



Comparative Study of Stress and Adjustment among Senior Secondary School Students

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the current study is to evaluate the differences in school kids' levels of stress and adjustment. 100 students—50 males and 50 girls—between the ages of 17 and 19 who attended schools in various parts of the Sirsa District were chosen at random. The school students were given the Puri, Kaur, and Mehta (2011) Stress Scale and the H.S. Asthana (2011) Adjustment Scale. The findings showed that these girls experience more stress than boys. Boy's shows adjustment more than girls.

Key words: Stress, Adjustment School Students.

Introduction

Stress

Stress is frequently viewed as a psychological process that includes each person's particular perception of and response to each stressful event. The word "stress," which was coined by Hans Selye in 1936, was subsequently defined by him as "the non-specific response of the body to any demand for change." Every individual encounters stress in their lives, including pressure, lowered confidence and self-esteem, among other things. Stress has ingrained itself into everyday life.

Stress is a term that is frequently used to describe negative thoughts that might affect one's mental and physical health. However, when stress levels reach too much, issues start to occur. The person's emotional, cognitive, and physical processes are then disrupted. One typical sign of stress is feeling overwhelmed with and/or unable to handle the people or circumstances in one's life. Researchers have identified many coping mechanisms that people might use when they are stressed. Older teenagers frequently use a larger range of coping strategies than younger ones, especially cognitive-oriented ones, to decrease the impact of the stressor (Williams & McGillicuddy-De, 1999).

Everyone's life in this world usually involves some level of stress that cannot be avoided. It presents a detrimental idea that could affect one's mental and physical health. Stress is consistently thought of as a psychological process including a person's unique perception and reaction to each stressful occurrence. Everyone experiences stress at some point in their life, and unless students learn effective coping mechanisms, it may negatively impact their physical and emotional well-being, academic progress, and other aspects of their lives as well.

Stress has a detrimental effect on both one's physical and mental health. One may go through hundreds of such stress-related events in a lifetime. This suggests that stress may be a typical, adaptive response to danger. Its purpose is to alert people to danger and have them ready to defend them. For instance, people are motivated to cope with or avoid things they fear because they pose genuine hazards.

Anger and stress are related in that a person is more likely to feel angry and express it or try to control it if they are under more stress. In addition, a person's worldview, which may include his or her spiritual beliefs, may have an impact on stress (also known as anxiety; Beck et al., 1985) as well as the feeling and expression of fury (also known as anger and hostility; Beck, 1999). In late adolescence, the gender difference tends to expand, according to Compas et al. (2004). This means that women are more prone than men to suffer the negative effects of stress on their psychological health (Charbonneau et al., 2009). Additionally, studies show that stressful life events forecast an increase in psychiatric issues over time (Carter et al., 2006).

Adjustment

According to Monroe (1990), the words "adjustment" and "accommodation" are frequently used interchangeably. Adjustment, which is derived from the Latin term *ad-justare*, is the process through which one strikes a balance between wants and environmental constraints. The process by which a living creature maintains a balance between its requirements and the external factors that affect how those needs are met is known as adjustment (Shaffer, 1961).

A person regularly modifies his behavior to establish a more harmonious interaction with his surroundings. The relationship that forms between a person's environment, personality, and biological background or organism is known as adjustment. It sort of shifts into a more defensive stance to deal with the obstacles or conditions after failing in prior attempt(s). Adjustment is the term used to describe this special quality of a living organism.

The behavioral process of balancing conflicting demands or requirements with environmental limits is known as adjustment. Animals and humans both do this regularly. For instance, they eat to sate their hunger when their physiological state compels them to do so, adapting to the hunger signal. An adjustment disorder arises when a person finds it difficult to react appropriately to a need or stress in their surroundings. Adjustment is a sign of harmony between a person and his environment. One must adapt to the circumstances at hand.

Through the process of adjustment, a living thing maintains balance between its requirements and the outside influences that impact how successfully those needs are supplied. Adjustment, which is a harmonic relationship with the environment, is required to be able to fulfill the majority of one's needs and expectations (Anonymous, 1968). Adjustment, according to Anonymous (1972), is the state in which a person's needs and the demands of their environment are fully fulfilled.

Stress and Adjustment:

Stress is the body's response to a change that necessitates an adjustment or response on a physical, mental, or emotional level. However, excessive stress may be uncomfortable and interfere with one's ability to concentrate and accomplish goals. All college students must juggle a lot of expectations, which may be challenging. An existing stressor, often known as a "stressor," is what causes stress. Everyone is aware of how terrifying exams can be, especially the practical exams in medical schools.

Present study focused on stress and adjustment and their interaction effect among school students. A lot of studies examined various stressors common for all students and stressor which are specific, lack of time, availability of resource, finance, unclear expectations and assignments' how to study for tests are common stressors. Students who are studying abroad have to face more common stressor like language problems, home sickness, adjustment stress, loneliness and lack of social support due to racial discriminations. Students that are male or female may see adjustment and related stress differently. Female students were shown in several studies to have lower levels of adaptability and greater levels of stress than male students (Bang, Muriuki, & Hodges, 2008; Virta et al., 2004). Gender, however, was found to have no impact on adjustment in other research (Poyrazli, Arbona, Bullington, & Pisecco, 2001).

Objective of the study:

Stress and adjustment among secondary school pupils will be compared in the study. It was started in the hope that systematic and in-depth research in this field would be very helpful for understanding comparisons between stress and adjustment in secondary school students. Additionally, this idea would tend to make school, teachers, parents, and society more aware of the importance of secondary school students' stress and adjustment.

Problems

To study the gender differences on stress and adjustment of senior secondary school students

Hypotheses:

1. There is no significant difference between boys and girls on stress in senior secondary school students.
2. There is no significant difference between boys and girls on adjustment in senior secondary school students.

Methodology:

Participants

The sample of the present study was consisted of total 100 students (50 boys and 50 girls) in different areas of Sirsa district. The age range of the students was 17 - 19 year. The technique of sample selection was used in random sampling. They were selected from school in different areas of Sirsa. However, all the respondents were literate and studying in XI and XII class and were belonging to various socio-economic statuses.

Tools of the Study:

The following psychological tools have been used to collect the information from the sample:

Stress scale by Puri, Kaur & Mehta, (2011)-

This scale is useful to assess the stress level of the students of secondary/senior secondary, college and university level. It was developed on the basis of data of 500 college students. It contains 34 items. The students have to respond how often they have gone through the situations under question and indicate it on a 4-point scale (very often, often, sometimes and never). Though there is no time limit but usually the subjects complete it within 15-20 minutes. For each item scores are awarded according to scoring pattern: Very Often (4), often (3), sometimes (2) and never (1).

Adjustment Scale by H.S. Asthana

The inventory compiles 42 items which measures adjustment of the students. The inventory is self administering and it has no fix time limit. The reliability coefficient is .80. It merely attempts to segregate the poorly adjusted from those who are better adjusted and who may stand in need of psycho diagnostic study and counseling. Instructions were provided as in the test booklets and given to the subjects. The scores obtained by the subjects with respect to different variables as measured by the tools were analyzed statistically.

Results & Discussion:

Table showing Mean, SD and t-Value on Stress and Adjustment

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t- value	Level of significance
Stress	Boys	50	78.8200	15.13	2.28	.005 S
	Girls		85.1400	12.44		
Adjustment	Boys	50	158.20	24.02	3.005	.005 S
	Girls		145.76	16.71		

In the above given table boys' and girls' data sets are being analysed separately for the variable of stress. Boys who participated in a 50-the study on stress levels had a mean stress level of 78.82 and a standard deviation of 15.13. In the study of 50 girls, the mean stress level was 85.14, with a standard deviation of 12.44. A t-value of 2.28 indicates that there is a difference in the stress levels of boys and girls. The p-value, which stands for the level of significance, is 0.005. Boys and girls are once again segregated from the variable adjustment as well as assessed. With a standard deviation of 24.02 points, boys' average adjustment scores are 158.20. The standard deviation is 16.71 and the average adjustment score for girls is 145.76. The adjustment scores for boys and girls are compared using a t-value of 3.005. The level of significance, or the p-value, is 0.005.

In terms of stress levels and adjustment evaluations, the results reveal some intriguing disparities between boys and girls. In comparison to boys (78.82), girls feel stress at a mean level that is higher (85.14). The t-value of 2.28 suggests that this difference is statistically significant at a threshold of 0.005. This shows that stress levels differed greatly across boys and girls, with girls frequently reporting higher levels of stress. When comparing adjustment scores, boys have a mean score that is higher (158.20) than girls (145.76). The t-value of 3.005 indicates that this difference is statistically significant at a threshold of 0.005. Girls are under higher stress than boys in senior secondary school, with stress levels significantly different for each gender (boys and girls). The adjustment of senior secondary school pupils differs significantly between boys and girls, favoring boy since they have greater adjustment than girls. Bindu Devi and Manju Sharma (2021) observed similar outcomes when they adjusted their study in Rajasthan.

Boys often score higher on adjustment scales, which suggest that they may have greater general adaptability and coping skills than girls. The results are based on a specific sample and may not accurately reflect the total population, it is vital to remember that. Age, socioeconomic position, and cultural influences are other variables that may affect stress and adjustment levels. To generalise the results to a larger population and to comprehend the underlying causes of these discrepancies, more study is required.

Overall, these findings shed light on potential gender variations in stress and coping in the population under study. They emphasize the need of individualized strategies to help boys and girls manage stress and improve adjustment in their particular contexts.

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