

5th International Conference on Research Developments in Arts, Social Science, & Humanities

Mahratta Chamber of Commerce, Industries and Agriculture, Tilak Road, Pune (India)



15th -16th June 2019

www.conferenceworld.in

ISBN : 978-93-87793-91-0

Stress and its Management among the College Students

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ABSTRACT

Stress is our body's reaction to the situation and the challenges. It is the physical and mental reaction to the tensions or problems. Stress when handled properly can make us to deal with the situation easily but when it is not handled properly it can cause problems. Stress among the students is very common and the reasons behind this are many. The most important thing is how to respond to the stressful situation and how to create a positive environment so that the stress can not affect the physical as well as mental health of an individual. So keeping all the views in mind the present study was framed to assess the stress level of the students and as well as the stress management of the students. The Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana was selected for the study. For the selection of the sample college students were approached within the age range of 21-29 years. Random sample technique was used to select the sample. Thus, total 120 respondents (60 males and 60 females) were selected for the study. Self-structured interview schedule was used to assess the socio-personal information and the symptoms of stress among the respondents. Stress Coping Inventory was used to assess the stress management among the students. The results of the study revealed that the students had symptoms of stress, especially the girls they showed more symptoms of the stress. The stress management coping strategies depicted that almost all of the respondents had average level of stress management which means they need to be improved in the stress management skills so that they can handle the stressful situation with the positive attitude.

Key words: stress, symptoms, stress management

1. INTRODUCTION

Stress is one of the most common and familiar problem that is faced by greater part of the population. Stress is very prevalent among all people irrespective of their age, gender, class, caste etc. The stress can be positive and it can be negative, if it is positive, then it will not have any adverse effect on the individual but the negative stress can cause lots of problems it also depends on the occurrence and intensity of the stress, the individual's perception towards it, and support of the family and the friends. The reason of stress can be many like, death in the family, financial problems, divorce, chronic illness etc. Conner 2010[1] explained stressor as something that has an impact on the individual's body as well as mind and restrict the individual's flexibility or adaptability to the things. Physical factors, cognitive factors, behavioural factors, and emotional factors can be the cause of stress.

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The college students are one of the groups that face the stress very frequently. They have to deal with so many situations in their college, outside college and many more. The stress causes depression among the students. The incidences of depression were also found among stressful students as it is related with incapability to give attention to things, constant fear of rejection, hopelessness, etc. (Busari, 2012) [2]. The students were also found to be involved in various perilous behaviours such as more consumption of alcohol and drugs, , less physical activity, less eating or over eating and more or less sleep (American College Health Association, 2009; Bennet & Holloway[4], 2014; King, Vidourek & Singh, 2014)[3]. The stress results in the increased rates of suicide among the students as they become vulnerable to the situation and opt for the suicide. While talking about the gender differences the researches showed that female are more vulnerable to the stress as they do not cope up easily with the stressful situatuon (Abdulghani *et al.* and Abu-Ghazaleh *et al*)[4].

If one really want to come up from stress then the management of stress is very important. One should know how to deal with the situation assertively and cope up with the situation. Researcher has suggested that more importance should be given to development stage right from the childhood the child should be incorporated with the positive attitude towards life. (Elizab 2009) [5]. They should be reared in the optimistic environment. Outdoor activities should be promoted and an environment should be created where the negative stressors can be minimized and the positive attitude should be encouraged (Reddy *et al*) [6]. One needs to spend more and more time with the family and the friends. Techniques like yoga, meditation, psychotherapy, exercises, involvement in hobbies and a good diet and good sleep have been found to be helpful in minimizing the stress among students. The more realistic goals should be incorporated so that they can be achieved (Vivek *et al* 2013) [7]. So keeping all these views in the mind the study was planned on the students to know how much they are in to the stress and how effectively they are managing the stress. The following objectives have been framed:

2. OBJECTIVE

- 2.1 To assess the level of stress and stress management among the college students
- 2.2 To investigate gender differences in symptoms of stress and stress management among the college students

3. METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 Local of the study: The study was conducted in Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana, Punjab.
- 3.2 Sample of the study: The students of the colleges of Punjab Agricultural University was selected for the sample selection, within the age range of 21-29 years, random sample technique was applied. The sample comprises of 120 respondents (boys=60 and girls =60).
- 3.3 Research instrument used:
 - 3.3.1 Self-structured interview schedule was used to assess the socio-personal information of the students

3.3.2 Self-structured instrument was used to assess the symptoms of stress among the students

3.3.3 Stress management Inventory was used to assess stress management skills among the students

3.4 Statistical analysis: Frequency, Percentage, Z- test was used to analyze the data.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 4.1 Socio-personal characteristics of the respondents

Characteristics	Boys		Girls		Overall sample	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Family type	Joint	21	35	19	31.66	40
	Nuclear	39	65	41	68.33	80
Paternal education	Matric or below	10	16.66	8	13.33	18
	Intermediate	34	56.66	10	16.66	44
	Graduation	10	16.66	29	48.33	39
	Post-graduation	6	10	13	21.66	19
Maternal education	Matric or below	9	15	10	16.66	19
	Intermediate	10	16.66	12	20	22
	Graduation	33	55	25	41.66	58
	Post-graduation	8	13.33	13	21.66	21
Paternal occupation	Service	22	36.66	18	30	40
	Business	30	50	35	58.33	65
	Farming	8	13.33	7	11.66	15
Maternal occupation	Home maker	42	70	45	75	87
	Service	15	25	10	16.66	25
	Farming	3	5	5	8.33	8

Data in the Table 4.1 depicts the socio-personal characteristics of the respondents and the data revealed that the major proportion of the respondents belonged to nuclear family. Moving towards the paternal education the data depicted that 36.66 per cent of the respondents were intermediate, 32.5 per cent were upto graduation, and almost equal number of respondents were educated upto post-graduation and matric or below (15.83 % and 15 %). The data relating maternal education envisaged that the major proportion (48.33%) of the mothers of the respondents were educated upto graduation followed by, 18.33 per cent were intermediate, 17.5 per cent were post-graduation and 15.83 per cent were matric or below.

The paternal occupation data revealed that more than half of the respondents (54.16 %) were involved in business followed by, service (33.33 %) and farming (12.50 %). Further, maternal occupation data elucidated that major proportions of the respondents were homemaker (72.50%) followed by, service (20.83%) and farming (6.66%).

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Table 4.2 Gender-wise differences in symptoms of stress among the students

Symptoms of Stress		Boys		Girls		Z-value	Overall sample	
		f	%	f	%		f	%
Aches and pains	Yes	25	41.66	40	66.66	2.74**	65	54.16
	No	35	58.33	20	33.33	2.74**	55	45.833
Diarrhea or constipation	Yes	20	33.33	10	16.66	2.10*	30	25
	No	40	66.66	50	83.33	2.10*	90	75
Nausea or dizziness	Yes	20	33.33	32	53.33	2.21*	52	43.33
	No	40	66.66	28	43.66	2.53*	68	56.66
Chest pain or rapid heart rate	Yes	10	16.66	12	20	0.47	22	18.33
	No	50	83.33	48	80	0.47	98	81.66
Anxiety	Yes	25	41.66	30	41.66	0.00	55	45.83
	No	35	58.33	30	58.33	0.00	65	45.83
Mood swings	Yes	20	33.33	45	75	4.58**	65	45.83
	No	40	66.66	15	25	4.58**	65	45.83
Feeling overwhelmed	Yes	15	25	12	20	0.65	27	22.5
	No	45	75	48	80	0.65	93	77.5
Loneliness	Yes	10	16.66	32	53.33	4.21**	42	35
	No	50	83.33	28	46.66	4.21**	78	65
Memory problems	Yes	35	58.33	10	16.66	4.71**	45	37.5
	No	25	41.66	50	83.33	4.71**	75	62.5
Inability to concentrate	Yes	40	66.66	20	33.33	3.65**	60	50
	No	20	33.33	40	66.66	3.65**	60	50
Poor judgment	Yes	20	33.33	25	41.66	0.94	45	37.5
	No	40	66.66	35	58.33	0.94	75	62.5
Eating more or less	Yes	32	53.33	40	66.66	1.49	72	60
	No	28	46.66	20	33.33	1.49	48	40
Sleeping too much or too little	Yes	39	65	40	66.66	0.19	79	65.83
	No	21	35	20	33.33	0.19	41	34.16
Withdrawning from others	Yes	10	16.66	20	33.33	2.10*	30	25
	No	50	83.33	40	66.66	2.10*	80	66.66

**Significant at 1%

*Significant at 5%

The data pertaining gender-wise differences in symptoms of stress among students revealed that significant gender-wise differences existed among students in almost all of the symptoms of stress i.e. Aches and pains ($Z= 2.74$), Diarrhea or constipation ($Z= 2.10$), Nausea or dizziness ($Z=2.21$), Mood Swings ($Z=4.58$), Loneliness ($Z=4.21$), Memory problem ($Z=4.71$), Inability to concentrate (3.65), withdrawing from others ($Z=2.10$).

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The girls outnumbered the boys in almost all the symptoms. The other had non-significant gender differences Chest pain or rapid heart rate, Anxiety, Feeling overwhelmed Poor judgment, eating more or less and sleeping too much or too little. So, it can be concluded that the girls were having more symptoms of stress and they are more prone to stress.

Table 4.3 Gender differences difference in stress management among students

Stress Coping Resources Inventory	Levels of Stresscoper	Boys		Girls		Z-value	Overall Sample	
		f	%	f	%		f	%
Wellness	Superior	2	3.33	6	10	1.46	8	6.66
	Above Average	8	13.33	10	16.66	0.51	18	15
	Average	40	66.66	32	66.66	0.00	72	60
	Below Average	10	16.66	12	20	0.47	22	18.33
Thought Control	Superior	5	8.33	2	8.33	0.00	7	5.83
	Above Average	6	10	8	13.33	0.56	14	11.66
	Average	31	51.66	35	58.33	0.73	66	55
	Below Average	8	13.33	15	13.33	0.00	23	19.16
Active Coping	Superior	2	3.33	3	5	0.45	5	4.16
	Above Average	10	16.66	13	21.66	0.69	23	19.16
	Average	36	60	42	70	1.14	78	65
	Below Average	12	20	2	3.33	2.84**	14	11.66
Social Ease	Superior	5	8.33	5	8.33	0.00	10	8.33
	Above Average	15	25	10	16.66	1.12	25	20.83
	Average	30	50	40	66.66	1.85*	70	58.33
	Below Average	10	16.66	5	8.33	1.38	15	12.5
Tension Reduction	Superior	5	8.33	3	5	0.73	8	6.66
	Above Average	10	16.66	14	23.33	0.91	24	20
	Average	30	50	38	63.33	1.47	68	56.66
	Below Average	5	8.33	5	8.33	0.00	10	8.33
Spiritual Practice	Superior	5	8.33	5	8.33	0.00	10	8.33
	Above Average	15	25	10	16.66	1.12	25	20.83
	Average	35	58.33	40	66.66	0.94	75	62.5
	Below Average	5	8.33	5	8.33	0.00	10	8.33
Overall Score	Superior	5	8.33	5	8.33	0.00	10	8.33
	Above Average	10	16.66	10	16.66	0.00	20	16.66
	Average	35	58.33	35	58.33	0.00	70	58.33
	Below Average	5	8.33	10	16.66	1.38	15	12.5

The data presented in the table 3.3 highlights the gender-wise difference in stress management among the students and the data depicted that significant gender-wise differences were observed only for active coping ($Z=2.84$) and social ease ($Z=1.85$) in below average and average category respectively where boys were more in

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below average and girls were more in average. Whereas, non-significant gender-wise differences were observed in other aspects of stress management i.e. wellness, thought control, tension reduction, spiritual practice and overall score.

Further, the data revealed that in almost of the aspects of stress management the students were more in average category so, it can be concluded that the students were more inclined towards average level of stress management.

5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The study revealed that the students had symptoms of stress, especially the girls they had more symptoms of stress which can be concluded that they are not able to handle the adverse situation positively they are more vulnerable to the stress. While taking about the stress management it was found that the majority of the students in all the aspects of stress management were at average level which means when they are in stressful situation they handle it normally. The students should be given more time to relax so that they can be rejuvenate for the other activities.

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