

A Study of Causes of Stress and Stress Management Among Youth – A Global Perspective

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ABSTRACT:

Stress is a condition of mental pressure for particular individuals facing problems from environmental and social well-being which leads to so many diseases. Young age is the critical period because at this time youth face lots of changes in his/her life. They are expected to be the elites in the society. Thus, they should enhance their stress management abilities so as to live a healthy life after entering the society. When a child enters into the youth age, he needs to not only adapt himself to the new life and new environment but also be familiar with many new people, events, and things. Therefore, understanding the sources of stress among them and how they can cope with stress is very important. The researcher found that stress mainly comes from academic tests, interpersonal relations, relationship problems, life changes, and career exploration. Such stress may usually cause psychological, physical, and behavioral problems. This study finds out the causes of stress among youth. So, after identifying the causes of stress, the researcher suggests that more emphasis can be given to development stage of child into adolescence. They should be brought up in a positive environment. More emphasis should be given to the outdoor activities and create hostile learning environment by minimizing the negative impact of stress. The findings will help the individual students, scholars, lecturers, career and counseling centers.

Keywords: Stress, Symptoms, Youth.

BACK DROP OF THE STUDY:

Selye (1956) states that “any external event or any internal drive which threatens to upset the organism equilibrium is stress”. **Stress is a condition or feeling experienced when a person perceives that demands exceed the personal and social resources the individual is able to mobilize.** In the present competitive age, it is reported that the young generation is found to be more in stress. We got the information related to depression, attempt to commit suicide and some psychological symptoms among the youth. Sometimes, we got the information related to suicide, attempted suicide, depression, dropout and many more psychological symptoms

among the youth. Now scenario has been changing as most of us are aware about the stressor which affects the college students and maintains the environment which induces the positive thinking among youth. Many measures have also been taken by the individuals and different organizations to conduct various programs to reduce the stress.

Adolescence is a dangerous period where young people may experience loss of self-confidence and role confusion. For them, stress mainly comes from academic tests, interpersonal relations, relationship problems, financial, and career exploration. Such stress may usually cause psychological, physical, and behavioral problems. Taking all these factors into account, an effort is made to understand stress and emotional adjustments of today's youth. The inference of this study may lead to better adjustment and academic performance of the students.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- To study the symptoms of stress among Youth.
- To measure the level of stress among the Youth.
- To know the strategies to cope up with stressor by the Youth.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

This study tries to find out the causes of stress among the youth. So, after identifying the causes, the researcher suggests that more emphasis can be given to the development stage of child into adolescence. They should be brought up in a positive environment. More emphasis should be given to the outdoor activities and to create a conducive learning environment by minimizing the negative impact of stressors.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

There have been many studies (Schafer, 1996; Fisher, 1994; Altmaier, 1983; Greenberg & Valletutti, 1980), which have reported strong relationship between stress and college students.

According to Lazarus & Folkman (1984), stress is a mental or physical phenomenon formed through one's cognitive appraisal of the stimulation and is a result of one's interaction with the environment. The existence of stress depends on the existence of the stressor.

Feng (1992) and Volpe (2000) defined stressor as anything that challenges an individual's adaptability or stimulates an individual's body or mentality. Stress can be caused by

environmental factors, psychological factors, biological factors, and social factors. Academic stress among students have long been researched on, and researchers have identified stressors as too many assignments, competition with other students, failures, lack of pocket money.

(Fairbrother and Warn, 2003), poor relationships with other students or lecturers, family or problems at home. Institutional (university) level stressors are overcrowded lecture halls, (Ongori, 2007; Awino and Agolla, 2008), semester system, and inadequate resources to perform academic work..

Researchers (Malach Pines and Keinan, 2007; Ongori, 2007; Ongori and Agolla, 2008; Agolla, 2009) have long identified stress symptoms as lack of energy, taking over the counter medication, high blood pressure, feeling depressed, increase in appetite, trouble concentrating, restlessness, tensions and anxiety among others. An individual experiencing one of these factors is likely to be a victim of stress. Although this may also depend on how the individual appraises the situation, and how resilient is the person. While the negative effects of stress on an individual may vary considerably from one student based on their previous encounter with situations and the resilience of the individual student. In their findings, (Jaramillo et al., 2005; Stevenson and Harper, 2006) point out that, the perception of the individual determines whether or not the stressor has a detrimental effect; that is whether it causes physical or psychological symptoms of stress in the individual.

Another reason why little research has been done on student's stress could be due to the fact that students' presence in the institution has no direct relationship to the quality of education they get. We argue that, unless the university takes appropriate measures that take care of well-being of the students, the student's health may compromise the quality of education they are supposed to get (Daniels and Harris, 2000; Smith et al., 2000; Finlayson, 2003). Gibbons and Gibbons (2007) and McCarty et al. (2007) have carried out extensive research on stress and found out that, stress is associated with how an individual appraises situations and the coping strategies adopted.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The tool employed for generating responses was a questionnaire-based survey of young candidates who are students or are working in different organizations. The information was collected from both primary and secondary data.

CAUSES OF STRESS AMONG STUDENTS

The events that provoke stress are called stressors, and they cover a whole range of situations ranging from outright physical danger to making a class presentation or taking a semester's test of your toughest subject. Some of the main stressor among students are:

Academics-The worry about academic performance can cause stress symptoms such as anxiety, insomnia or changes in your appetite and overall mood. According to Morehouse State University, youth have poor study habits and cram last minute studying in the night before exams. The fear of exams and workload creates stress among students. The first cause of stress among university students is a lot of assignments.

Finances – All young people feel stressed out about money! Most young people do not have jobs, or the jobs that they do have don't pay as much as they would like them to. They want to maintain their lifestyle and fulfill the demand of articles like mobile, bikes and cars etc. If they fail to fulfill the requirements, then it creates stress.

Relationships – Relationships are another big aspect of stress. Everyone wants to have friends, whether they are close friends or just acquaintances. If a person finds that making friends is a bit tougher than he/ she had expected, stress is present here as well.

Career- Job Stress is a chronic disease caused among the current youth that negatively affects an individual's performance and/or overall well-being of his body and mind. Cutthroat competition, an inconsiderate work colleague, lack of job security are many causes of job stress. The students have fear of not getting job opportunities and competition in the market.

Time Management- Lack of time management also causes stress in youth, whether secondary or tertiary. Balancing academics, peer activities, and home life can be difficult. Toss in a part-time job and the challenge increases.

SOURCES OF DATA:

- (i) Secondary Data from the Internet, Magazine, Journals, Books ,etc.
- (ii) Primary Data through Questionnaire
- (iii) Contact Method
- (iv) Personal Interaction

SAMPLE SIZE:

The sample was selected from young males and females from the areas of Odisha, West Bengal,

Delhi and Maharashtra region of India on random basis. The questionnaire was distributed among 100 young people and got 78 responses.

In order to achieve the objective, both primary and secondary sources of information are relied upon. The primary data was collected through structured questionnaires apart from discussions with students.

METHODS OF ANALYSIS:

Three methods have been taken for analysis. One section highlights the symptoms of stress, the second section highlights the stressor and the third section highlights the coping strategies used by the Youth. The first part covers the different symptoms on a seven-point scale, the second part covers the causes of stress through 25 statements on five-point scale and the last section covers the ten coping strategies.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY:

H1 = There is significant relationship between age & stress.

H0 = There is no significant relationship between age & stress.

H1 = There is significant relationship between income& stress.

H0 = There is no significant relationship between income& stress.

H1 = There is significant relationship between working status of parents and stress.

H0 = There is no significant relationship between working status of parents and stress.

ANALYSIS OF DATA:

The respondents are from the different areas of India, some are working and some are pursuing their studies. The table shows that total number of respondents was 78. The maximum respondents belong to the age group of 21-22 years i.e., 39.11%, the 23-24 age group represents 22.67%, up to 20 yrs. age group represents 24.89 %. The male respondents are 30 and female are 48. Maximum respondents are from the income level of Rs. 10,000 to Rs.20,000/. Respondents are from the environment where a single parent is working.

Table 1
Distribution According to Age

Age	N	%
Up to 20 years	56	24.89
21-22 years	88	39.11
23-24 years	51	22.67
Above 25 years	25	11.11
No Response	5	2.22
Total	225	100.00

Table 2

Distribution According to Gender

Gender	N	%
Male	135	60.00
Female	90	40.00
Total	225	100.00

Table 3

Monthly Income (Family) wise Distribution

Income	N	%
Up to Rs. 10000	37	16.44
Rs. 10,0001 - Rs. 20,000	51	22.67
Rs. 20,0001 - Rs. 30,000	39	17.33
Rs. 30,0001 - Rs. 40,000	26	11.56
Rs. 50000 and above	29	12.89
No Response	43	19.11
Total	225	100.00

The following table shows the working status of parents, 14.22 % of the respondents' parents are working whereas 85.78% have a single working parent.

Table 4

Distribution According to Working Status of Mother

Working Status of Parents	N	%
Mother - Father Both Working	32	14.22

Father Working	193	85.78
Total	225	100.00

Symptoms of Stress among the youth

The result indicates that students do experience stress and symptoms as shown in Table 5 below. The highest percentage is 81.60% suffering from depression followed by Insomnia (79.82%) It is observed that most of the youth are suffering from depression, tension etc. The lifestyle of youth consists of various desires and if they are not capable to fulfill the wishes they feel somewhat stressed out. Youngsters may be unable to concentrate on academics and sports. They isolate from family activities or peer relationships. Adolescents may be experimenting with drugs and alcohol. They may have poor appetite and low immunity.

Table 5
Symptoms

Symptoms	%	Rank
Headaches	71.29	8
Tense muscles, sore neck and back	74.93	5
Fatigue	73.60	7
Anxiety, worry, phobias	67.20	10
Insomnia	79.82	2
Irritability	70.84	9
Bouts of anger	64.18	11
Boredom, Depression	78.22	3
Binge eating	81.60	1
Constipation	75.38	4
Restlessness	73.69	6

Causes of Stress

The first part of the questionnaire indicates about academics which shows the stress level at 61.81% whereas highest level of stress is generated due to relationship. It is observed that due to the increasing use of social media, the relationship stress starts increasing. The other stressor, psychological factors have 73.40%, young generation have 72.55% of financial stress and 68.39% are having career stress.

Table 6: Level of Stress of each kind

Kind of Stress	Level of stress (%)	Rank
Academics	61.81	5
Financial or Economic Stress	72.55	3
Relationship Stress	74.74	1
Future / Career Growth Stress	68.39	4
Psychological Stress	73.40	2
Overall Stress	70.18	

Coping Strategies

The different strategies used by the students to manage the stress levels are:

- ❖ Most of the students want to talk with friends (80.89%)
- ❖ Students want to become active on social networking sites to cope up with stress (76.00%)
- ❖ Students want to talk with family members to cope up with stress. (74.67%)
- ❖ Other strategies are to watch movies, play games and use the internet.

Table 7

Activity to Reduce Stress

Action	N	%	Rank
Watch movie with friends	150	66.67	4
Play Games	139	61.78	5
Talk with friends	182	80.89	1
Talk to family members	168	74.67	3
Go to picnic/excursions	75	33.33	10
Use Internet (Social networking sites -Facebook, Google+ etc.)	171	76.00	2
Listen Music	137	60.89	6
Do exercise /yoga	92	40.89	7
Read self help books	77	34.22	9
Attend cultural programmes	83	36.89	8

TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS

To test the level of significance between age and stress, F test is applied. The non-significant result occurs between the different age groups. It shows that all-age groups of youth have same factors of stress. There is overall non-significant relationship existing between different age groups

Table 7
Age and Stress

Age	N	Mean	SD	F	df	Result
Up to 20 years	56	3.57	0.66	0.518	3, 216	NS ($p > 0.05$)
21-22 years	88	3.47	0.58			
23-24 years	51	3.54	0.65			
Above 25 years	25	3.43	0.51			

To test the level of significance between income level and stress, F test is applied. The significant result occurs between the different income groups. It means that income affects the level of stress. There is overall significant relationship existing between different income groups.

Table 8
I Income and Stress

Income	N	Mean	SD	F	df	Result
Up to Rs. 10000	37	3.55	0.47	8.611	4, 177	*** ($p < 0.001$)
Rs. 10,0001 - Rs. 20,000	51	3.10	0.41			
Rs. 20,0001 - Rs. 30,000	39	3.41	0.47			
Rs. 30,0001 - Rs. 40,000	26	3.82	1.00			
Rs. 50000 and above	29	3.50	0.37			

To test the level of significance between working pattern of parents and stress, F test is applied. The significant result occurs between the parents' working pattern. This is due to the fact that when both father and mother are working, children are not getting enough time to discuss their problems and it creates stress.

Table 9
Working Status of Parents and Stress

Working Status of Parents	N	Mean	SD	Z	Result
Mother – Father Both Working	32	3.85	0.67	3.557	*** (p< 0.001)
Single Parent is Working	193	3.45	0.57		

FINDINGS

The future of any nation depends heavily on the young people since they are the leaders of the future. It is therefore, important to identify the causes, symptoms, and the consequences of stress on students. The negative effect of stress on youth is likely to pose challenge to the individual, their colleagues, and the society as a whole (Siegrist, 1998; Cartwright and Boyes, 2000). Stress poses a great threat to quality of life for the youth (Danna and Griffin, 1999; Dyck, 2001). Some of the suggestions to reduce the stress among youth are:

- ❖ Workshops to beat stress along with lectures motivating a positive lifestyle have become part of the academic curriculum, so that youngsters are being inspired to live a healthy life. Workshops play an important role as they help individuals to realize their inner strength.
- ❖ Set personal and professional objectives.
- ❖ Keep them organized and planned.
- ❖ Time management
- ❖ Update the course work
- ❖ Get involved with various activities.
- ❖ Maintain communication with family.
- ❖ Form healthy relationships.
- ❖ Share views and problems with someone.
- ❖ Positive thinking
- ❖ Adolescents should develop competencies (academic, social, life skills)
- ❖ Adolescents should take good nutritional food and exercise regularly

CONCLUSION:

From the findings, the results clearly show that the youth have a very high level of stress. The symptoms identified are binge eating, depression and headaches. It is identified that among all factors, the main causes of stress among youth are relationship stress, financial and psychological stress. They want to maintain their social networking and they are increasing the networking with the use of technology. The next stress they are feeling is career related. They have fear of job opportunity and how they survive in the competitive environment. Young respondents were able to identify some strategies to cope with stress such as meditation, enough sleeping, going out with friends and counseling. It is observed that due to the increasing use of social media, the young generation has become self-centered and only connects with technology. It reduces the physical movement of the body and spending time with relatives and friends. All these create stress which increases the case of depression and suicide. It is necessary and suggested to the young people to make their objectives planned systematically, use technology within limit and share their emotions with their loved ones.

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