for developing apathy is that there can be a progressive burnout in students caused by emotional and physical exhaustion. What this means is that constant overwork can take a toll on the students which can cause them to become indifferent with their academic work (Duru et Al.,2014)

Additionally, students may be unresponsive to their studies as they are exerting their efforts in other pursuits or fields. This shows that students may have different ambitions than academic success, and they are not merely lazy. It may be possible that they are leaning towards a career path that does not put much regard to educational background. Students can also be apathetic to avoid competition because they fear to lose, despite high potential (Uchida, 2016) For a student to achieve academically, he/she must be individually motivated to do so and make the concept of learning his/her own. Students must see education as something that they need and want, not as something they should do for others, so that they may actively partake in academic activities (Chukwunyere,2015). Although, when they are indifferent about the pressures they receive, students can develop feelings of self-pressure and consciousness to learn things by themselves. They can feel that it is necessary to become independent, self-sustaining, and competent.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Parental academic pressure is firmly rooted in the individual's childhood and upbringing. Whatever is

enforced upon the individual during the time of sensitive growth by significant figures in his or her life such as the parents, siblings, etc. can result in parental academic pressure within the student in forms of responsibility, motivation, and non-involvement. In which they show different behaviors depending on the quality of parental involvement received during childhood and onwards to adulthood. Academic pressure is a phenomenon that affects many parts of life, not limiting to the familial context, which may interconnect at times resulting in the complex behaviors yet to be deconstructed, which were brought to light in this project. Research has shown to date that parental participation and academic achievement tend to be strongly linked. Findings have shown that the involvement of parents in the education of their children has been advantageous to parents, children, and schools. Pressure from parents also has a positive and significant effect on the performance of schools. (Khajehpour, 2019).

The pressure on academic excellence in families, as shown by intense parental pressure to succeed in, will put students under high stress. Out of concern for the welfare of their children and their awareness of the competition for admission to respectable institutions, parents put pressure on their children to succeed. Some parents place a burden on their children so that their children can achieve the dreams they were not able to fulfill as a student or achiever themselves (Deb, Strodl, & Sun, 2015). This parental pressure is not bounded strictly by expected competence alone. Parents also stress students' responsibility to achieve for their past goals or to stand as a role model to their younger siblings. The stigma of upholding family achievement is brought upon the students in the form of hereditary responsibility that either boosts them to do better or burdens them to do so. The motivation for academic achievement is of great importance, especially for students. Through such encouragement, people are encouraged to complete a task successfully, reaching an objective or a certification standard in their careers. Motivation thus describes the factors behind the behavior of people and why they are behaving in a particular way. The motivation for academic achievement is linked to actions contributing to learning and accomplishment. In regards to this, parental pressure affects the students because of the incentives or support given to them, which then drives them to excel in their studies.

Lastly, some students also choose not to mind the pressure given to them by their parents. The careers of their parents are not a source of inspiration for their academics because they have their aspirations. Additionally, some students also work without any supervision or assistance from their parents; thus, their independence boosts their self – motivation to complete their tasks. Alternatively, some students choose to be indifferent to the pressure despite the incentives given to them. They are either unaffected by the rewards are given to them – even though it is appreciated – or not given any awards at all since they do not express any longing for them. Academic institutions and families, in collaboration, can establish a home environment that supports the children as students. Schools can help parents by sharing information or advising approaches that can create a managed, less stressing learning environment at home with the help of parental involvement methods which are: parenting and communication (Mahuro & Hungi, 2016). Parents should foster a healthy two-way communication habit in their family. Children who talk to their parents are less likely to suffer from mental illnesses, stress, and communication issues as adults. Parents need to instill self-confidence in their children (Cheree, 2019). They should be able to offer constructive criticism without laying any invective comments that could worsen academic stress.

As a result, both sides will be able to come to an understanding of each perspective. Responses indicate the importance of building a secure relationship between parent and student through means of proper parenting and effective communication. As based on the findings, it is apparent that parental academic pressure materializes on one hand: emotional instability from miscommunication, low self-esteem, inferiority complex from belligerent criticism and comparison, and a lack of emotional and material fulfillment; while on the other: a sense of responsibility to their family, conscientiousness to their skill or activities, emotional and material satisfaction, considerate virtue towards familial situation, and motivation in academic endeavors. Nonetheless, whether the implications are positive or negative, they both contribute to the achievers' academic success.

This study has explored direct and indirect parental academic pressures. Expectations have become a factor in the success of students by inducing the intrinsic behaviors of responsibility, motivation, and independence within the SHS achievers and allowed them to reach greater heights and success in their academic endeavors. One aspect that is not taken much of a consideration in other studies is the achievers' indifference or apathy to parental academic pressure. Generally, student apathy would equate to low academic performance. However, in this study, the achievers' indifference to rewards or parents' aspirations has allowed them to form their own goals and independence, which lead to their academic success. This shows how the students' attitude towards parental academic pressure plays a part in their academic performance.

This research paper bottles down to the fact that despite the achievers' struggles stemmed from parental



academic pressure, their attitudes towards this impacts their studies in a way that brings them their academic success. To simplify, the attitudes of the achievers themselves are the impacts of parental academic pressure, which are role compliance, internal motivation, and situational indifference that results in the achievers' academic success. Without parental academic pressure, the achievers would not have formed these attitudes that impact their studies.

The key strengths of this study comprise firstly, a cause-and-effect understanding of the parental academic pressure phenomenon experienced by students and achievers alike. The study offers comprehensive information needed to understand and conciliate the academic struggles of students. It may assist teachers and parents in improving learning environments and student performance. Secondly, awareness regarding the effects of parental involvement to mitigate mental stress, strain in a familial relationship, and student self-confidence. Lastly, it comprises an in-depth analysis in the lens of honor students transitioning into adulthood, with regards to parental academic pressures as a contributing factor to academic success.

Several caveats need to be noted regarding the present study. It has certain limitations in the areas of the scope of academic pressure. This current study was not explicitly designed to gauge factors from the perspective of peer, societal, and cultural academic pressure, which could offer a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. Additionally, the inclusion of different individuals such as parents, teachers, and other authorities who can offer a variation in data was not considered. Furthermore, these results may not apply to all types of students as it focuses on the lived experiences of SHS student achievers rather than the general student population. The researchers recommend that further study be undertaken in the following areas: peer, societal, and cultural academic pressure, younger student population, interracial academic stress, and pressure in different types of educational standards.

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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH



**Marelle Anjely H. Bañez** is currently a Grade 12 HUMSS student in Philippine School Doha (PSD). Throughout Junior and Senior High School, she has been a consistent honor student, being a Bronze and Silver awardee in Junior High School and further being a Laureola awardee in Senior High School. She is the Deputy Editor of her school's publication, The Link and prior to this, she was also its Features Editor and News Editor. She is also a part of the following clubs or organizations: Dunong: Academic Guild and the Senior Safety Squad (SSS). After graduating, she plans to pursue a course in Journalism.



**Pauline Bea B. Estolas** is currently a Humanities and Social Sciences ( student in Philippine School Doha (PSD). She has graduated from both 6<sup>th</sup> grade, which concluded her elementary education, and 10<sup>th</sup> grade, which concluded her junior high school education. In

junior high school, she was awarded for academic distinction. Additionally, she was a semi-finalist in the 2015 Academic Olympiad Spelling Bee competition. In senior high school, she was awarded as a bronze Laureola awardee. She has also attended numerous research seminars conducted in PSD. As a graduating student, Pauline Bea aims to get into her preferred university as a major in BS Psychology in order to achieve her ambition of being a counselor/therapist.



**Ashley Clarisse D. Salac** is currently a grade 12 student from the strand Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) in Philippine School Doha. She is the current president of The Artizans, which was

formerly called as the JHS-SHS Art Club. She has consistently shown good grades and been an academic awardee. During her school year 2017-2018, she was awarded with a bronze medal, she

also received bronze medals for being a Laureola Awardee. Even though Ashley is from the HUMSS strand, she has chosen to go with a course related to arts. As a graduating student, she hopes to enter and be accepted in her chosen university as a student majoring in Information Technology and specializing in Digital Arts, in hopes to be able to successful while still pushing through with her dreams.



**Sherese G. Sanoria** is currently a grade 12 HUMSS student in Philippine School Doha. She is a member of two major organizations in her school namely, PSD Hiyaw Chorale and Dunong: Academic Guild. She has been a consistent academic awardee in her school.

During her elementary days, she won 2<sup>nd</sup> runner up in a story-writing competition for her school's anti – bullying campaign. In the school year 2015 - 2016, she won the award Best Speaker in Research Defense 2015 along with their group's award of Champion in Research Defense. She also received the Award of Excellence Performing Arts Chorale and was a silver awardee during her convocation of school year 2017 – 2018. Recently, she was a semi – finalist in the 3<sup>rd</sup> PICE Math Whiz Competition, held in Philippine School Doha, Qatar. As a graduating student, Sherese looks forward to be accepted in her chosen university as a major in Mass Communication to achieve her dreams of becoming a successful writer.



**Paula Gwyneth L. Sanusi** is currently in Senior High School as a HUMSS student in Philippine School Doha. She studied in Liceo De Cagayan University and moved to Qatar in the year 2012. She has been a Laureola Awardee for 2 consecutive terms, achieving

both Bronze and Silver Awardee. Her research study was handpicked in Philippine School Doha's Research Congress in S.Y 2017-2018 as the only study from the mainstream class to present their output and won 3<sup>rd</sup> runner up for the category of "Best Research Banner." After she receives her high school diploma on April 2020, she plans to continue her studies and pursue Multimedia Arts in De La Salle – College of Saint Benilde.



**Leez Arbil Jonn B. Suarez** was born on June 15, 2003 in Bulacan, Philippines. She moved to Doha, Qatar in 2010 and has been living there since. She is currently in her last semester of senior year in the Humanities and Social Sciences strand at

Philippine School Doha. She is now the president of her class, of her Computer Programming Specialization Batch, and of a major club in the school- PSD HIYAW Chorale. She is also a member of the Senior Safety Squad. She aims to be a multidisciplinary person who is knowledgeable in many lines of work. She is a consistent achiever and is always in her grade level's honor roll. She was 3<sup>rd</sup> Honorable Mention in her 6<sup>th</sup> grade graduation, a Silver awardee in her 10<sup>th</sup> Grade convocation and is a Silver Awardee in the Laureola Ceremony. As a HUMSS student, she plans to pursue a career in international relations and diplomatic endeavors. She intends to go back home to the Philippines in order to earn a degree in a course related to this field.



