

Comparative Study

A Comparative Study of Hopelessness and Perception of Stress among Depressed and Non-Depressed Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

Depression is a major psychological disorder among all age groups in the world. But in adolescents and young adults age, it is very common. It is correlated with many psychological factors like hopelessness and perception of stress which aggravates alarming consequences. Hence, there is an urgent need for addressing mental health issues of depression. This current study focuses on the statistical differences in hopelessness and perception of stress among depressed and non-depressed adolescents and gender differences in hopelessness and perception of stress among adolescents. The quantitative technique had utilized for data collection. The researcher had been used two types of independent variables “Gender” and “Adolescents” both have two levels (Gender: male and female; Adolescents: Depressed and Non-Depressed). This study is based on a 2×2 factorial design. After screening 1000 participants, the researcher selected 120 participants (60 depressed and 60 non-depressed adolescents) on the basis of their BDI-II scores, from two colleges in Cuttack. The sample was used ages 18 to 21 years having a moderate level of depression in case of depressed adolescent participants. In this study, Beck’s Depression Inventory-II (BDI-II) was used to identify and distinguish between moderate depression and non-depression participants. The Beck Hopelessness Scale (BHS) and Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) were used for the collection of data from participants. Two-way ANOVA was used for data analysis and hypothesis testing. Results concluded statistically significant differences between depressed and non-depressed adolescents for hopelessness and perception of stress. But no such gender differences were found among males and females in their hopelessness and perception of stress. The interaction effect were also not significant. This study has both theoretical and practical implications for counsellors, psychologists and professional practitioners.

Keywords: *Psychological Correlates, Depression, Gender, Hopelessness, Perception of Stress, Adolescents.*

Nowadays psychological disorders are major issues in our daily life, among them, depression is a major disorder that is shown in all age groups but it is in adolescence and young adulthood is common. In depression an individual may go through many

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A Comparative Study of Hopelessness and Perception of Stress among Depressed and Non-Depressed Adolescents

symptoms like feeling low, insomnia or hyposomnia, little enjoyment in doing things, and low social or peer transaction. People feel no engagement in work life without a goal or distract from their goals and taking suicide attempts are common activities of depressive disorder. They have less social contact with friends or working groups or with family. Some people take alcohol and drugs in their daily routine to feel better.

Depression is correlated with many psychological factors which can affect the mental health of depressive adolescents including, learned helplessness, hopelessness, low level of gratitude, low forgiveness, low self-esteem, fear or apprehension of failure, perception of stress, and loneliness. These psychological factors further aggravate alarming consequences. Hence, there is an urgent need for addressing mental health issues of depression.

Hopelessness is related to negative thoughts and expectations about the future and self (Beck, 1963). Previous studies suggested hopelessness is associated with depressive symptoms and suicidal ideation and other clinical conditions (Beck & Beck et al., 1990; 1998). Hopelessness is related to the experience of extreme pessimistic thought and despair about the future, and it is part of the “cognitive triad” (relate to a negative assessment of oneself and own world) described in the cognitive model of depression. Hopelessness and helplessness are the two most common emotions experienced among persons who attempted suicide, Shneidman (1996).

Perception of stress is linked with psychological tension and anxiety, if we perceive more and more stress, we feel more psychological tension and changes in physiological metabolism which creates anxiety and distract us from our main goal. It is also correlated with depression through a feeling of uncontrollability and inability to deal with problems and difficulties. Moderate perception of stress related to optimal use of resources.

Gender differences can be considered in three ways: - physical or biological differences, psychological differences, and social differences. Genetic differences are known as physical differences like female receive XX and male receive XY chromosomes from their parents. Phenotype expression is known as psychological differences where different behaviours are shown through different gender and cultures and social roles determine the social difference in gender. If goes through the gender, most of the previous studies indicate that females have a higher risk of being prone to depression in adolescents (Garber, 2002; Ay & Save, 2004).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to Baptista et al., (2013), there has a relationship between depression, family support, and hopelessness. A cross-sectional study was conducted on 1185 9th grade students of Turkish. The result revealed that there has a relationship between depression, self-esteem, hopelessness, guilt, and shame with a gender significance in adolescents. The data were analyzed through a suitable statistical analysis.

Abramson et al. (1989) conducted a longitudinal study on the theoretical basis of hopelessness and depression from 1978 to 1989 to formulate a theory of depression. From this extensive study, he found out that hopelessness is a cause of depression.

Greene (1989) studied the relationship between depression and hopelessness. Implications of this study concluded that hopelessness is the strong determinant for depression but it disappears at the high peak of depression. There is a connection between suicide and

A Comparative Study of Hopelessness and Perception of Stress among Depressed and Non-Depressed Adolescents

hopelessness. Both Beck's cognitive theory and Brown & Harris's psychosocial model suggest the existence of 'non-hopelessness' depression.

Sinha (1989) confirmed that stressful events during a lifetime are found to be related to the symptoms of depression. A more significant relationship between stressful events of the past year and symptoms of depression is found.

Stone et al. (2009) examined the gender differences in depression and accounted for the framework of the hopelessness theory of depression. This study focuses on how negative inferential styles are the mediator of gender differences in depressive symptoms. Four hundred fifty-eight participants were taken as samples. Data were collected through different types of measures. After analysing the data, the researcher concluded that boys felt more hopeless than girls. The researcher also concluded that stress and inferential styles moderate hopelessness and create depressive symptoms among adolescents. Finally, the results of this study did not support the mediation model of hopelessness (Hankin & Abramson, 2001; Hyde et al., 2008; Nolen-Hoeksema & Girgus, 1994). In the context of gender differences in depression, girls felt more depressed than boys across the follow-up process.

Maurizio et al. (1992) conducted a study on correlations between perception of stress and depressive symptoms among depressive outpatients. To assess the levels of perception of stress conditions, Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) was used. In this study, pre-and post-treatment design was taken for eight weeks period of time upon 60 outpatients with major depression (15 men and 45 women) and 22 normal control groups (11 men and 11 women). Findings of the study revealed that of having greater correlations between differences in pre-and post-treatment PSS scores and differences in pre-and post-treatment.

Bergdahl (2002) examined the gender differences in perception of stress. Also, check the relationship between perceived stress, depression, anxiety, and other medical precautions. A total sample size of 1275 participants (581 male and 694 female) was selected through a random sampling technique. Perceived Stress Questionnaire (PSQ) had been utilized for measuring the perception of stress levels of participants. Results of the study revealed that there was high perception of stress associated with depression.

Piccalilli & Wilkinson (2000) researched gender differences in depression. Their study aims to review some risk factors leading to gender differentiation in depressive disorder. They concluded that many factors influence gender differences like social support, gonadal hormones, adrenal axis, thyroid axis, neurotransmitter system, adverse life events, vulnerability, and coping style are on depression. Girls feel more depressed than boys.

Kim (2018) study on gender differences in depression found that females are more depressed than males. Both psychosocial and biological factors have been studied and manifestations with the prevalence of depression as with gender bodily symptoms and suicidal behaviors are more often in females. Impulsivity and acting out are more frequent in depressed males. Sexual assault, coping style, gender role stereotypes, restriction, and discrimination are contributed to the depression of the female gender.

The Rationale of the Study

Depression correlates with many psychological factors like hopelessness, perception of stress, lack of gratitude, inability to forgive, and low level of self-esteem. The present study

A Comparative Study of Hopelessness and Perception of Stress among Depressed and Non-Depressed Adolescents

focuses on how psychological correlates like hopelessness and perception of stress influence or are related to the condition of depression and also shows gender differences among both two risk factors, i.e., hopelessness and perception of stress.

Objectives

- To examine the effect of depression on the hopelessness of adolescents.
- To examine the effect of depression on the perception of the stress of adolescents.
- To examine the effect of gender on the hopelessness of adolescents.
- To examine the effect of gender on the perception of the stress of adolescents.

Hypotheses

- There will be differences in the hopelessness among depressed and non-depressed adolescents.
- There will be differences in the perception of stress among depressed and non-depressed adolescents.
- There will be gender differences in the hopelessness among male and female adolescents.
- There will be gender differences in the perception of stress among male and female adolescents.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

In this study, a quantitative technique had been utilized for investigation. After purposively selecting 1000 participants, 120 participants were screened out on the basis of BDI-II scores, within the age range of 18-21 years. The present study included two independent variables (depression and gender) and two dependent variables (hopelessness and perception of stress). The study adopted a 2 (depressed versus non-depressed) × 2 (male versus female) factorial design. There are a between-group research design of 60 depressed and 60 non-depressed with an equal number of participants in each gender (30 males and 30 females). All four groups of participants (30 depressed males, 30 depressed females, 30 non-depressed males, and 30 non-depressed females) were compared concerning their hopelessness and perception of stress scores.

Participants

Out of a total of 1000 participants, some were moderately depressed while the others were severely depressed. The participants who were in the category of minimal, mild, and severe depression were not taken into consideration, as this study focused on those individuals who were moderately depressed. There were also who did not fully responded to the questionnaires and left the data collection in the middle, without completing fully. Those haphazard responses were discarded in this study. After screening, 120 participants: 60 depressed (30 Male and 30 Female) and 60 non-depressed (30 Male and 30 Female) were purposively selected from four colleges of Cuttack district of Odisha, India, within the age range of 18-21 years.

Tests used

- **Screening Test: Beck's Depression Inventory-2nd Edition (BDI-II).** Beck Depression Inventory of 2nd edition (BDI-II) was developed by Beck (1996). It was used to measure depression among individuals or patients with severely depressed.

A Comparative Study of Hopelessness and Perception of Stress among Depressed and Non-Depressed Adolescents

BDI-II is 21- an item rating scale that ranges from 0 to 3 and is used to assess or measure depressive symptoms over the past two weeks or more than two weeks (DSM-IV, 1994). The total score of BDI-II will be 63, and a higher score indicates that the person is going through severe depression. In the BDI-II, participants choose a single score for each item of a total of 21 items which indicates symptoms of depression. There are two items in the 21 items: item number 16 indicating changes in sleeping patterns and item number 18 indicating changes in appetite. In BDI-II scores ranges from 0-13 indicate minimal depression; 14 to 19 indicate mild depression; 20 to 28 indicate moderate depression and 29 to 63 indicate severe depression. The BDI-II has Cronbach's alpha reliability of 0.94 and a concurrent validity range between 0.82 to 0.94.

- **The Beck Hopelessness Scale (BHS).** Beck (1974) devised a scale to measure people's negative expectations for the future. The BHS is a 20-item self-assessment questionnaire. The test takes about 5-10 minutes to complete. The scale is in the format of 'True/False. If we take the total score it ranges from 0 to 20 with a higher score indicating more hopelessness (Haatainen et al., 2016). Any response that matches the response key receives one point, while any response that does not match the response key receives zero points. Seven items are in reverse order: 1, 5, 6, 8, 13, 15, and 19. Mild hopelessness is indicated by a score of 4-8, moderate hopelessness by a score of 9-14, and severe hopelessness by a score of 15-20. The scale assesses three domains: taking feelings about the longer away from the present, inability to feel pleasure in normally pleasurable activities, and expectations about the future. Durak conducted a validity and reliability study on BHS, and the Cronbach alpha was found to be 0.93. It is a valid and reliable scale for assessing hopelessness in healthy people as well as those suffering from psychiatric and chronic physical illnesses. The Beck Hopelessness Scale is an excellent test measure that is based on the cognitive theory of depression (Forindos et al., 2010).
- **Perceived Stress Scale (PSS).** PSS is used to collect data from participants on their way of perceiving to a situation or event, which was developed by Cohen (1983). The PSS is a simple, self-administered test that determines how stressful certain situations are in one's life. As a result, it could be used to examine the role of perceived stress levels in the etiology of diseases and behavioral disorders. The PSS has acceptable internal and test-retest reliability. PSS is strongly correlated with emotional variables like depression and anxiety. The scale's Cronbach's alpha was found to be greater than 0.70 (Andreou et.al., 2007).

Procedure

During the administration of the data, it was ensured that the research should be conducted in a place where possible distractions like noise could be minimized. A rapport was established with the participants. They were assured about the confidentiality of the results and the researcher cleared out all the possible doubts and queries of the participants. Then the participants were given adequate time to respond to the scale items and in this way, the researcher completed the data collection procedure. After the test was administered to the entire sample, the scoring procedure was undertaken. All the test measures were scored as per the guidelines provided in the testing manual. The total score obtained by the participants was neatly noted on the datasheets and entered into Microsoft Office Excel Sheet for statistical analysis using SPSS for Windows Version-20.

A Comparative Study of Hopelessness and Perception of Stress among Depressed and Non-Depressed Adolescents

Statistical Analysis

In this current research, the two-Way ANOVA statistical technique was used and analyzed through SPSS Version-20.

RESULTS

Table-1 (Descriptive statistics) Mean rating on Hopelessness of depressed and non-depressed adolescents.

Depression	Gender	Mean	SD	N
Depressed	Male	9.16	4.44	30
	Female	10.30	4.80	30
	Total	9.73	4.62	60
Non-Depressed	Male	6.26	2.75	30
	Female	6.00	2.28	30
	Total	6.13	2.51	60

Table-2 ANOVA showing the role of gender and depression on Hopelessness among depressed and non-depressed adolescents.

Source	df	Mean Square	F
Depression	1	388.80	27.97**
Gender	1	5.63	0.40
Depression× Gender	1	14.70	1.05
Error	116	13.89	
Total	119		

Note: ** $p < .01$

The findings of two-way ANOVA shown in Table-2 revealed that there were differences in depressed and non-depressed adolescents in their hopelessness. Table-1 indicated that depressed adolescents were having higher hopelessness ($M=9.73$) in comparison to non-depressed adolescents ($M=6.13$). There were also gender differences were found in male and female adolescents. But no differences were found in the interaction effect of male and female as well as depressed and non-depressed adolescents.

Table-3 Mean rating on Perception of Stress in depressed and non-depressed adolescents.

Depression	Gender	Mean	SD	N
Depressed	Male	22.33	6.23	30
	Female	22.63	5.51	30
	Total	22.48	5.83	60
Non-Depressed	Male	15.90	4.24	30
	Female	17.03	4.40	30
	Total	16.46	4.32	60

Table-4 ANOVA showing the role of gender and depression on Perception of Stress among depressed and non-depressed adolescents.

Source	df	Mean Square	F
Depression	1	1086.00	40.69**
Gender	1	15.40	0.57
Depression× Gender	1	5.20	0.19
Error	116	26.68	
Total	119		

Note: ** $p < .01$

The findings of two-way ANOVA shown in Table-4 revealed that there were differences in depressed and non-depressed adolescents in their perception of stress. Table-3 indicated that

A Comparative Study of Hopelessness and Perception of Stress among Depressed and Non-Depressed Adolescents

depressed adolescents were having higher perception of stress ($M=22.48$) in comparison to non-depressed adolescents ($M=16.46$). There were no gender differences found in male and female adolescents. Also, no differences were found in the interaction effect of male and female as well as depressed and non-depressed adolescents.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Analysis of the Results

There were differences between depressed and non-depressed adolescents in hopelessness and perception of stress levels. There were no gender differences found among males and females in their hopelessness and perception of stress levels. The interaction effects were also not significant in the psychological correlates of hopelessness and perception of stress. Previous studies found that there is a positive association between perceived stress and depression. High levels of perceived stress increased the risk of an individual developing depression (Eisen Barth et al., 2013 & Hamman et al., 2004). The results of this study supported the previous studies conducted on perceived stress and depression (Maurizio et al., 1992; Thimm et al., 2017; Narvaez et al., 2020; Gavuriva et al., 2020) and also studies supported the interlink between hopelessness and depression (Abramson et al. (1989; Beck, Rush, Shaw, & Emery, 1982; Abramson et al., 1989; Alloy, Abramson, & Francis, 1999; Osnaya et al., 2005; Panzarella et al., 2006).

CONCLUSION/ RECOMMENDATION

In a future study, psychotherapeutic interventions can be provided to male and female depressed adolescents. This study has both theoretical and practical implications for psychologists and counsellors.

- The present study has important implications for:
- Useful for professional practice and clinicians
- Helpful for researchers and scholars
- Helpful for building a theory
- Helpful for professors and future studies

Recommendations and Suggestions for Future Research

Future suggestions and recommendations will be based on changes in the population and geographical area, research methodology, statistical analysis, and sampling techniques. Recommendations can be given for changes in academic concepts, knowledge, or professional practice: There should be more emphasis given to mental health awareness among adolescents, their parents, and community level by the professionals. The focus should also be given to address mental health issues in the curriculum itself by the academicians. Recommendations can also be in the direction of changes or modifications in accepted theoretical constructs.

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A Comparative Study of Hopelessness and Perception of Stress among Depressed and Non-Depressed Adolescents

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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