

Impact of Academic Stress: A Study of Coping Strategies Among Adolescents

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ABSTRACT: The topic of the present study “Impact of Academic Stress: A study of Coping Strategies among Adolescents” was taken with the following objectives to find out the impact and causes responsible for academic stress among adolescents and to know the coping strategies used by adolescents. The sample size for the study comprised of 50 adolescents and their parents. Purposive convenience sampling technique was used and self designed questionnaire was administrated on the sample group to obtain information. Results revealed that majority believed that school is blessing. Good parenting and teaching helped adolescents in a period of stress and storm. Academics was main stress among adolescents. Besides that peer and parental pressures were also some stressors among adolescents. Girls got bothered easily as compared to boys. Boys were more stressed than girls due to competition. Fear was found more in boys. Girls were comfortable in sharing feelings as compared to boys. Regarding health orthopedic problems were found more among adolescent girls. Overall adolescents suffered from frequent headaches. Boys were found to get bored from school as compared to girls and boys showed more interest towards extracurricular activities. Regarding coping strategies when being stressed majority of the adolescents liked to offer prayers. Majority of the parents wished their children to become doctor by profession followed by fashion designing and journalism. Adolescent girls were over concerned about studies and felt anxious when they scored less marks in examinations. Result also revealed that adolescent parents felt stressed when their children did not score good marks.

KEY WORDS: Academic Stress, Stress and Storm, Orthopedic problem, Extra Curricular Activities.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The term “Adolescence” comes from the Latin word “adolescere” which means “to grow” or “to maturity”. So the essence of the word adolescence is growth and it is in the sense that adolescence represents a period of intensive growth and change in nearly all aspects of child’s physical, mental, emotional and social life. Adolescence is probably the most challenging and complicated period of life to describe, study or experience.

According to A.T. Jersild, “Adolescence is a period during which boys and girls move from childhood to adulthood mentally, emotionally, socially and physically.” Stanley Hall said, “It is a period of stress and strain, storm and strife”.

Piaget expressed adolescence is the age when the individual becomes integrated into the society of adults, the age when the child no longer feels that he is below the level of his elders but equal, at least in rights. This integration into adult society has many affective aspects, more or less linked with puberty. It also includes very profound intellectual changes. These intellectual transformations typical of the adolescents thinking enable him to achieve his integration into the social relationship of adults, which is in fact, the most general characteristic of this period of development.

The characteristics of Adolescence are it

1. It is an important period
2. It is a transitional period
3. A period of change
4. It is a problem age
5. It is a time of search for identity
6. It is a dreaded age
7. It is a time of unrealism

The need of adolescences considering the Tolmans criterion, the adolescents need can be broadly classified into three categories as

- Physiological needs,
- Socio-Psychological or status needs and
- Ego or integrative needs

II. ASPIRATIONS OF ADOLESCENCE

As a living being, all of us have our own aspiration, experiences at all ages and stages of life. The aspirations of an infant, child and adolescent or adult thus will naturally differ not only in its shape, size but also in terms of motivation and anxiety felt for fulfillment. Following are aspirations generally felt by our adolescence boys and girls.

1. Adolescents have an aspiration to see and understand the world. They have a desire to see, to touch, to hear, to reason, to seek and to comprehend.
2. Aspiration of becoming economically independent. Aspiration of getting admission into a prestigious academic course or professional course.
3. Aspiration of developing a sound, balanced and complete personality and to get a good life partner for leading a happy married life.
4. They always aspire to be in a company of their friends particularly from opposite sex.
5. They always aspire to get attention and recognition from the personal friends / girl friends.

Three significant factors that contribute to academic stress are peer pressure, parental pressure and importance of school. According to Bisht four components of academic stress are as follows:

1. Academic Frustration
2. Academic Conflict
3. Academic Pressure
4. Academic Anxiety, other causes are:
 - Dating
 - Environment
 - Extra Co-curricular activities
 - Peers and
 - Parental Pressure

Keeping in view the topic of study, the objectives of the present study are:-

- To find out the impact and causes responsible for academic stress among adolescents and
- To know the coping strategies used by adolescents.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

For the present piece of research the review of data on the related studies have been arranged as under:

Dawood (1998) found that students stress affect their academic performance. He further showed that the most frequently motioned stressor by student was school and fear related stressor. Many teenager tend to become non-conformist and fall prey to teenage depression in response to a variety of growing up anxieties. However, stress included fears and anxiety in children and adversely affect children's performance at various levels.

Sandal and Dur (2000) Students who like their school do better academically and also are healthier. Adolescents particularly boys, in most western industrialized countries like school less than younger children. Adolescents are more satisfied with school if they are allowed to participate in making rules and feel support from teachers and other students.

Rayan (2001) Peer influence may explain the downward trend in academic motivation and achievement that begins for many students in early adolescence. In a longitudinal study of students entering as urban middle school after sixth grade, motivation and grades declined, on average, during the seventh grade year. However, students whose peer groups were high achievement and employment of school while those who associated with low achievers showed greater declines. This was true for both boys and girls across ethnic group.

Brue (2004) Emphasized the fact that school is the primary social meeting place for adolescents and where the number and quality of interaction with peers have a crucial impact on their well – being supportive relationship are considered to be a buffer against stress. Moreover, because social relationship its general can be a cause for conflicts they constitute a potential source of increased stress symptoms especially adolescent girls.

Shaikh et al (2004) Being able to manage responsibilities, problems, or difficulties in a calm and thoughtful manner is one way of coping students are being pressured frequently by a variety of actors which causes them to have stress in one or more ways.

Brolin – Laftman and Ostberg (2006) In order to prevent adolescent from health complaints and stress, it is therefore important to provide a school context that counteracts social rejection and social isolation. In this respect, accessibility to significant others as well as being able to view oneself as being, significant others seem to be of importance.

Liston et al (2008); Arnsten, (2009) stress leads to worse academic achievement, because the symptoms associated with stress make it harder for the individual to accomplish school related tasks and maintain academically high standards.

Wiklund et al (2010) found that young adolescent feel a considerably high degree of pressure to achieve individual success and perfection as well as to manage challenges and overcome barriers on their own. Adolescents have also tended to equate their self – worth with achievement outcomes.

Ostberg, Toivanen and Sundell (2011) Adolescents may have to deal with accumulated stress from increased academic pressure, economic constraints, and interpersonal conflicts with peers or parents or from unforeseen major life events that could affect any one at any time, such as divorcing parents, severe illness, or the death of a significant other. Moreover there are number of general potential stressors which are characteristics of modern western societies, such as high degree of individualization, which provides personal freedom but also increased uncertainty.

Kadhiravan and Kumar, (2012) Coping strategies can help undergraduate students to enhance their academic performance improve class attendance, participation, persistence even when faced with setbacks or failure in general and arm them with stronger more resistant self who can lead to much more positive learning experience.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Methodology is a way to systematically investigate the research problem. Present study was designed to find out the impact and causes of academic stress of adolescents and to know their coping strategies. The sample for the present study comprised of 50 adolescents and their parents. The adolescents included in the study belonged to the age group 16-19 years only and the locale of the study was Srinagar district. Purposive convenience sampling technique was used to select the sample from the respondent and self designed questionnaire was administered on the sample group to obtain information.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was carried on five respondents and the tool yielded desirable result and hence no modification was made after data collection analysis was done on percentage basis.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data showed that overall 62% of the respondents were in the age group of 18-19 years and 38% were in the age group of 16-17 years. Data showed that overall 62% of the respondents were in the age group of 18-19 years and 38% were in the age group of 16-17 years. 62% of the samples were from nuclear families and 38% from joint families.

Majority of the adolescents were in the age group of 16-19 years and majority lived in nuclear families.

None of the parents were illiterate 48% of fathers were government employees and 76% of mothers were housewives. Majority i.e. 62% of the respondents were studying in Higher Secondary part-1 onwards. 96% revealed that the teachers had favorable attitude towards them. 74% revealed that school is blessing among them 88% were girls and 60% were boys. 46% of the respondents revealed that good parenting and teaching helps in better academic achievements. Amongst them 52% were girls and 40% were boys. 64% of the respondents revealed that good parenting and teaching helps in better academic achievements. Amongst them 52% were girls and 40% were boys. 64% of the respondents shift to other streams if they did not achieve their goals and only 16 tried to work hard to achieve their goals.

Table 1: Adolescence is period of Stress

Option	Girls	%age	Boys	%age	Total
• Yes	14	56.00	16	64.00	60.00
• No	11	44.00	9	36.00	40.00
	25	100.00	25	100.00	100.00
If yes why					
• Changes occur	05	20.00	09	36.00	28.00
• Making Career	02	8.00	03	12.00	16.00
• Burden	02	8.00	03	12.00	10.00
• Attractions	-	-	1	4.00	2.00
• Any other	01	4.00	*	*	2.00

Table 1 predicts that overall 60% of the respondents said that adolescence is a period of stress and storm. Amongst them 64% were boys and 56% were girls. The reason is that in adolescence stage different primary and secondary changes occur. 40% of the respondents said adolescence is not a period of stress and storm. Amongst them 64% were boys and only 14% were girls.

Data predicted that overall 68% of the respondents said that stress does not affect academics when physical changes occur. Amongst them 76% were boys and 60% were girls while as 32% of the respondents said that stress affects academics. Amongst them 40% were girls and 24% were boys. The reason is that we are not able to concentrate on studies and we are unfamiliar with changes.

Overall 46% of the respondents experienced stress in academics. Amongst them 52% were girls and 40% were boys. 30% of the respondents experience stress regarding career. Amongst them 32% were boys and 28% were girls overall 10% of the respondents felt stress regarding family. Amongst them 12% were boys and 8% were girls.

Overall 60% of the respondents liked to study. Amongst them 64% were girls and 56% were boys while as 40% of the respondents did not like to study. The reasons were that teachers were strict and they did not get time for other activities.

Table 2 shows that overall 78% of the respondents were stressed due to competition. Amongst them 88% were boys and 68% girls. This study is similar to the study revealed by Tynkkyen's (2012) on academic stress and coping strategies.

Table 2: Stress due to competition

Option	Girls	%age	Boys	%age	Total
• Yes	17	68.00	22	88.00	78.00
• No	08	32.00	03	12.00	22.00
	25	100.00	25	100.00	100.00

Fear of Exams

Option	Girls	%age	Boys	%age	Total
• Yes	10	40.00	11	44.00	42.00
• No	15	60.00	14	56.00	58.00
	25	100.00	25	100.00	100.00
If yes why					
• Don't want to score less marks	02	8.99	03	12.00	10.00
• Due to competition	02	8.00	02	8.00	8.00
• Any other	04	16.00	08	32.00	24.00

Overall 76% of the respondents were comfortable in sharing feeling with others. Amongst them 80% were girls and 72% were boys. Respondents were comfortable in sharing feeling with siblings, parents and friends.

Table 3: Health Problems

Health problem	Girls	%age	Boys	%age	Total
• Frequent Headache	11	44.00	13	52.00	48.00
• Thyroid Blood Pressure	02	8.00	01	4.00	6.00
• Stomach Irritation	*	*	01	4.00	2.00
• Orthopedic Problem	04	16.00	05	20.00	18.00
	08	32.00	05	25.00	26.00
	25	100.00	25	100.00	100.00

Table 3 shows that over 48% of the respondents had frequent headache. Amongst them 52% were boys and 44% were girls, 26% of the respondents said that they suffered from orthopedic problem. Amongst them 32% were girls and 25% were boys. 18% of the respondents had stomach irritation. Amongst them 20% were boys and 16% were girls 2% of the respondents had blood pressure and 6% had thyroid problem. Majority liked their mothers the most.

Majority i.e. 84% of the girls felt bad when their result was not good as compared to 68% boys. Overall 34% of the respondents felt bored with school amongst them 48% were boys as compared to 20% of girls. Regarding interest towards extracurricular activities 80% of the boys showed interest as compared to the 32% of the girls. Only 6% of the respondents were afraid of teaching staff all were girls.

Overall 44% of the respondents liked their mothers. Amongst them 48% were girls and 40% were boys, 32% of the respondents liked their fathers, 24% of the respondents liked their grandparents. Amongst them 28% were boys and 20% were girls. Overall 76% of the respondents felt bad when their results were not good. Amongst them 84% were girls and 68% were boys, 24% of the respondents did not feel bad. Amongst them 32% were boys' and 165 were girls.

Data also indicated that overall 62% of the respondents had more than 3 friends. Amongst them 56% were boys and 68% were girls 30% of the respondents had 3 friends. Amongst them 32% were girls and 28% were boys, 8% of the respondents had 2 friends.

Also 84% of the respondents said that it is difficult for them to express in the class. Amongst them 88% were boys and 80% were girls. In comparison only 16% of the respondents had difficulty in expressing. Amongst them 20% were girls and 12% were boys. The reason given by the respondent was that they were shy and were not outspoken that's why it was difficult for them to express in the class. Also 70% of the respondents felt that they did not have poor memory. Amongst them 72 were boys and 68% were girls while as 30% of the respondents felt that they had poor memory. Amongst them 32% were girls and 28% were boys. 56% of the respondents didn't compare their grades with their siblings. Amongst them 60% were boys and 52% were girls. 48% of the respondents sometimes liked their parents indulged in their dressing style. Amongst them 52% were boys and 44% were girls. Data also indicated that overall 74% of the respondents said that they felt bad when their friends scored better marks. Amongst them 76% were girls and 72% were boys.

Table 4: Coping Strategy When Stressed

Option	Girls	%age	Boys	%age	Total
• Talk to friend	03	12.00	08	32.00	22.00
• Talk to parent	*	*	05	20.00	10.00
• Offer prayers	13	52.00	06	24.00	38.00
• Relax and go to sleep	04	16.00	05	20.00	18.00
• Any other	05	20.00	01	4.00	12.00
	25	100.00	25	100.00	100.00

Table 4 indicates that 38% of the respondents said that they offer prayers when they are stressed. Amongst them 52% were girls and 24% were boys 22% of the respondents said they talk to the friend when stressed. Amongst them 32% were boys and 12% were girls, 18% of the respondents relax and go to sleep. Amongst them 20% were boys and 16% were girls, 12% of the respondents watch TV and listen to music and only 10% of the respondents walk to their parents when they are stressed. Overall 48% of the parents respondents said that they provide religious education to their children. Overall 72% of the respondents said that their daily activities are monitored by parents.

Data predicts that overall 38% of the parent respondents said that they scold their children when they don't want to go to school. Amongst them 60% were girls and 16% were boys.

Table5: Option Given By Parents Regarding Respondent's Career

Option	Girls	%age	Boys	%age	Total
• Doctor	14	56.00	09	36.00	46.00
• Depend on my child	03	12.00	07	28.00	20.00
• Any other	08	32.00	09	36.00	34.00
	20	100.00	25	100.00	100.00

Table 5 showed that overall 46% of the parent respondents said that they want their children to become doctors by profession. Amongst them 56% were girls and 36% were boys, 34% of the respondents said that they want their children to join journalism and fashion designing.

VI. CONCLUSION

To sum up it is concluded that majority of the respondents were of the view that teachers were favorable to them. It was found that adolescence is a period of stress and storm. Academics was found to be the main stress among adolescence. Besides that peer pressure and parental pressures were also some stressors among adolescents. It was found that during the period of adolescence physical changes occur which mainly affect academics. Boys were found to get bored from school as compared to girls and boys showed more interest towards extracurricular activities. Adolescent girls were over concerned about studies and felt anxious when they scored less marks in examinations. Regarding coping strategies majority of the adolescents liked to offer prayers when they were stressed.

Limitations of the study:

The study was restricted to Srinagar district only

Sample size was small.

Recommendations:

- Parents should be counseled for handling adolescents as it is a stage of stress for adolescents
- Further research can be taken using larger sample
- Proper counseling should be given to adolescents regarding their career options.

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