



STRESS AMONG ADOLESCENTS : IMPLEMENTING INNER SELF INTEGRATION THERAPY

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to find out the impact of age, gender and therapeutic conditions on academic stress of adolescents. It was contended that variation in age, gender and therapeutic conditions would lay their impact on academic stress. Two hundred participants were tested under repeated measure condition and thus, the sample was framed under 400 observations. Findings were derived by analysis of variance and it was found that all independent variables laid their impact on academic stress independently and jointly. At last, implementation and indication of inner self integration therapy were discussed.

KEYWORDS : Stress, adolescents, Inner self integration therapy

Introduction

Stress is experienced by both young people and adults as part of their everyday life. Stress is not bad at all its energies and maintains goal directed behavior, however excessive stress can lead to a wide range of mental and physical health (Mapfumo, 2012:155). Stress can have a significant effect on an adolescent's long term physical and mental well being. Adolescent stress is a pivotal health issue because of its abilities to disrupt an adolescent's capacity to handle demands of daily life (Chandra & Batada, 2006). Stress is a state of physical or mental tension that causes emotional distress or even feelings of pain to an individual (Lai, Chao, Chanf and Chang 1996). It is a feeling of mental, physical and emotional strain or tension. The existence of stress depends on a stressor. Volpe (2000) defines a stressor as anything that challenges an individual's adaptability or stimulates an individual's body or mentality.

Adolescence is a transition period from childhood to adulthood. During this period individuals go through a time of rapid growth, make academic and professional decisions, identity develops, orientations towards the future begins, and expectations from families and school increase (Durualp, 2013:658). From the perspective of the psychosocial development of adolescents, it is seen that they are required to adjust to the emotional problems they encounter. Adolescence is a period that involves important transitions (for example, pubertal growth and hormonal changes, heightened sexuality), increasing responsibilities for example, changes from dependence to independence and changes in the roles the individual plays in society. The view by Hall (1904) that adolescence is a period of "storm and stress" is reconsidered in the light of this contemporary study, although some researchers believe adolescence is not a very tumultuous period. According to Chandra and Batada (2006), Hall was not the first to remark on the emotional distinctiveness of adolescence. He was the first to consider storm and stress issue explicitly and formally. Aristotle stated that youth "are heated by nature as drunken men by wine". Rousseau relied on a stormy metaphor in describing adolescence. "As the roaring of waves precedes the tempest, so the murmur of rising passions announces the tumultuous change. Keep your hand upon helm, he advised parents, or all is lost" (Rousseau 1962:172-173). The core of the storm and stress is a period of life that is more difficult in some ways than other periods of life and difficult for adolescence as well as for people around them. Hampet, Meier and Kummel (2008) assert that during adolescence (11-19 years), the levels of stress increase significantly. Stress is one of the serious issues that affect a student's life, its effects could be reflected in student social, academic and mental health (<http://www.rand.org>). During the teen years, a lot of changes take place and in order to stabilise these changes, the adolescent students are always confronted with problems and conflicts. All the changes require adaptations and all this brings with them a certain amount of stress. The idea that adolescence is difficult includes the following key elements which are sources of stress: the school, family factor, peer pressure and physical appearance (Eckottu & Chafia 2006, Kempf 2011). School teachers and parents use academic achievement as a sole criterion for evaluating a student's performance at school.

The educationist Dewey once said "Education is a pursuit of a perfect

life". According to *Erkutlu and Chafia (2006)* the pressure to perform well, high expectations of teachers, parents and self makes academic environment very stressful. Too much homework, competitions with their students, and lack of interest in particular subjects are sources of stress (<http://jmsnonolympictimes.org>). *Kempf (2011)* also notes that bullying is on the increase in schools. According to *Kempf (2011)* some of the leading causes of stress among adolescents include: the failing economy- parents losing their jobs, receiving pay cuts, or losing benefits, arguments between parents, illness or death of family member. The break between them and boy/girlfriend attribute to adolescent stress. In the same vein *Krienke-Seiff, Aunola and Numi (2009)* say adolescents are confronted with stress stemming from romantic partners or dissatisfaction with body image. Peer pressure can lead to poor decision making and hurt feelings (*Chandra & Batada, 2006*). Teen stress is often difficult to recognise and parents and educators need to know the impact of stress on the adolescent in order to provide the necessary support and help them deal with the multiple issues.

Major stressors in adolescence In response to stressors encountered by adolescents, both teachers and students listed, some of the following factors as causing stress:

- Puberty
- Poor academic performance
- Too much homework
- Family related problems like domestic violence, death and poverty
- Love affairs
- Peers.

In addition, students listed the following as stressors:

- Labelling by teachers
- Abusive teachers
- Sexual abuse
- Corporal punishment
- Personal appearance
- Bullying.

Keeping these views in consideration, this study was planned and it was aimed to:

- ascertain the impact of chronological age on stress. It was assumed that variation in chronological age would cause variation in the magnitude of stress
- find out the relative impact of gender on stress. It was assumed that variation in gender would cause variation in the magnitude of stress.
- find out the difference between the scores of stress as affected by pre-therapeutic and post therapeutic conditions, It was contended that magnitude of stress will be found reduced in post therapeutic conditions.

In order to check these objectives and hypotheses, this study was planned.

Method

Two hundred participants ranging between 18 – 26 years, participated in this study. They hailed from New Delhi and Almora and the were

arranged according to the requirement of 2 x 2 x 2 factorial design with repeated measure on the last factor. In this way two hundred observations were made under age and gender variables and 400 hundred observations were made under therapeutic conditions because every participant was tested twice. The participants were placed under the eight treatment conditions with two age groups (18–21 years) and (22–26 years), two gender (male and female) and two testing conditions (pre therapeutic condition and post therapeutic condition). The schematic presentation of instrumental design is given in table 1.

Table 1 Overview of the investigation

		A1		A		A2	
	B1		B2		B1		B2
C1							
C2							

Legends:

A=Chronological age **B=Gender**
 A1=18-21 years B1=Male
 A2=22-26 years B2=Female

C=Therapeutic conditions

C1=Pre therapeutic condition
 C2=Post therapeutic condition

Measure of Stress

The academic stress scale: 3-Academic stress inventory: This measure was constructed by Shukla and Karnatak (1996) and it consists of fifteen five point items. Every item is composed of expression of stress and stress management. Score range between 15-75. Low scores indicated higher stress and high scores vice versa. Stress management was assessed by the responses of the participants. Scoring was made positive and negative, according to the statements of the subjects.

Procedure

At first, the investigators contacted the students of DU and Kumaun University and after making proper effort, they requested them to go through the stress scale. During the rapport it was found that the participants were feeling blocked (sometimes) so they decided to administer all stages of Inner Self Integration Therapy. After sometime, it was reported that the participants were feeling relaxed and they themselves desired to appear again and check the status of their stress. The investigators co-operated them and the participants were subjected again to Stress scale. Indeed it was a time taking and sheer confidential process, so data collection was done individually and best attempts were made to avoid external distractions

Results

Obtained data were analyzed by three way anova and interpreted in terms of age, gender and therapeutic conditions of the affecters of stress. Findings are given in table 2.

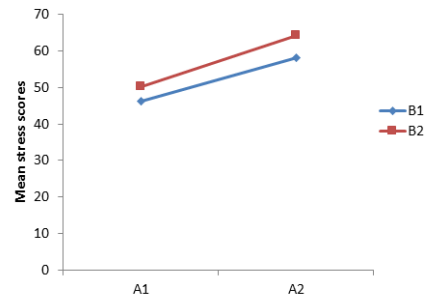
Table 2 Summary table of analysis of variance showing the impact of age, gender and therapeutic conditions on academic stress

Sources of Variations	SS	df	MS	F
A	6.85	1	6.85	5.91
B	5.52	1	5.52	4.76
C	7.64	1	7.64	6.59
AB	7.74	1	7.74	6.68
AC	6.70	1	6.70	5.78
BC	6.61	1	6.61	5.70
ABC	6.02	1	6.02	5.19
Error	454.72	392	1.16	
(Within)		399		

Table 2 indicates that the first main effect of age was significant ($F, 1, 199 = 5.19 P < .01$). It was noted that variation in chronological age caused variation in stress. The next main effect of gender was also significant ($F, 1, 199 = 6.12 P < .01$) stating the fact that boys and girls found discrepant on their scores of stress. The third main effect of therapeutic condition was also significant ($F, 1, 399 = 5.41 P < .01$) and it was resulted that the magnitude of stress under pre and post therapeutic condition was highly variant.

The age and gender interaction was significant ($F, 1, 199 = 4.48 P < .05$) and it is depicted in figure 1.

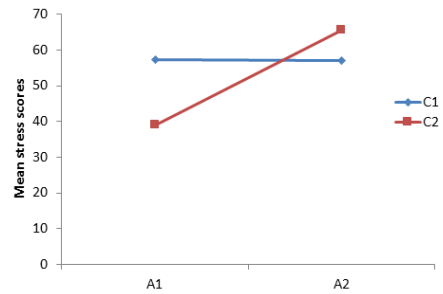
Figure 1
 Mean values showing the impact of age and gender on academic stress



Legends:
 A=Chronological age
 A1=18-21 years A2=22-26 years
 B=Gender
 B1=Male B2=Female

The age and therapeutic condition interaction was also significant ($F, 1, 399 = 4.06 P < .05$) and it can be seen in figure 2.

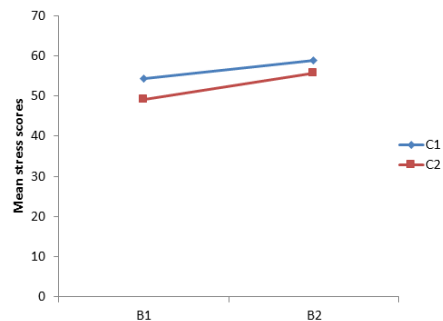
Figure 2
 Mean values showing the impact of age and therapeutic conditions on academic stress



Legends:
 A=Chronological age
 A1=18-21 years A2=22-26 years
 C=Therapeutic conditions
 C1=Pre therapeutic condition
 C2=Post therapeutic condition

The gender and therapeutic condition interaction was also significant ($F, 1, 399 = 4.86 P < .05$) and it is clearly apparent in figure 3.

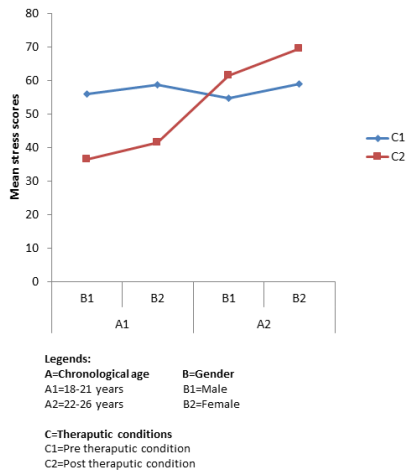
Figure 3
 Mean values showing the impact of gender and therapeutic conditions on academic stress



Legends:
 B=Gender
 B1=Male B2=Female
 C=Therapeutic conditions
 C1=Pre therapeutic condition
 C2=Post therapeutic condition

The three way interactions of age, gender and therapeutic condition was significant ($F, 1, 399 = 6.74 P < .01$) and it is mentioned in figure 4. The figure shows that all the variables have their impact on the magnitude of stress.

Figure 4
Mean values showing the impact of age, gender and therapeutic conditions on academic stress



Discussion

Data were analyzed by the three way Anova and interpreted in terms of age, gender and therapeutic conditions as effectors of academic stress. All main effects and interactions were significant and it was noted that academic stress was significantly affected by them. Almost every person today lives in a fast life and as a result is affected by stress on a daily basis. Different people tackle stress in different ways. It is very crucial to help people learn to fight stress. It is more of an art to handle stress using proven scientific techniques. Everyone is faced with several demands in life which requires great effort to manage the needed resources. At times when someone is perceiving tension while feeling stuck between demands and resources of daily life, the person feels stress. This is more obvious because in today's competitive world, people also have aspirations to be independent, manage resources on their own which lead to major anxiety. People find it challenging to achieve balance in personal and family life. This paper focuses on the causes of stress and managing stress using Inner Self Integration therapy.

A report by *The Royal College of Psychiatrists (2003)* observed that a student faces important challenges in late adolescence due to increased independence and responsibilities. When students leave home for the first time they have to experience separation from family and friends, adjusting to new environment, so they find it difficult. They have to face new responsibilities and also the Thoughts of unknown future is always there. According to *D'Zurilla and Sheedy (1991)*, college students especially Freshers, are prone to more stress due to their transition from home to college life. *Rose et al. (1999)* stated that most of the students are stressed because of some compulsory adjustments viz., Being away from home for the first time, to maintain high academic achievement, and adjust to a new social environment. As stated by (*Bunn et al., 2007.*) a student also encounters a pressure to earn good grades

There has been greater sensitivity to stress as an ill of the advancement on the society at large. And as a result, behavioral and health sciences have been working on stress for a while now. The term 'Stress' comes from physics where it was observed as a result of interplay of load and resistance and external focus. Stress is referred to external pressure or force applied to a structure, while strain denoted the resulting internal distortion of the object (for the term's history, cf. *Hinkle 1974, Mason 1975a, 1975c.*) (*Selye 1976*) depicted that the term stress designates bodily processes created by circumstances that place physical or psychological demands on an individual. (*McGrath 1982*) stated that the external forces that impinge on the body are called stressors.

As stated by *Lazarus (1991)*, stress is regarded as a relational concept, i.e., stress is not defined as a specific kind of external stimulation nor a specific pattern of physiological, behavioral, or subjective reactions. Instead, stress is viewed as a relationship ('transaction') between individuals and their environment. 'Psychological stress refers to a relationship with the environment that the person appraises as significant for his or her well being and in which the demands tax or exceed available coping resources' (*Lazarus and Folkman 1986, p.*

63). This definition points to two processes as central mediators within the person-environment transaction: cognitive appraisal and coping. The concept of appraisal, introduced into emotion research by *Arnold (1960)* and elaborated with respect to stress processes by *Lazarus (1966, Lazarus and Launier 1978)*, is a key factor for understanding stress-relevant transactions. Stress is dependent on actual expectancies that people express when they encounter a significant and a specific situation.

Specific patterns of primary and secondary appraisal lead to different kinds of stress. Three types are distinguished: harm, threat, and challenge (*Lazarus and Folkman 1984*). Here 'Harm' refers to the (psychological) damage or loss that has already happened. Threat is the anticipation of harm that may be imminent. Challenge results from demands that a person feels confident about mastering. These different kinds of psychological stress are embedded in specific types of emotional reactions, thus illustrating the close conjunction of the fields of stress and emotions.

Coping is very closely related to cognitive appraisal and thereby also to the stress relevant person-environment transactions. *Folkman and Lazarus (1980, p. 223)*, define coping as 'the cognitive and behavioral efforts made to master, tolerate, or reduce external and internal demands and conflicts among them.'

Resource theories of stress are not primarily concerned with factors that create stress, but with resources that preserve well being in the face of stressful encounters. The aim of this paper is to contribute to implementation of therapeutic approach instead of just working on stress removal. Several social and personal constructs have been proposed, such as social support (*Schwarzer and Leppin 1991*), sense of coherence (*Antonovsky 1979*), hardiness (*Kobasa 1979*), self-efficacy (*Bandura 1977*), or optimism (*Scheier and Carver 1992*). Whereas self-efficacy and optimism are single protective factors, hardiness and sense of coherence represent tripartite approaches. Hardiness is an amalgam of three components: internal control, commitment, and a sense of challenge as opposed to threat. Similarly, sense of coherence consists of believing that the world is meaningful, predictable, and basically benevolent.

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