

A STUDY ON ACADEMIC STRESS AMONG INDIAN TEEN-AGE GIRLS

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ABSTRACT: Adolescents' primary source of stress is schoolwork, which is linked to psychological issues; understanding the factors that contribute to this stress is important. The primary purpose of this research was to examine the causes and consequences of academic pressure experienced by female adolescents. Research was conducted on a cross-sectional sample of female college students in Dharwad, India. A total of 314 teenage girls, aged 16-19, were selected at random to participate in the study. The university's ethics board gave its blessing to the study. A random sampling method was used to compile the data. Self-administered socio-demographic data sheets, personality inventories, intelligence tests, and educational stress scales were given to adolescents.

KEYWORDS: Academic stress, Adolescents, Adolescent girls, Stress, Educational stress, Early Life, India.

INTRODUCTION:

Adolescents' high cognitive and emotional load at school is negatively associated with their mental health (MH), especially in the context of insufficient as well as declining levels of physical activity between many adolescents and inadequate physical fitness [1]. Although some studies have not confirmed this same association between physical activity (PA) decline & changes in MH in adolescents, this will not undermine the importance of studying such associations. The prevalence of mental illness in 12- to 17- year-olds in the USA has been increasing, and so is the case in Europe and other countries. Even though the overall prevalence of mental disorders is high, there is a significant disparity in MH among young people [2]. Many more young people than older people suffer from mental illness. As a result, such behavioural issues are more common in elementary and secondary schools. Adolescents who struggled with mental health and behaviour as children are more likely to struggle again as adults. Half of all adult mental health issues first appear in adolescence or earlier. The decline in students' mental health is a pressing issue in classrooms across the globe, and the call to action issued by The Lancet Commission is in line with similar efforts being made in the United Kingdom and Germany [3]. Students' mental health may be negatively impacted by their exposure to and experiences within the education system, as well as the school environment.

Academic stress (AS) is a serious issue. We view AS in accordance with Selye's definition of this term as an individual's nonspecific set of responses to internal or external stimuli interfering with the habitual academic process [4]. AS is a topic of interest as well because it requires consideration in relation to future work-related stress. The stress of the workplace serves as a useful metaphor for understanding AS. It is generally agreed that "a negative psychological state with emotional and cognitive components with effects on the health both of individual employees and organization" is an adequate definition of work-related stress. When addressing the problems of AS in a school setting, it is just as important to take into

account the psychosocial, environmental, safety, organisational, and other aspects of work-related stress.

In Asia, the effects of AS are likely to be the most severe. Despite this, Zhao et al. point out that the stress-reducing reforms in the Chinese education system have not been successful so far. These scholars emphasised the need to improve educational standards in both United States and China; however, maintaining a humanistic approach to education is also important in the context of global economic competition [5]. Based on the discovery that bonding social capital is a causal predictor of AS, Yoo shares similar concerns about the psychological development of South Korean adolescents. Meanwhile, he cautioned that bonding social capital's impact on AS could have both positive and negative outcomes. When a person is between the ages of 10 and 19, they are considered to be in the adolescent stage of development, which occurs between childhood and adulthood. Nearly one-seventh of the global population lives there. A large percentage of the world's youth population resides in India. Adolescents are more vulnerable to the effects of stress because of the many psychological and physiological changes they experience at this time. Because their academic performance at this stage is so important to their future education and careers, many people in Asia assume that academic-related events are a major source of stress for them. According to studies conducted after the year 2000, the percentage of Indian adolescents who experience stress varies anywhere from 13% to 45% [6]. Ninety-three to one hundred percent of schoolchildren in Thiruvananthapuram, India, showed moderate to severe stress, and 1.9% showed extremely severe stress, according to another study. Deb et al. (2015) found that 63.5% of Indian college students feel overwhelmed by schoolwork. Therefore, it's important to invest in studies that aim to safeguard the expanding youth demographic. In recent years, India's education system has become increasingly competitive as the country's population has grown. Therefore, the children are exposed to competitive pressure as early as the pre-primary level, with end-of-year tests determining their advancement to the next grade level. At the secondary school level, students are under even more pressure to succeed academically because their chances of being accepted to a prestigious university are directly tied to their performance on the qualifying exam. In the Indian educational system, passing exams is prioritised over learning content. As a result, many Indian adolescents experience significant academic stress due to their heavy workloads. Academic stress has negative effects on students' mental, physical, and social health as well as their ability to learn and do well in school. Several studies have highlighted the correlation between school stress and behavioural and emotional issues. High-stress adolescents were found to engage in a number of maladaptive and risky behaviours, including increased alcohol and drug use, sexual activity without protection, lack of physical activity, poor diet, and poor sleep. Stressful adolescents also showed higher rates of depression [7]. Adolescents in India, according to one study, show a significant correlation between educational stress and psychological issues. Although boys and girls worry about school and money to the same extent, girls are more likely to experience stress over future events, peers, and their own health. Adolescent girls report higher levels of stress from negative interpersonal events than boys do. Adolescent girls are more likely to report feeling stressed than teenage boys, according to studies. However, there has been a dearth of research involving teenage women. In order to learn more about this blank spot, the current study set out to do some digging. Given this context, the current study set out to measure academic stress among adolescent girls and look into the major demographic, personality, and intelligence factors that could predict it.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

There are over 1220 million people living in India, making it the second most populous country in the world. Of this number, 22.5 percent are adolescents, or roughly 275 million people. According to the World Health Organization, adolescents are people between the ages of 10 and 19, and young adults are those between the ages of 15 and 24. Adolescence is "a process rather than a period, process of achieving the beliefs and attitudes needed for effective participation in the society," as Dorothy Roger (1950) puts it. "The age of great ideals as well as the beginning of theories and the time of simple adaptation to reality," as defined by Jean Piaget (1954). Adolescence, as defined by Dr. Jone (1965), is the period during which one recalls their childhood. Adolescence is defined as the period of time between the onset of puberty and the attainment of a level of independence from one's parents. This is the time when a person's social, emotional, and cognitive abilities mature along with their physical ones. When a young person reaches puberty with the psychological and biological maturity of an adult, the transition is relatively easy. Between the ages of 14 and 18, roughly, is considered to be adolescence. Stress is a scientific concept that has suffered from the double-edged sword of being too well known in too few understood, as noted by the doyen of stress research and theory, Hans Selye (1980).

OBJECTIVES:

1. Study about Academic stress.
2. The second objective is to compare the levels of academic, social, family, and financial stress experienced by disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged female high school students.

STRESS IN ADOLESCENTS:

Even though we live in an era of unprecedented progress, the pressures of modern life are immense. One encounters stress in all spheres of social and economic life, from the home to the workplace. From the moment of conception until the very last breath is taken, a human being is constantly bombarded by a variety of stressful events. Since the 21st century has been dubbed the "Age of Anxiety and Stress," the public's preoccupation with the topic makes sense. Hans Selye is credited as the person who first introduced the concept of stress to the field of life sciences. Stress can manifest in a variety of ways, including mental and physical tension in response to novel or demanding circumstances. As a result of frustration, conflicts, and other internal and external strains and pressures, humans experience stress [8].

Rapid physiological, social, and cognitive changes during adolescence can be a stressful time for young people. 'Mis-coping' responses to these demands (such as truancy, drug abuse, isolation) can exacerbate the already stressful transition to adulthood, as stated by Nielsen (1987). Adolescents who thought about suicide were more likely to have experienced negative life events in the past year, according to a recent study. One study found that college students' primary concerns were time wastage, loneliness, and pressure to perform well academically. Higher levels of stress have been linked to less successful academic performance in the future, which has serious consequences on many fronts. Serious consequences to a student's mental, social, and emotional health may arise from ineffective coping with academic stress. Academic failure, social misbehaviour, interpersonal difficulties, depression, and emotional distress are all examples. Insights into the types of stressors people are most likely to face, the degree to which they will be affected by those stressors, and the best way to deal with them can be gleaned from an analysis of sociocultural factors [9]. Extreme financial hardship places a heavy burden on individuals and families.

METHODS:

Subjects in a study Adolescent female enrolled in 11th and 12th grades or lower-level college programmes were included in the study. A random sampling method was used to choose the students. In all, 600 students were asked to take part in the study, but only 80 agreed because of the inconvenient scheduling. Of the remaining 520 adolescent girls, 326 girls met the criteria of cut-off score above 14 on the stress subscale of the depression, anxiety, and stress scale. Of the 326 students who participated in the study, 314 had complete data, and 12 had to be excluded due to missing or improperly completed information on the survey. Numbers were gathered from the beginning of the year through the end of June. After obtaining consent, participants completed questionnaires independently. The questionnaires and data collection procedures were explained to the researcher in detail. Time spent filling out the questionnaires ranged from 40 to 45 minutes per respondent. While students were filling out the questionnaires, researchers were on hand to answer any questions they may have had. SPSS software (version 23), IBM, New York, USA, was used to code and analyse the data. Stress related to schoolwork was the dependent variable among teenage women. This data was analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Adolescents' educational stress was correlated to their demographics, educational background, personality traits, and intelligence using Chi square, Fisher exact, and Pearson's tests. In order to estimate the predictors, a backward regression analysis was carried out. Significantly correlated variables were entered into the model, and the least significant ones were eliminated at each stage. This process was repeated until only the most important factors remained. The cut-off for statistical significance was set at $P < 0.05$.

RESULTS:

The demographic, educational, & psychological characteristics of the study population are presented in Tables 1-3. The average age of the sample was 18.010.9, 65.0% were from rural areas, 79.6% were Hindu, 69.4% were from nuclear families, 36% had one sibling, 41.7% were the first born in their family, 72.3% were majoring in a science combination, 78.3% were attending private schools, 39.2% were moderately stressed, 60.2% had average IQs, and 51.3% displayed ambivert and neuroticism personality traits. IQ, personality type, number of siblings, subject preferences, parental stress, and religious affiliation.

Combination of subjects	Science combination	227 (72.3)
	Commerce combination	36 (11.5)
	Arts combination	51 (16.2)
Types of educational institution	Government	68 (21.7)
	Private	246 (78.3)
Number of homework hours (mean±SD) 2.53±1.2		

Table 1: Adolescent girls' educational background: a descriptive study (n=314)

Demographic variables	Educational stress, frequency (%)			P
	Normal - mild	Moderate	Extremely severe	
Personality				
Extrovert and neuroticism	4 (18.2)	10 (45.5)	8 (36.4)	0.001***
Introvert and neuroticism	6 (11.5)	22 (42.3)	24 (46.2)	
Ambivert and neuroticism	37 (23.0)	57 (35.4)	67 (41.6)	
Extrovert and emotionally well-being	4 (50.0)	3 (37.5)	1 (12.5)	
Rejected data	3 (15.0)	7 (35.0)	10 (50.0)	
Ambivert and emotionally well-being	5 (71.4)	0 (0.0)	2 (28.6)	
Ambivert and mentally well-being	14 (31.8)	24 (54.5)	6 (13.6)	

***P=0.001

Table 2: Adolescent girls' educational stress & psychological variables: a correlational study
 Backward regression analysis was conducted using academic stress as the predictor variables. Age, religion, income, father & mother education, number of siblings, combination of subjects in pre-university course and personality type were included as predictors by creating appropriately dummy variables. Number of siblings (beta = -0.115; P = 0.037) & extrovert & neuroticism personality type (beta = -0.242; P = 0.001) predicted lower the educational stress and then were considered to be positive variables (Table-2).

Variables	B	SE	β	t	P
Siblings	-1.473	0.704	-0.115	-2.094	0.037*
Extrovert and neuroticism	-2.788	0.831	-0.242	-3.354	0.001***
Introvert and neuroticism	1.502	0.672	0.160	2.236	0.026*
Hindu	3.106	1.404	0.119	2.213	0.028*
Illiterate-father	2.962	1.235	0.125	2.399	0.017*
Commerce	4.583	1.068	0.278	4.292	0.000***

P=*.05, **.01, ***0.001. SE=Standard error

Table 3: Regression analysis with school pressure as the dependent variable

These positive factors serve as a buffer against the negative effects of academic pressure. The educational stress was positively predicted by introversion and neuroticism (beta = 0.160; P = 0.026), Hinduism (beta = 0.119; P = 0.028), an illiterate father (beta = 0.125; P = 0.017), and the combination of subjects in commerce (beta = 0.278; P < 0.001).

DISCUSSION:

The current study made an exploratory effort to identify factors that could be used to better prepare high school and college students for the challenges of higher education. The majority of the investigated factors were significantly correlated with student anxiety levels. Among adolescent girls, having an illiterate father was found to be a significant predictor of educational stress (beta = 0.125; P = 0.017) in the current study. This finding is consistent with the findings of Finkelstein et al., 2007, who found that adolescents whose parents did not complete high school were less likely to have a positive outlook on the future. Adolescents may be more stressed out because of their pessimism.

The current study found that having more siblings was associated with greater educational stress (beta = 0.115, P = 0.037). Previous research has found that adolescents who grew up with more siblings than their peers had higher levels of self-confidence. Adolescent girls' educational stress was predicted more strongly for those with introverted neuroticism traits (beta = 0.160; P = 0.026) than for those with extroverted neuroticism traits (beta = 0.242; P =

0.001). Many prior studies have found that neuroticism is a predictor of both the occurrence of stressful life events and poor academic performance. Those who are more prone to neuroticism are also more likely to be stressed because of their propensity to feel negative emotions. Numerous studies have found a negative relationship between neuroticism and academic success. Adolescent girls' educational stress was found to be positively correlated with their exposure to Hinduism and commerce courses. No studies have been found to provide evidence for these factors; future research should account for them. These results can help mental health professionals design more effective interventions and workshops to reduce stress levels in young women. While the results of the current study are promising, they should be interpreted with caution due to a number of caveats.

LIMITATIONS & CONCLUSIONS:

Low statistical power is a direct result of the study's small sample size. Because of the lack of diversity in the sex composition of the sample, we cannot generalise our findings from this study. The current findings rely entirely on self-reported questionnaires, which means that reporting bias cannot be completely ruled out. There's a chance that some students won't speak up if they're under an unusually heavy load of stress. This study used a cross-sectional approach to look for correlations rather than direct causes.

Academic pressure was found to be a significant issue for the majority of the teenage female participants in this study, both at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Variables such as a student's temperament, the level of his or her father's education, the subjects taken in high school, and the size of their family all played a role in how much pressure they felt to succeed academically. As a result, these factors can be considered when trying to determine the causes of stress in young women. These stressors should not be ignored, and teachers, parents, and primary caregivers should be aware of them. Schools would do well to implement stress-management courses for students.

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