



COMPREHENDING REASONS AND COPING MECHANISM OF STRESS AMONG ADOLESCENTS: A PSYCHOSOCIAL CONCERN

Ms Pawandeeep
Kaur

ABSTRACT

Adolescence has been long characterized as a time of heightened emotional reactivity and poor self-control. Stress is one of the common issues found among adolescents. Adolescents experience stress under numerous circumstances which leads to prolonged and intense damage to their coping abilities. This paper is an attempt to focus on several reasons for stress in the life of adolescents and the coping mechanism used by them to overcome the stress. Generally, pushing through on life stress refers to any pressure or demand placed on the individual to adapt or adjust to the stressors. Stress has become a serious issue of concern that affects not only their perception towards their friends and family but also their life-supporting faculties, namely mental and physical body operation.

KEYWORDS : Adolescents, reasons for stress, a coping mechanism

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence has long been recognized as a period of a heightened risk-taking stage that requires a special oversight from adults. The adolescent struggles to develop his individuality while still conformity to societal norms.

Psychological problems are very common and if they are not addressed or taken care then it can affect the mental health of individuals. Overall, every individual goes through some sort of psychological and social issues that resulted either from their internal or external determinant that could be sadness, stress, isolation, frustration, aggression, feeling of sadness, family pressure, non-cordial relationship with parents, peers pressure and many more. Stress is a preeminent worry among adolescents that affects at most to school and family life. During this phase, adolescents need someone with whom they can share their daily issues, somehow on whom they can rely and not being ignored. A literature review indicated that the prevalence rate of emotional and behavioural problems among adolescents in India ranges from 13.7 per cent to 50 per cent. They start to live with devalued or inefficient bodily faculties in life, the ramifications of which are disastrous for both the family and the nation in terms of abnormal workforce and think tank.

Increased instances of fatigue, tiredness, stomach ache are some of the prevalent issues reported commonly both in males and females during this period. They also experience a dramatic shift in their eating and sleep patterns. More specifically stress at the age of adolescents commences from physiological changes that bring the utmost matter for worry for adolescent females. The most common among is the hormonal disorder in adolescent girls, that disturbs their menstrual cycles. Many have postponed or delayed cycles by as many as three months on average, and the inability to handle stress comes out to be the biggest cause for it.

Consequently, adolescent's female suffer anxiety issues, hesitation and excruciating fear to even discuss such a problem in their house or even with peers in schools. Isolation and the fear to face anyone are the most common symptoms of such a social impact.

AIMS:

- 1 To comprehend the reasons of stress among adolescents.
- 2 To apperceive the coping mechanism used by the adolescents to overcome the stress.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Design: Cross-sectional study from the public and private schools of Chandigarh.

The locale of the study: The locale of the present study was from Chandigarh and the samples were taken from several public and private co-educational schools. The samples were taken from 8th, 9th and 10th grades from the school of Chandigarh. Total of 50 samples was taken from 1000 students from the 20 schools of each private and public sector of Chandigarh city.

Study Tool: For data collection, the semi-structured interview schedule was prepared to keep all the objectives and parameters of the study. Stress is the main psychological problem prevalent at larger among adolescents. Adolescent worries about their future perspective goals, their uneven relations and many times that cause frustration, anxiety, mood swings and at large stress among them. Moreover, physiological changes add another level of stress to their life. To understand the reasons and various strategies used by adolescents an interview schedule was prepared to keep all the issues in mind.

Statistical Analysis Used: The data entry was done in MS Office Excel 2007. The analysis was done in the form of frequency tables, charts cross tables. For significance, chi-square test and correlation were found between various factors.

Analysis Of Results And Discussion:

The objective of the study is to know the reasons for stress and to apperceive the strategies used by adolescents to overcome the feeling of stress. To find out, an interview schedule method was used and results were obtained are shown in the below tables.

Table 1: Reasons For Stress

S. No.	Response	Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
1.	Relationship with parents/ peers	106 (24.6)	149 (32.5)	255 (28.7)
2	Academics	239 (55.5)	199 (43.4)	438 (49.2)
3	Self	45 (10.4)	74 (16.1)	119 (13.4)
4	Any other	41 (9.5)	37 (8.1)	78 (8.8)
Total		431 (100.0)	459 (100.0)	890 (100.0)

Figures in parenthesis denote percentage. (Chi-square= 17.313, P value= .001)

The study in the data reflects that among the total respondents, a little less than half (49.2 per cent) of the total respondents were feeling stress due to academics. The gender-wise distribution in this regard highlights that the proportion of male respondents was significantly high at 55.5 per cent whereas 43.4 per cent of the female respondents who find academics to be a reason for stress. The data further elucidate that 28.7 per cent of the total respondents feel more stress with their relationships (parents/peers). Among the gender, more number of female respondents (32.5 per cent) as compared to male respondents (24.6 per cent) believed that the non-cordial relationships of adolescents with parents/peers add stress to their life. However, 13.4 per cent of the total respondents blame themselves to be a reason for stress as they were not able to fulfil their expectations and expectations from parents, teachers and peers. Apart from this, 8.8 per cent of the total respondents stated other reasons such as insufficient pocket money, feeling of unworthy, identity and autonomy etc.

TABLE 2: COPING MECHANISM WITH STRESS

After identifying a plethora of reasons for feeling stress it was hard essential to know how adolescents manage to cope up with stress.

COPING MECHANISM WITH STRESS

S. No.	Response	Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
1.	Talk to a friend	166 (38.5)	206 (44.9)	372 (41.8)
2	Do a sport	113 (26.2)	25 (5.4)	138 (15.5)
3	Talk to a parent	62 (14.4)	78 (17.0)	140 (15.7)
4	Relaxation	57 (13.2)	93 (20.3)	150 (16.9)
5	Meditation	12 (2.8)	50 (10.9)	62 (7.0)
6	Others (Recreational activities)	21 (4.9)	7 (1.5)	28 (3.1)
Total		431 (100.0)	459 (100.0)	890 (100.0)

Figures in parenthesis denote percentage. (Chi-square=100.394, P value=.000)

The field enquiry from the total respondents' reviews that adolescent to overcome their stress use numerous ways and means. 41.8 per cent of respondents usually talk to their friends. 16.9 per cent of the total respondents adopt for doing relaxation to relieve their stress. 15.5 per cent of the total respondents talk to their parents whereas 15.5 per cent to divert their attention and indulge themselves in any sports activities that help them as a stress buster. Only 7 per cent of the total respondents find meditation a way to cope up with stress level while a small proportion 3.1 per cent engage themselves in recreational activities such as like watching movies, playing video games, surfing the internet, chatting with friends, following their hobbies etc.

The gender-wise distribution reveals that coping strategies among the female respondents (N=459) suggests that 44.9 per cent talk to their friends while 20.3 per cent go for relaxation. Apart from this 17 per cent of the female adolescents talk to their parents, 10.9 per cent go for meditation while the proportion of female adolescents for any sports activities were 5.4 per cent and for any other recreational activities were 1.5 per cent. Whereas among the male respondents 38.5 per cent talk to their friends, 26.2 per cent manage their stress by adopting games or sports

activities and 14.4 per cent talk to their parents to relieve their stress.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

By looking into the field observation it is stated that there is a significant association between the reasons of stress and the gender of respondents. The major area of stress among adolescents is academics followed by a relationship with parents and peers and less with themselves and other activities. Stress is a detrimental concern and parents and teachers need to help the adolescents to mitigate the effect of stress. Further, the introduction of stress management programs at the school level will be helpful.

However, in coping strategies, the sample area (Chandigarh) shows that to cope up with stress, adolescents are more comfortable in sharing problems with their friends (41.8 per cent) rather than with parents (15.7 per cent). This depicts that there is still a loose tie between parents and adolescents that abstain the adolescents to share their reason of stress with them. Adolescents prefer to engage themselves in doing some sports activities to alleviate the level of stress as compare to meditation or any recreational activity. Hence, parents and peers play a vital role in reducing stress among adolescents as the results show a significant association between the reasons of stress and the gender of respondents.

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