
GENDER DIFFERENCE AMONG ADOLESCENT IN THEIR PERSONAL STRESS

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Abstract: A psychological and physical response of the body that occurs whenever a person must adapt to changing conditions, whether those conditions are real or perceived, positive or negative. Although everyone has stress in their lives, people respond to stress in different ways. Some people seem to be severely affected while others seem calm, cool, and collected all the time. So the present study intends to measure the Personal stress of an adolescent in terms of Gender difference. The scale used for the research was the Personal Stress Inventory, developed by ArunK.Singh, AshishK.Singh and Arpana Singh & the sample used was 50 boys & 50 girls studying PU from various Colleges of Bangalore. Null Hypothesis was formulated for the present study & the obtained data was statistically analyzed using “t” test. The “t” score of 4.73 indicated that there is significant relation that existed, indicating that there is gender difference in stress level among adolescents & Majority of students falls under the category of moderate stress. Adolescent Girls are facing more stress compared to adolescent Boys. Through content analysis it is clear that Girls are more worried about future, vocation and financial stability.

With this study we can conclude that adolescents need some Life skill training in improving their personal life style so that stress level can be minimized.

Key words: Life skills, Personal stress, Adolescents.

Introduction: The term stress has many definitions (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). “Stress is an internal state which can be caused by physical demands on the body (disease condition, exercise, extremes of temperature and the like) or by environmental and social situations which are evaluated as potentially harmful, uncontrollable, or exceeding our resources for coping.” ‘ it is also defined as the wear and tear on the body when there is reactivity and a Combination of a stressor, stress reactivity, and strain is called Stress.’ The stimulus that provokes a stress response that is the physical, environmental, and social stimuli are termed as Stressors. Individuals differ dramatically in their response to a problem or a stressor. Some people are born with a temperament that predisposes them to higher or lower levels of tolerance to stress.

General adaptation syndrome: in the year 1936, scientist Hans Selye created the stress model “*General Adaptation Syndrome*”, in which the alleged effects of the chronic exposure to stress has on body, is explained in three phases. The course of biological decomposition under excessive stress is explained under this General Adaptation Syndrome.

“Every stress leaves an indelible scar, and the organism pays for its survival after a stressful situation by becoming a little older.”-Hans Selye (1907-1982)

He has also divided stress into two types:

1. Positive stress technically known as Eustress
2. Negative stress technically known as Distress.

Selye found that body’s reaction to sustained stress occurs in 3 major phases:

1. Alarm Reaction: When an individual encounters stress body’s defensive forces are

activated by the autonomic nervous system. During this phase the main stress hormones cortisol, adrenaline, and noradrenalin, is released to provide instant energy. At this stage everything is working as it should –there is a stressful event, body alarms with a sudden jolt of hormonal changes, and now immediately the body is equipped with enough energy to handle it.

2. Stage Of Resistance: This is the second phase. The biological adaptation is at the maximum level in terms of bodily resources used to resist the stressor. Homeostasis begins to restore the balance in body and a period of recovery for renewal and repair also takes place. The levels of stress hormones may return to the normal.

3. Exhaustion: Bodily resources are depleted and the organism loses its ability to resist. Often referred to as overload, burnout, adrenal fatigue, mal-adaptation or dysfunction. The further exposure to stress can lead to illness and death. This stage of the general adaptation syndrome is the most hazardous to one’s health. When the decomposition does not run its entire course, maintenance mechanisms try to repair the damage and recognize the normal functioning.

Almost every change in the environment, even a pleasant change like a vacation demands some coping; and a little stress is useful in helping us adapt. But beyond a point, “Stress” becomes “Distress.” What becomes a distress varies greatly from one person to the other. There are some events which seem to be a stressor for all people like injuries or infections to the body, annoying or dangerous events in our environments, transitions in life or actual threats to one’s Self-esteem etc.

An individual's cognitive reaction to a situation plays an important role in determining how stressful a situation is. This reaction is characterized by the appraisal of the nature, importance and implications of the event, and by the ability to effectively manage or cope with the event.

The emotional responses to a situation are determined by the appraisal of both the situation and the coping abilities, as well as the temperament. For example, if a person tells to him, "I can handle this," he will have a completely different emotional response than if he says, "This is terrible. I'm going crazy

Each and every one is affected by stress and reacts to it in numerous ways. Stress is a way in which our body responds to the demands made upon us by the environment, our relationships, and our perceptions and interpretations of those demands. There is Eustress and Distress, where Eustress makes us feel energized and motivated to do our best work and contributes to our resilience. Whereas the Distress occurs when the coping mechanisms are overwhelmed by the stress and we do not function at our best. It's the same with adolescents where one adult see a stressor as a carnival ride as thrilling and another may see it as a major stressor. Stress will become distress when an individual is unable to cope or when they believe that they do not possess the ability to meet that particular challenge.

Some of the major things that cause stress in teenagers include:-

- Study worries- Stress can come from an unclear or unreasonable expectations, or fear of failure, unstructured classrooms.
- Home- Stress can occur through a lack of family routines, over-scheduling, prolonged or serious illness among the members of family, divorced parents, death of a member of family or a parent, looking after other family members, poor nutrition, change in the family situation, financial problems, family conflicts, family strife or abuse etc.
- Peer group- Stress can be a result of changing school buildings, peer pressures, having to deal with a bully, fitting in with the crowd, or moving to a new community or new friend, friends from different social standards, discrimination, boy friend/ girlfriends, relationships.
- Body image- Worries about not having a flawless body shape, Sex appeal, being worried about over weight or under weight.

Some of the other causes would be alcohol and other drug use, tension between cultural worlds, high personal expectations or high expectations from parents, teachers and friends, school demands and frustrations, negative thoughts and feelings about themselves, changes in their bodies, unsafe living

environment/neighbourhood, chronic illness or severe problems death of a loved one, taking on too many activities etc.

Ways to reduce stress: There are many Tranquilizers or antidepressants which are used to control blood pressure or other physical symptoms of stress. In the present days, a lot of Stress management programs are being taking place which may be either individual or group treatments. Another way to tackle stress is the behavioral approaches whose strategies include relaxation techniques, breathing & physical exercises, walking etc. Therapeutic massage relieves stress by relaxing the large groups of muscles in the back, neck, arms and leg regions of the body. Meditation and other associated religious practices also help in reducing stress. There are other alternative therapies which are recommended by the main stream medicine for reduction in the stress level include Aromatherapy, Dance therapy, Biofeedback, Nutrition -based treatments, Acupuncture, homeopathy and other herbal medicine.

Review of literature: The study by M.PilarMatud which aimed to examine the gender differences in stress and coping in a sample of 2816 people (1566 women and 1250 men) between 18 and 65 years old, with different sociodemographic characteristics. The results of MANCOVA, after adjusting for sociodemographic variables, indicated that the women scored significantly higher than the men in chronic stress and minor daily stressors. Further results show that the women scored significantly higher than the men on the emotional and avoidance coping styles and lower on rational and detachment coping and the men were found to have more emotional inhibition than the women. And the women scored significantly higher than the men on somatic symptoms and psychological distress.

Sex Differences in Adolescent Depression: Stress Exposure and Reactivity Models is a study by Hankin et al whose results indicated that Girls reported more depressive symptoms and stressors in certain contexts (e.g., interpersonal) than boys. Sex differences in depression were partially explained by girls reporting more stressors, especially peer events.

A Meta-analysis of studies yielding sex-specific risk of potentially traumatic events (PTEs) and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) by Tolin et al indicated that female participants were more likely than male participants to meet criteria for PTSD, although they were less likely to experience PTEs. Female participants were more likely than male participants to experience sexual assault and child sexual abuse, but less likely to experience accidents, nonsexual assaults, witnessing death or injury, disaster or fire, and combat or war. Among victims of specific PTEs (excluding sexual assault or abuse),

female participants exhibited greater PTSD. Thus, sex differences in risk of exposure to particular types of PTE can only partially account for the differential PTSD risk in male and female participants.

Gender Differences in the Cognitive Vulnerability-Stress Model of Depression in the Transition to Adolescence is a study by Amy H. Mezulis, Kristyn S. Funasaki, Anna M. Charbonneau and Janet Shibley Hyde aimed to examine whether the cognitive vulnerability-stress model of depression may contribute to understanding of the gender difference in depression in the other 366 adolescence who were asked to who complete the measures of depressive symptoms, stress, and negative cognitive style at ages 11, 13, and 15. Results indicated that gender differences in depressive symptoms emerged prior to gender differences in cognitive vulnerability and stressful life events; depressive symptoms significantly mediated the emergent gender difference in cognitive style and dependent interpersonal stress. Gender also moderated several components of the cognitive vulnerability-stress model. Girls showed stronger associations between stress and depression over time, and the cognitive vulnerability stress interaction was significant in predicting girls' but not boys' depression trajectories.

Gender Differences in Coping with Stress: When Stressor and Appraisals Do Not Differ is a study done by J. T. Ptacek-University of Washington, Ronald E. Smith-University of Washington, Kenneth L. Dodge-Iowa State University in an attempt to control for the effects of event type on sex differences in coping, men and women responded to an identical achievement-related stressor under controlled laboratory

conditions. Although men and women were similar in their cognitive appraisal of the situation, they nonetheless reported differences in preparatory coping. Women reported seeking social support and using emotion-focused coping to a greater extent than men, whereas men reported using relatively more problem-focused coping than women. The masculinity and femininity of respondents failed to moderate the relation between sex and coping. These results are inconsistent with a purely situational explanation of sex differences in coping but are consistent with the notion that men and women are socialized to cope with stress in different ways.

Aim: To find Gender difference among adolescents in their Personal stress using 'Personal Stress Inventory' developed by ArunK.Singh, AshishK.Singh and Arpana Singh.

Hypothesis: There is no significant gender difference in the Personal stress among adolescents.

Sample: 50 boys & 50 girls between the age group of 15years to 17years, studying PU from various Colleges of Bangalore.

Inclusion criteria:

- Literate and urban population is included for the study.
- Adolescent boys and girls from the age group 15years to 17years are included.

Exclusion criteria:

- Illiterates and rural population are excluded for the study

Materials:

The tools used for the study was as follows:

Name of the inventories and authors	Description of the tool
Personal Stress Inventory developed by ArunK.Singh, AshishK.Singh and Arpana Singh.	In this inventory thirty-five various sources related to personal life events that are likely to produce stress in a person are located. It is available in English and in Hindi.

Procedure: The subject is seated comfortably and the Personal Stress Inventory was administered asgroup test on the sample selected. At the outset it was explained to the subject that these inventories were normally used scale on general population in order to measure the Personal stress of an individual. In this inventory there are sources of events which often occur in personal life. The subject was asked to mark statements which they agree and leave the statement unmarked if they don't. They were also assured with confidentiality. The nature of the inventory was explained to the subjects. They would ask for clarification in case of any doubts, on an average 15 to 20 minutes was taken to complete the inventory.

Analysis of results:

Table 1: showing the t-score of adolescent girls and boys

Hypothesis testing

<i>Gender Difference</i>		
<i>Variables</i>	<i>Statistical Value</i>	<i>Results</i>
<i>Personal stress</i>	4.73	<i>Significant at 0.01 level</i>

H₁ There is no significant gender difference in the Personal stress among adolescents

Null hypothesis was adopted for the present study, the data was analysed using t test and the t score of 4.73 at 0.01 level of significance, indicated that there is a significant difference between the two scores indicating boys and girls differ in their perception of personal stress and thereby the null hypothesis has been rejected.

Results: Table 1 shows the statistical 't' value in the personal stress among the adolescent boys and girls. The obtained 't' value is 4.73 in personal stress which is interpreted as significant that is, there is a significant difference that existed, indicating that there is gender difference in stress level among adolescents & through descriptive statistics it is clear that majority of students falls under the category of moderate stress.

Discussion: The present study aimed to find the gender difference among adolescent in their personal stress, the obtained results was statically analyzed and the findings show that there is a difference in the stress level among adolescent boys and girls. The

statistical t- value shows that there is a presence of gender difference in the levels of stress among adolescents and adolescent girls face more stress than the adolescent boys and the present findings are in accordance with the previous studies. Through content analysis it is clear that Girls are more worried about future, vocation and financial stability. Though, both the gender's stress level falls under the category of moderate stress.

Conclusion: The analyzed and interpreted findings of the study have led to the following conclusions.

- Adolescent girls face more stress than the adolescent boys.
- The findings of the study indicate that there is a need for adolescents to improve their coping mechanisms through techniques like life skill education, soft skills training, stress management, coping mechanisms in order to reduce the stress levels.
- Adolescent girls are in more need of the above mentioned techniques since they have different roles to play in their life.

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