



A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON STRESS, ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION AMONG MALE AND FEMALE SCHOOL GOING ADOLESCENTS

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Abstract: Adolescence is a crucial phase in one's life and the presence of conditions like depression, anxiety and stress at this stage of life is a matter of serious concern. Academic pressure, parental pressure, peer pressure and physical and psychological changes accompanied with this stage of life can make the adolescents stressed out, anxious and depressed. Gender has been found to be associated with these problems. The present study was undertaken to measure and compare the stress, anxiety and depression among male and female school going adolescents. It was hypothesized that female adolescent students would have significantly higher level of stress, anxiety and depression. A total sample of 60 male adolescent students (30 Hindu and 30 Muslim) and 60 female adolescent students (30 Hindu and 30 Muslim) from 5 private high schools of Hazaribag district were selected. Quota sampling was used to select the sample. Data regarding socio-demographic characteristics were collected by a self-constructed Personal Data Sheet. Depression Anxiety and Stress Scale-42 (DASS-42) was used to study the variables of stress, anxiety and depression. Data was analyzed using mean and Mann Whitney U test. Results indicated that female adolescent students had significantly higher level of stress than male adolescent students ($p < 0.05$). But no significant gender difference was found in terms of anxiety and depression.

Keywords: adolescence, gender, stress, anxiety, depression

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is an important phase of life. World Health Organization (1997) defines "adolescents" as individuals who are in the 10-19 years age group. In adolescence, rapid physical and psychological changes occur which culminates in sexual maturity (Marshall, 1978). Many adolescents face tough choices regarding schoolwork, family matters, sexuality, drugs, alcohol, and social life.

A school is an institution which provides learning spaces and learning environments for the teaching of students under the direction of teachers. A major part of adolescent's lives and a significant portion of their time is spent in school. Stress, anxiety and depression are the most common psychological problems that most of the school going adolescents experience today.

Stress is the condition that results when person-environment interaction make the individual to perceive a discrepancy, whether real or not, between the demands of a situation and the resources of the person's biological, psychological or social systems. When a person feels that he is unable to cope up with environmental demands with his resources, he experiences stress. Many physiological and psychological reactions occur in stress. Anxiety is often an unpleasant and uncomfortable feeling of worry, fear and apprehension accompanied by one or more bodily sensations over an anticipated problem. Depression is basically a state of low mood and aversion to activity that can affect a person's thoughts, behavior, feelings and sense of well-being. Depression is a serious mood disorder that has been affecting many adolescents in the world (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

Stress, anxiety and depression are normal part of an adolescent's life. Physical and psychological changes, increasing academic pressure, parental and sibling conflicts, peer pressure, bullying, competition, difficult choices regarding career etc. often lead to stress, anxiety and depression among adolescents (Spirito et al. 1991). Many adolescents all over the world are facing these problems. A modest amount of stress and anxiety actually help adolescents in performing better but when it goes beyond that level it starts causing significant problems (Sapolsky & Robert, 2004). They may refuse to go to school, their academic performance can also decrease, they become irritable and conflicts increase in interpersonal relationships. In extreme condition many adolescents even commit suicide (Essau et al., 2000).

Stress, anxiety and depression occur in both male and female adolescents. Gender differences have also been seen in stress, anxiety and depression. These differences generally appear in early adolescence and then remain throughout the adult life span. According to a research until age 11, girls and boys are equally likely to develop an anxiety disorder. But by age 15, girls are six times more likely to have one than boys are (McGee, R. et al., 1992). Adolescent Girls are more vulnerable to stress, anxiety and depression. Hormonal functioning, gender based roles, gender based violence and socialization pattern are said to be responsible for this difference (Young, 1998).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

➤ **Dr. Indira Dhull & Sunita Kumari** (2015) undertook a study to examine academic stress among adolescents in relation to gender. 123 males and 89 females of class 10th were selected in the research. It was hypothesized that no significant difference between academic stress of male and female adolescents would be found. Stress Inventory for School Students (S.I.S.S) by Singh & Rani was used to collect the data. For statistical analysis, t-test was used. The results suggested that female adolescents had significantly higher level of stress than male adolescents.

➤ In a research article by **Jessica Hess** (2014), she studied the prevalence of anxiety among high school students. A total of 146 students (57 males and 89 females) from a rural high school in the Northeast United States were involved in the study. Convenience sampling was used. The Screen for Childhood Anxiety Related Emotional Disorders (SCARED) was used to assess student's level of anxiety. ANOVA, multivariate tests and chi-square tests were conducted to compare mean scores. The results indicated that significant number of adolescents experienced anxiety and adolescent females experienced significantly higher levels of anxiety than males.

➤ **Dr. Supreet Kaur Meenu** (2014) conducted a comparative study on depression among rural and urban secondary school students in relation to their achievement motivation. The sample consisted of 150 students (75 males & 75 females) studying in government and private schools of Hoshiarpur district, Punjab. Purposive sampling and random sampling were used to select samples. Beck Depression Inventory (BDI-II; Beck, Steer & Brown, 1996) and Deo-Mohan achievement motivation scales (1986) were used to study the variables, 't'-ratio was used to find out differences and coefficient of correlation was used to find the relationship between dependent and independent variables. The study revealed that there was no significant gender difference on the variable of depression among secondary students.

➤ In a research article by **Nazan Bilgel & Nuran Bayram** (2014), they investigated the prevalence of depression, anxiety, stress and anger in Turkish high school students. The sample consisted of 1503 students (958 females and 545 males) from grade 9 to grade 12 from 6 public high schools. Depression-Anxiety and Stress Scale-42 (DASS-42) and Multi Dimensional Anger Scale (MDAS) were used. Participants were between ages 14-19 years. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, Mann Whitney U test and Kruskal Wallis Variance analysis were used. Results indicated that students

had mild depression, anxiety and stress level. Female students' depression, anxiety and stress levels were found to be significantly higher than male students.

AIM AND HYPOTHESES

The aim of the present field work was to measure and compare the stress, anxiety and depression among male and female school going adolescents.

This present field work was done with following objectives:

- (i) To measure and compare the stress level of male adolescent students and female adolescent students from private schools.
- (ii) To measure and compare the anxiety level of male adolescent students and female adolescent students from private schools.
- (iii) To measure and compare the depression level of male adolescent students and female adolescent students from private schools.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses have been formulated for the present study:

- (i) Female adolescent students will have significantly higher level of stress than male adolescent students.
- (ii) Female adolescent students will have significantly higher level of anxiety than male adolescent students.
- (iii) Female adolescent students will have significantly higher level of depression than male adolescent students.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

60 male and 60 female adolescents were selected as sample.

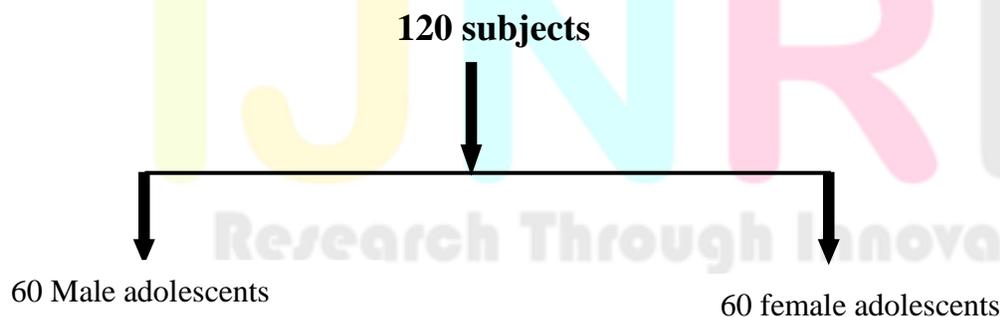
Sample area

Saraswati Shishu Vidya Mandir, Kumhartoli, Fahima Academy, Pugmil, Owasis High School, Pugmil, St. Augustin high School, Pugmil and National Public School, New area of Hazaribag District were sample area.

Sample Technique/Method

Quota Sampling

Sample distribution



Inclusion

- (i) The sample must be adolescents of 10th class.
- (ii) The sample must be studying in private school.
- (iii) The physical and mental health of the sample must be normal.
- (iv) The sample must be Hindu and Muslim.

Exclusion criteria

- (i) Handicapped sample was excluded.

- (ii) Christian and Sarna samples were excluded.
- (iii) Samples suffering from chronic diseases like Cancer, AIDS and Hepatitis B were excluded.

Tools used

(i) Personal Data Sheet (PDS):

A semi structured Performa was prepared by researcher to collect information about the socio-demographic variables of the participants such as name, age, religion, residence, socio-economic status and family type etc.

(ii) Depression Anxiety and Stress Scale-42 (DASS-42):

Depression Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS) was developed by Lovibond and Lovibond in 1995. The DASS is a 42-item questionnaire which includes three self-report scales designed to measure the negative emotional states of depression, anxiety and stress. Each of the three scales contains 14 items. Respondents are asked to use 4-point severity/frequency scales to rate the extent to which they have experienced each state over the past week. The reliability scores of the scales rate the Depression scale at 0.91, the Anxiety scale at 0.84 and the Stress scale at 0.90. Concurrent validity coefficient on normal population and clinical population is found .87 and .96 respectively.

Procedure

The data collection procedure in present study was planned in two phase. In first phase, researcher selected the schools randomly and then got consent from the principals of the schools to conduct the study there. In phase two, researcher administered the proposed tests PDS and DASS-42 on the participants of group 'A' and group 'B'. After data collection, data of both groups was gathered and tabulated.

Statistical analysis

Mean and Mann whitney U test were used for analyzing data.

RESULT

The information gathered was coded in tabulation form and subjected to appropriate statistical analysis. The researcher tabulated the whole result in Table I and Table II



Variables	Categories	Sample size		Total
		Male adolescent students	Female adolescent students	
Age	14	10	13	120
	15	30	31	
	16	19	16	
	17	1	-	
Religion	Hindu	30	30	120
	Islam	30	30	
Category	General	22	21	120
	OBC	38	39	
Place of residence	Rural	16	28	120
	Urban	44	32	
Type of family	Nuclear	23	43	120
	Joint	37	17	
Family monthly income	Below 25000	43	40	120
	25000-50000	9	12	
	50000-75000	5	7	
	75000 or above	3	1	
Parents' occupation	Private job	51	54	120
	Government job	9	8	

Table II :Result Table

Variables	Group-A Male Adolescent Students N=60	Group-B Female Adolescent Students N=60	df	U-Value	Z-Value
	Mean	Mean			
Stress	16.20	19.23	118	1424.50	-1.97*
Anxiety	12.02	12.93	118	1647.00	-0.80
Depression	14.13	13.67	118	1762.00	-0.20

*= significant at 0.05 level

Table II shows the scores of male and female school going adolescents on the domains of stress, anxiety and depression.

The mean value of stress scores for male adolescent students and female adolescent students are 16.20 and 19.23 respectively. This means that male adolescent students were suffering from mild level of stress and female adolescent students were suffering from moderate level of stress. After analysis it was found that both groups differed significantly in terms of stress ($u=1424.50$, $z= -1.97$, $p<0.05$).

Hence the hypothesis No. 1, “Female adolescent students will have significantly higher level of stress than male adolescent students”, is accepted.

The mean value of anxiety scores for male adolescent students and female adolescent students are 12.02 and 12.93 respectively. This indicates that both male adolescent students and female adolescent students were suffering from moderate level of anxiety. After analysis no significant difference was found between male adolescent students and female adolescent students in terms of anxiety ($u=1647.00$, $z= -0.80$, $p>0.05$).

Hence the hypothesis No. 2, “Female adolescent students will have significantly higher level of anxiety than male adolescent students”, is rejected.

The mean value of depression scores for male adolescent students and female adolescent students are 14.13 and 13.67 respectively. This suggests that male adolescent students were suffering from moderate level of depression and female adolescent students were suffering from mild level of depression. After analysis no significant difference was found between male adolescent students and female adolescent students in terms of depression ($u=1762.00$, $z=- 0.20$, $p>0.05$).

Hence the hypothesis No. 3, “Female adolescent students will have significantly higher level of depression than male adolescent students”, is rejected.

DISCUSSION

The main objective of the present field work was to measure and compare the levels of stress, anxiety and depression among male and female school going adolescents. It is observed that adolescents are suffering from stress, anxiety and depression. However, the result of the present study suggests that the difference between the levels of stress, anxiety and depression between them is not always significant.

The study shows that male and female school going adolescents differ significantly in terms of stress ($p<0.05$) and the level of stress is higher in female adolescents (mean value=19.23) than male adolescents (mean value=16.2). So the first hypothesis of the study that female adolescent students will have significantly higher level of stress than male adolescent students is accepted. When this finding is considered against previous findings, it is found that there are many researches which support the findings of the present study. Study conducted by Dr Indira Dhull & Sunita Kumari (2015) indicates that female adolescent students have significantly higher stress than male adolescent students.

The second hypothesis that female adolescent students will have significantly higher level of anxiety than male adolescent students is rejected. Though the level of anxiety is found higher among female adolescent students (mean value=12.93) than male adolescent students (12.02), this difference is not significant.

The results of the present study also suggest that the level of depression was slightly higher in male adolescent students (mean value= 14.13) than female adolescent students (mean value=13.67) but this difference is not significant. Hence the third hypothesis that female adolescent students will have significantly higher level of depression than male adolescent students is rejected. Study conducted by Dr. Supreet kaur Meenu (2014) support the findings of the present study.

CONCLUSION

- (i) Female adolescent students had significantly higher level of stress than male adolescent students ($p<0.05$).
- (ii) Female adolescent students and male adolescent students did not differ significantly in terms of anxiety. But the mean value was found higher in female adolescents.
- (iii) Female adolescent students and male adolescent students did not differ significantly in terms of depression. However, the mean value was found higher in male adolescents.

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