

Research Article

## A Study on Stress Coping Strategies and Emotional Stability among High School Students

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### ABSTRACT

Stress is a typical physical response to events that make us to feel threatened or upset our balance in some way. Managing stress is all about taking charge: taking charge of our thoughts, emotions, environment, and the way we deal with problems. We can reduce stress in life by nurturing our life. The present study is a study on stress coping strategies and emotional stability among high school students of Chennai District. The research was of survey type, which consists of purposive sampling of 200 high school students of Chennai City. The researcher used self-made questionnaire for Stress coping strategies and the standardized tool for Emotional stability (Goldberg, 1999) were administrated to the sample selected. The interpretation of data was done with the statistical methods mean, standard deviation, t- test and Chi- Square. It was founded that, there is significant association between Stress Coping Strategies and emotional stability among high school students.

**Keywords:** stress coping strategies, emotional stability, high school students, mental health, academic performance, adolescent behaviour, and student wellbeing

### INTRODUCTION

Every person encounters stress, understood as the nonspecific response of the body to a demand made upon it. The variance in the ability to handle stress can be attributed to stress tolerance. Stress tolerance can be affected by a number of things, including genetics, life style habits, and coping strategies.

The method of coping with stressful events depends on the circumstances, childhood experiences, history of learning and personality dispositions (Bolger, 1990; Suls, 1999). Stress coping strategies refer to the behaviours and the ways of thinking that people deal with stressful

events, which most of them associated with negative emotions. In fact, coping behaviour is one of the major determinates of individual differences in psychological stress responses (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, and Aldwin, 1994) .Coping responses are effortful attempts to manage stress. The act of coping can exhaust psychological recourses needed for effective coping.

### STRESS COPING STRATEGIES

Stress is the tension or pressure we feel in our bodies as we respond to everyday events or events that make us feel uncomfortable. Stress is a natural part of living. It can be positive and motivating. But it can also produce an uneasy feeling. We have problems when we have too much stress (we feel tense) or too little (we feel bored and unmotivated).

When strong feelings come up, we all have ways we try to cope with them. Some of our approaches, or strategies, are successful; others are not.

Have the following terms:

- **Positive coping strategy:** This is a strategy that enables to restore emotional balance; feel better about our self; is respectful of others, and property; and helps to solve the problem.
- **Negative coping strategy.** This is a strategy that does not restore emotional balance; may be harmful to our self, others, or property; does not solve the problem, and may create additional problems.
- **Neutral coping strategy.** This is a strategy that is neither positive nor negative, but used to excess, could be harmful.
- **Time-out strategy.** This is a strategy that helps you to calm down and restore emotional balance. It is only temporary and must be used with another positive strategy in order to solve the problem.

Adolescent school students would not have enough experiences to deal with stressful events. Educational and social status may influence their reactions to stressors. Transferring from childhood to adulthood can press young people and make them anxious, depressed or aggressive. Childhood experiences and life events determine and lead our coping behaviours in adulthood. Hence the increased level of perceived stress is associated with accumulative stress; Coping might be a solution to overcome increased perceived stress.

## IMPORTANCE OF COPING SKILLS

- All students should be taught coping skills and they should regularly be modelled for all students.
- When a student frequently has melt downs, falls apart, cries, experiences anxiety, has issues with friends.
- When students seem to have trouble handling criticism, failure, disappointment, conflict, decision-making, etc
- When students have trouble appropriately expressing emotions, like sadness, disappointment, frustration, happiness, excitement, etc
- When we have to frequently stop to console, encourage, or settle children down.
- Improves self-confidence and self-esteem
- Improves students' independence
- Helps students to be more assertive
- Decreases the time it takes to deal with students' crises, issues, meltdowns, etc
- Provides students a good life long skills
- Helps to empower students
- Improves student problem solving behaviours

## EMOTIONAL STABILITY

Emotional Stability refers to one's ability to adapt to stressful situations or crises. More stable people are able to "roll with the punches" and adapt to adversity without lasting difficulties; less stable people have a harder time with stress and life changes, both major and minor. It's been found that those who deal with minor stresses more easily can also manage major crises with greater ease, so resilience emotional stability has its benefits for daily life as well as for the rare major catastrophe.

## NEED FOR THE STUDY

Rates among young people have been increasing to such an extent that they are now the group at highest risk in a third of countries. Suicide ranks as the second cause of death worldwide among 15-19 year olds, with at least one lakh adolescents dying by suicide every year. And also, emotionally unstable, impulsive adolescents relied more on emotion-focus\_edcoping tactics such as venting, avoidance or distraction, and they showed more frequent signs of aggression. In such condition empowering with coping skills can help adolescents to learn and

practice problem-solving skills and develop social skills. Help them understand that they can cope in different ways and develop ways to see problems and situations in a different light. Help them learn and practice skills that will allow them to participate in and enjoy new activities.

#### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

**Khan et al. (2005)** conducted a study on coping strategies among male and female teachers with high and low job strain. The results of the present study indicate that both male and female teachers used the same strategies to cope with job strain. Significant difference was not found to exist between the male and female teachers on different types of coping strategies except use of humour. Teachers have adopted a range of coping strategies most tend to be functional or active and some are dysfunctional or passive (i.e. self-distraction and use of humour).

**Nasir Mohammad Bhati (2014)**, conducted a study on Emotional Stability and Depression in Orphan Secondary School Students. The aim of the present study was to find out the mental health status among orphan secondary school students in comparison with non orphan secondary school students of Kashmir valley. The sample of the present study consists of 210 secondary school students (131 Orphan) and (79 Non orphan) taken from different schools and orphanages. The age of the sample group ranges from 13 to 17 years with mean age of 15 years. Purposive sampling

technique was used for research purpose. For assessment of Emotional stability among orphan and non-orphan adolescents, mental health scale developed by Alpana Sen Gupta and Arun Kumar Singh (1983) was used and; for depression Beck's Depression Inventory was used. For studying the difference between the group's t-test was used. For assessing levels of Emotional security and Depression in sample groups, quartiles were used. Result findings suggest significant differences in Emotional stability and Depressive levels between the two groups. Orphans were found at the lower side of Emotional stability and higher levels of depression as compared to their counterpart non-orphan secondary school students.

**Osborne. et.al, (2009)** conducted a study on examination of personality, emotional intelligence, coping, gender and subjective well-being with perceived stress (trait and state) in undergraduate students. This multivariate study aimed to further understand student stress. Associations between personality, emotional intelligence, coping and subjective well-being with perceived stress (trait and state) were examined in 238 undergraduate students, using self-

report measures. Gender differences in these variables were also investigated. The results showed that students low in emotional stability, extraversion, emotional intelligence, subjective well-being and those with a tendency to use emotion-focused coping are at risk of greater perceived stress. Higher-order emotional intelligence/coping associations were identified, which in turn had an influence on perceived stress.

## OBJECTIVES

- ❖ To explore the difference if any in Stress Coping Strategies of high school students with respect to some selected personal variables.
- ❖ To study the association if any between Stress Coping Strategies and emotional stability and with respect to the selected personal variables.

## HYPOTHESIS:

- ❖ There is no significant difference in Stress Coping Strategies of high school students owing to differences in terms of the variables viz., gender, Type of management and Type of family.
- ❖ There is no significant association between Stress Coping Strategies and emotional stability among high school students.

## METHODOLOGY

The identified problem is studied by following the survey method of research.

## POPULATION & SAMPLE

The sample constituted 200 High school students in the schools of Chennai District in Tamilnadu were taken with due representation given to the variables viz., gender, Type of management and Type of family.

## TOOLS USED

For the present study the following tool was employed to collect the data.

- i. **Stress coping strategies** : Constructed by Investigator
- ii. **Emotional stability** : Emotional Stability (Goldberg, 1999)

## STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES

In this study the collected data were computing and analyzed by using appropriate statistical technique such as Mean, standard Deviation, 't' - test and Chi-square test.

## ANALYSIS OF DATA AND INTERPRETATION

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant difference in Stress Coping Strategies of high school students owing to differences in terms of the variables viz., gender, Type of management and Type of family.

**Table: 1**

**T - Ratios for Difference in Stress Coping Strategies owing to Differences in Gender, Type of management and Type of family**

Variables	Sub category	N	Mean	SD	DF	tValue	Level of Sig.
Gender	Male	76	47.32	7.805	198	1.19	NS
	Female	124	48.52	6.28			
Type of management	Government	40	47.70	8.086	198	0.36	NS
	Private	160	48.15	6.878			
Type of family	Joint	60	46.83	5.895	198	1.65	NS
	Nuclear	140	48.59	7.251			

It is clearly seen from the Table 1 that the 't' values, 1.19, 0.36 and 1.65 are not significant at 0.05 level. It is understood from the results that there is no significant difference in Stress Coping Strategies of high school students owing to differences in terms of the variables viz., gender, Type of management and Type of family. Hence, the framed null hypothesis is accepted.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant association between Stress Coping Strategies and emotional stability among high school students

**Table: 2**  
**Chi- Square Analysis for Stress Coping Strategies and emotional stability among high school students**

Variables	Sub category	Stress Coping Strategies			DF	Chi-Square	Level of significance
		Low	Average	High			
Emotional Stability	Low	Fo 019	024	007	4	21.11	8
		Fo 12.0	22.5	15.5			
	Average	Fo 024	5.72	027			
		Fo 22.6	42.3	028			
	High	Fo 005	023	007			
		Fo 13.4	25.2	17.4			

It is clearly seen from the Table 2 that the Chi-square value 21.11 is significant at 0.01 levels. It is understood from the results that there is significant association between Stress Coping Strategies and emotional stability among high school students. Thus the null hypothesis is rejected.

## MAJOR FINDINGS

- ❖ There is no significant difference in Stress Coping Strategies of high school students owing to differences in terms of the variables viz., gender, Type of management and Type of family.
- ❖ There is significant association between Stress Coping Strategies and emotional stability among high school students.

## DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to find out if there is any association between Stress Coping Strategies and emotional stability among high school students. The first finding reveals that there is no significant difference in Stress Coping Strategies of high school students owing to differences in terms of the variables viz., gender, Type of management and Type of family. This finding is in conformity with **Khan *et al.* (2005)** who reported that significant difference was not found to exist between the male and female teachers on different types of coping strategies except use of humour.

The second findings reveal that there is significant association between Stress Coping Strategies and emotional stability among high school students. This finding is in conformity with **Osborne, et.al, (2009)** who reported that Higher-order emotional intelligence/coping associations were identified, which in turn had an influence on perceived stress. Hence there exists a relationship between Stress Coping Strategies and emotional stability among high school students.

### **EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS**

Education is the process of human enlightenment and empowerment for achievement of a better and quality of life. A key aspect of human development as important to basic survival as intellect is the acquisition of socio-cognitive and emotional coping skills. If the individual doesn't have emotional stability in, chances are that the child him/herself won't be emotionally stable. Then the child will grow up and become emotionally unstable. People who are emotionally stable have the tools for coping with difficult situations and maintaining a positive outlook. This approach, builds skills in these particular areas to strengthen a young' protective factors, promote the competencies necessary to make a healthy transition to adulthood, and promote his or her adoption of positive behaviours.

Effective programs focus skills to issues relevant to a young's developmental tasks and social context, such as personal development, understanding peer relations, or managing emotions by helping the students to select appropriate extracurricular activities and limit over scheduling, Encouraging physical activity, good nutrition, and rest, Encouraging the expression of feelings, teaching and model good emotional responses, encouraging healthy and diverse friendships, Monitor television programs that could worry your child and pay attention to the use of computer games, movies, and the Internet, Teaching students to problem solve, Remind students of his or her ability to get through tough times, particularly with the love and support of family and friends and Seek the assistance of a physician, school psychologist, school counsellor, or school social worker if stress continues to be a concern.

### **CONCLUSION**

Stress is a very familiar condition faced by the students when they are unable to bear the risks involved in education. The main sources of stress are academic and time concerns,

fear of failure, classroom interactions, and economic issues. Apart from this, the parental system also affects a lot to these students. The parents have unlimited expectation from their children and therefore they impose their own desires on them. The impact of these influences results in a number of students reporting emotional problems, anxiety, stress, and other neurotic problems. They are often found in frightening, abusive, depressing, threatening, competitive, unpredictable, and confusing situations. The percentage of suicides is more among the students compared to the other ones and these suicides are mostly associated with academic failure or under achievement.

Due to the inability to cope up with the mounting Stress some students develop illness, physiological disorders and psychological problems. There have been instances of students leaving the course at this juncture due to the inability to manage the Stress and even students committed suicide.

Empowering the students with coping skills refers to efforts to overcome, diminish or endure the demands resulting from Stress. In other words coping refers to individual's reaction to a Stressor. Coping Strategies vary in their adaptive value and could range from being helpful, adaptive and solution oriented to being maladaptive, harmful and destructive. Coping Strategies are actions that people take to master, tolerate, reduce or minimize the effects of Stressors. It is not a permanently fixed individual trait or disposition but a transactional process which is continually modified by experience.

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