



STUDENT STRESS, HEALTH AND COPING STRATEGIES: A CASE STUDY OF INTERMEDIATE STUDENTS BELONGING TO GUNTUR AND KRISHNA DISTRICTS OF ANDHRA PRADESH

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Abstract

The present study is concerned with the effect of stress on physical and mental health of intermediate students, stress experienced by parents of intermediate students and coping styles adopted by students to reduce their stress levels. Samples of 1000 intermediate students were drawn randomly from Guntur and Krishna Districts of Andhra Pradesh. It was observed that majority of the students experienced major health problems in the course period. Parents of Intermediate students experienced high level of stress. It was also observed that majority of the respondents balance their work, rest and play and prefer to pray god in stressful situation. Most of the respondents chat with friends and play games as stress coping mechanisms.

Keywords: Physical and Mental Stress, Academic Stress, Coping Styles.

INTRODUCTION

Student life is exciting but it can also be very pressured and stressful as it is a transitional period. It also involves many challenges at a practical level. A high stress level may affect not only academic performance but also all aspects of student's physical and mental health. Hans Selye originally suggested that stress is simply the rate of wear and tear in the body. Stress is a part of day-to-day living. It is a common human phenomenon and part of life as a college student. As college students they may experience stress meeting academic demands, adjusting to a new living environment, or developing friendships. Mild forms of stress can act as a motivator and energizer.

Teenagers often have stress in their lives. Whether caused by the loss of a friend or loved one, a recent move, being teased or bullied, difficulties at home, or problems at school, childhood stress can lead to behavioral problems, anxiety, depression, headaches, drug use, and insomnia, among many other symptoms and medical problems. However, if stress level is too high, medical and social problems can result.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The study conducted by **Jigisha Gala and Sangeeta Chaudhary (2004)** on seventeen to eighteen years old adolescents revealed that academics is the major stressor. Adolescents cope with stress in distinct ways; Two major ways to cope with stress one way is problem solving. This involves trying to deal with the problem. Another way of handling stress is managing emotions. This involves wielding the thoughts and feelings caused by the problem. Adolescents use both methods, and both can be effective, depending on the situation. Most adolescents seek help from their parents, as the parents are perceived to be understanding and supportive.

B. P. Singh (2014) in his study of student's perception of academic stress due to their parents about their studies found out that there was high significant relationship between academic stress and parent's expectations towards the studies.

Raymond Montemayor (1986) review elicits that parents and adolescents who have good communication between them and when parenting style is helping the adolescents to communicate their stress have better relationship and parents also facilitate the adolescents to combat stress.

Verma & Gupta (1990) in one study found that middle-school age boys report that parents have higher expectations of them than girls, which is consistent with what might be expected in a country where sons have been traditionally expected to develop a professional career to support their families.

Sangeeta Chaudhary and Priya Mary Joseph (2010) conducted a study on adolescent's perceptions on coping with stress in middle income group. The results revealed that across the four domains, adolescents perceive parental support for their adaptive coping styles, whereas for adaptive coping, adolescents perceive guidance or no support. However, adolescent girls have perceived parents to be stricter with boys especially in academics.



OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following are the objectives of the present study.

- To study the effect of stress on physical and mental health of the students.
- To study the impact of stress experienced by parents of intermediate students.
- To study the coping styles adopted by the students to reduce their stress levels.

METHODOLOGY

The population for the present study consists of Intermediate students belonging to Guntur and Krishna Districts of Andhra Pradesh. The total population was first stratified on the basis of different groups that are M.P.C, Bi.P.C, M.E.C & C.E.C. The sample was selected from 18 colleges (9 colleges from Guntur District and 9 colleges from Krishna District). For the purpose of present study 1650 questionnaires were administered to the students and only 1000 questionnaires (M.P.C-340, Bi.P.C-250, M.E.C-225 and C.E.C-185) were returned which were filled in all respects. Data was collected with the help of a well designed questionnaire. Analysis was done with the help of simple percentages and averages. The questions were formulated based on the factors which were arrived from a pilot study of stress among students carried out on a sample of 100 students.

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE NO - 1

HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED ANY MAJOR HEALTH PROBLEM IN THE RECENT PAST											
S.NO	OPINION	TOTAL	%	M.P.C	%	Bi.P.C	%	M.E.C	%	C.E.C	%
1	YES	375	37.5	100	29	150	60	70	31	55	30
2	NO	583	58.3	220	65	100	40	145	64	118	64
3	DON'T KNOW	42	4.2	20	5.9	0	0	10	4.4	12	6
TOTAL		1000	100	340	100	250	100	225	100	185	100

TABLE - 2

ARE YOU FACING ANY OF THE BELOW PROBLEMS FREQUENTLY											
S.NO	OPINION	TOTAL	%	M.P.C	%	Bi.P.C	%	M.E.C	%	C.E.C	%
1	HEAD ACHE	174	17.4	48	14	46	18	40	18	40	22
2	STOMACHACHE	52	5.2	22	6.5	10	4	10	4.4	10	5
3	LACK OF SLEEP	86	8.6	46	14	10	4	10	4.4	20	11
4	INDEIGESTION PROBLEM	15	1.5	10	2.9	0	0	5	2.2	0	0
5	ASTHAMA	38	3.8	10	2.9	10	4	8	3.6	10	5
6	OBESITY	47	4.7	12	3.5	15	6	10	4.4	10	5
7	VOMITINGS	15	1.5	10	2.9	5	2	0	0	0	0
8	HAIR FALL	191	19.1	52	15	45	18	52	23	42	23
9	KIDNEY/LIVER PROBLEM	15	1.5	10	2.9	5	2	0	0	0	0
10	TIREDNESS	153	15.3	47	14	35	14	41	18	30	16
11	ANEMIA	13	1.3	8	2.4	5	2	0	0	0	0
12	SIGHT PROBLEM	158	15.8	51	15	52	21	40	18	15	8
13	IRR MNSTR L CYCLE	43	4.3	14	4.1	12	4.8	9	4	8	4
TOTAL		1000	100	340	100	250	100	225	100	185	100

TABLE NO - 3

HOW OFTEN YOUR PARENTS ARE STRESSED WITH YOUR EDUCATION?											
S.NO	OPINION	TOTAL	%	M.P.C	%	Bi.P.C	%	M.E.C	%	C.E.C	%
1	ALL THE TIME	412	41.2	130	38	192	77	65	29	25	14
2	SOME TIMES	358	35.8	160	47	58	23	80	36	60	32
3	ONCE IN A WHILE	165	16.5	40	12	0	0	75	33	50	27
4	ONCE IN A MONTH	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	NEVER	65	6.5	10	2.9	0	0	5	2.2	50	27
TOTAL		1000	100	340	100	250	100	225	100	185	100



TABLE - 4

4 MECHANISMS YOU USE TO REDUCE STRESS											
S.NO	RATING	TOTAL	%	M.P.C	%	BL.P.C	%	M.E.C	%	C.E.C	%
1	YOGA/MEDITATION	30	3	0	0	30	12	0	0	0	0
2	EXERCISES	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	WALKING	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	CHATTING	710	71	180	53	190	76	185	82	155	84
5	PLAYING GAMES	215	21.5	140	41	20	8	30	13	25	14
6	OTHERS	45	4.5	20	5.9	10	4	10	4.4	5	3
TOTAL		1000	100	340	100	250	100	225	100	185	100

TABLE-5

5 ACTIVITIES YOU PREFER TO DO AT STRESSFUL SITUATION											
S.NO	OPINION	TOTAL	%	M.P.C	%	BL.P.C	%	M.E.C	%	C.E.C	%
1	HOPE FOR A MIRACLE	165	16.5	50	15	30	12	40	18	45	24
2	PRAY TO GOD	200	20	80	24	45	18	30	13	45	24
3	START OVER EATING	125	12.5	50	15	45	18	20	8.9	10	5
4	START SLEEPING MORE	175	17.5	55	16	35	14	45	20	40	22
5	AVOID BEING WITH OTHER STUDENTS	90	9	30	8.8	30	12	20	8.9	10	5
6	CREATE A PLAN OF ACTION	60	6	10	2.9	20	8	20	8.9	10	5
7	FOCUS ON WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE	50	5	10	2.9	20	8	20	8.9	0	0
8	DRAW FROM PAST EXPERIENCE	55	5.5	25	7.4	10	4	10	4.4	10	5
9	REFUSE TO BELIEVE IN THE SITUATION	80	8	30	8.8	15	6	20	8.9	15	8
TOTAL		1000	100	340	100	250	100	225	100	185	100

TABLE -6

6 STRATEGIC TIME MANAGEMENT BY RESPONDENT											
S.NO	OPINION	TOTAL	%	M.P.C	%	BL.P.C	%	M.E.C	%	C.E.C	%
1	I USE MY TIME EFFECTIVELY	230	23	50	15	90	36	50	22	40	22
2	I BALANCE WORK, REST & PLAY	260	26	60	18	80	32	60	27	60	32
3	I WASTE A LOT OF TIME	190	19	90	26	30	12	40	18	30	16
4	I EASILY GET DISTRACTED FROM TASKS	165	16.5	80	24	30	12	35	16	20	11
5	I HAVE HARD TIME CONCENTRATING	155	15.5	60	18	20	8	40	18	35	19
TOTAL		1000	100	340	100	250	100	225	100	185	100

RESULTS

- Table 1 shows the results regarding experience of major health problems by the students. 58.3% of respondents expressed that they didn't experience any major health problem and 37.5% of respondents opined that they have experienced major health problem. The table also reveals the result of course wise problems faced by the



respondents. Majority (60%) of Bi.P.C. respondents said they have health problems and 64% of C.E.C. respondents said that they don't have any major health problem.

- Table 2 shows results regarding health problems that were frequently faced by the students. 19.1% of them were suffering with hair fall, 17.4% of them were facing frequent headaches, 15.8% with sight problems and 15.3% of them expressed that they were so tired with their study schedule.
- Table 3 shows results regarding parents stress on their children education. 41.2% of respondent's parents were stressed all the time about their children's education. The table reveals the result of course wise preferences by respondent's parents. 47% of respondent's parents of M.P.C. said that they were stressed sometimes. Majority (77%) of Bi.P.C. respondent's parents said all the time they were stressed, M.E.C & C.E.C. respondent parents were stressed sometimes about their children education.
- Table 4 depicts the result regarding mechanisms used to reduce stress. 71% of respondents said they use chatting as mechanism to reduce stress, 22% of respondents said they play games, 3% of them said they do yoga or meditation to reduce their stress. The table also shows the results course wise. Majority of M.E.C (82%) & C.E.C (84%) group respondents prefer chatting to reduce their stress, like wise other course respondents follow the same strategy.
- From table 5 it is depicted that 20% of respondents said that they pray to god in stressful situation, 17.5% of them said they start sleeping more, 16.5% of them said that they hope for a miracle.
- Table 6 shows the result regarding Strategic Time Management by Respondents. Only 26% of respondents said that they are able to balance work, rest & play, 16.5% of them said they get easily distracted from their tasks and 15.5% of them were unable to concentrate on their studies. From the table it is depicted that 26% of M.P.C. course respondents were wasting a lot of time, 36% of Bi.P.C course respondents were using their time effectively, 27% of M.E.C. & 32% of C.E.C. courses respondents were balancing work, rest & play equally.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The study shows that there is a significant relationship between stress experienced by intermediate students and the effect on physical and mental health of the students. It shows that there is a high significant relationship between academic stress and parent's expectations of science group towards the studies. Different stress management techniques such as meditation, support groups, games etc., help in better adoption of coping skills, improved knowledge of stress problems and enhanced ability to resolve conflicts (Shapiro et al., 2000). 'Stress management' and 'Time management' if taught along with first and second year curricula may assist students in dealing with stress due to study loads (Lee & Graham, 2001). Health education programs, mentorship and extracurricular activities can be important strategies to enable undergraduates cope better with the demands of this tertiary level of education. There is a definite need for regular surveys to be undertaken to monitor the levels of health among youth, especially the students, whose well-being guarantees the future.

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