

Perceived Stress in Adolescents Across Gender

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ABSTRACT

Stress may be defined as mental, emotional and psychological strain to cope with real or imagined factors. In the Indian context, stress is commonly seen in adolescents specifically during the time of the 10th standard board examinations. These examinations are used as a starting point for admissions into desirable institutes or courses for the more important 12th standard examinations. Thus, the researcher wished to measure the differences in the levels of perceived stress in male and female students studying in 10th grade. The researcher's hypothesis is that there are no significant differences in the levels of stress between the two genders. The sample size being considered is a total of 60 with equal division of 30 subjects for each gender. The tool being used for this study is the Perceived Stress Scale developed by Cohen, Kamarck and Mermelstein (1983) and is a well-established self-report measure based on the psychological conceptualization of stress. The result of the study will be discussed with the help of descriptive and inferential statistics.

Keywords: *Stress, Students, Gender*

It has been argued that adolescence is a transition period in one's life in which one undergoes biological, social, and psychological changes (McNamara, 2000; Tsai et al., 2015a, b, 2018; Lin and Tsai, 2016; Strong et al., 2016; Lee et al., 2017; Foulkes and Blakemore, 2018; Blakemore, 2019). According to the World Health Organization, Adolescence may be defined as "Adolescence is the phase of life between childhood and adulthood, from ages 10 to 19." This is a unique stage of human development and a major milestone in one's life. Adolescents experience rapid physical, cognitive and psychosocial growth affecting their interaction with the world around them. In the Indian context, Adolescents usually have to undergo two Board examinations at age 15-16 and 17-18. The class 10 board examinations are vital for admission into institutes for the more important 12th standard examinations and thereby gain access to better institutes of higher education and more career opportunities.

When there is an imbalance between environmental demands and adolescents' coping capacity, people will perceive stress (Cohen et al., 1997). This may be linked not only to unhealthy behaviors such as cigarette smoking and alcohol use (Wills and Shiffman, 1985;

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Cohen and Lichtenstein, 1990) but also to psychological health problems, including anxiety and depression (Lupien et al., 2009).

Specifically, it has been suggested that adolescents of East Asian cultures are more likely to show higher depression and lower life satisfaction than the European counterparts due to the emphasis on academic performance (Stankov, 2013). Students at this crossroad usually tend to face a lot of pressure from their families to perform well. There is also the need to compete with friends or classmates for better grades. Thus, they are more prone to stress and its various attendant issues as a consequence of the social and academic pressures that they face. School students in India have a high stress level and high rate of deliberate self-harm. (Arun. Priti and Chavan. B.S, 2009) Therefore, it will not be an understatement to say that students face an indescribable amount of stress and pressure in their 10th standard.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Objective:

To determine if there is any significant difference in the level and intensity of stress amongst students of the Male and Female genders by utilizing the Perceived Stress Scale developed by Cohen, Kamarck and Mermelstein (1983).

Hypothesis:

There is no significant difference in the level of stress between male and female adolescents.

Participants:

A sample of 30 boys and 30 girls between the ages of 15-17 were selected for the study. The subjects were generally of an affluent background.

Research Design:

The current study's research design was exploratory in nature and relied on a quantitative technique, namely the sample survey method, to collect the necessary data.

Materials:

Perceived Stress Scale developed by Cohen, Kamarck and Mermelstein (1983) was utilized for the purposes of this project. The questionnaire has a total of 10 items with 6 positive and 4 negative items. Each item is given five options which are: Never, Almost Never, Sometimes, Fairly Often, and Very Often and the participant may choose which option best suits their experience.

Data Collection:

The Perceived Stress test was administered through Google Forms. Then the scoring was done for the responses obtained and interpretation was made.

Scoring:

Amongst the 10 questions, questions 4, 5, 7, and 8 are negative. They are scored as 4,3,2,1 and 0. The remaining questions 1,2,3,6,9 and 10 are positive and are scored as 0,1,2,3 and 4.

Variables:

The variable being studied in this project is Perceived Stress.

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table-1: Level of Perceived Stress among Male Adolescents:

No. of Participants	Interpretation	Percentage
10	High Perceived Stress	34%
19	Moderate Perceived Stress	63%
1	Low Perceived Stress	3%

There are no significant changes in the level of perceived stress among male adolescents.

Figure-1: Percentage of the level of Perceived Stress among Male Adolescents

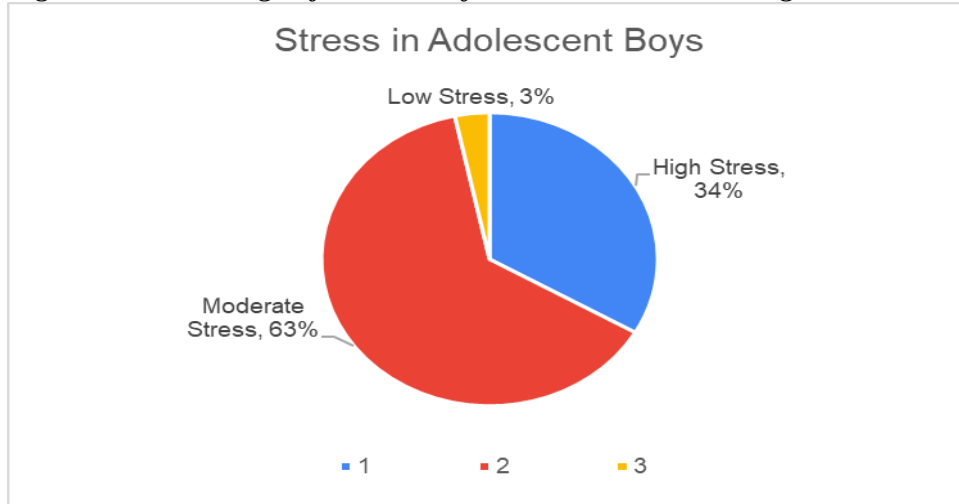
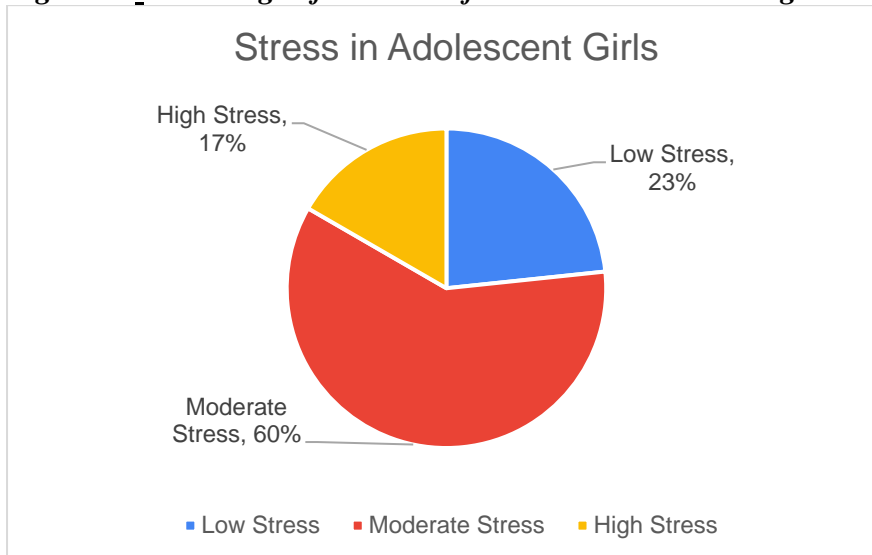


Table-2: Level of Perceived Stress among Female Adolescents:

No. of Participants	Interpretation	Percentage
7	High Perceived Stress	17%
18	Moderate Perceived Stress	63%
5	Low Perceived Stress	20%

There are no significant changes in the level of perceived stress among female adolescents.

Figure-2: Percentage of the level of Perceived Stress among Female Adolescents.



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Table-3: The table shows the result of Perceived Stress among adolescents across the group.

Variable	Group	Mean	SD	dt	t-value	Significant Value
Perceived Stress	Male	22.30	5.948	58	1.345	0.159
	Female	19.97	7.384			

Table-3 shows SD, t-value, and significant value in perceived stress among adolescents across gender. The t-value of perceived stress is 1.345 which indicates there is no significant difference between male and female adolescents in perceived stress. However, the mean of the group shows that the level of perceived stress is more among male adolescents (mean=22.30, SD=5.984) compared to female adolescents (mean=19.97, SD=7.384).

Therefore, the hypothesis states that there are no significant differences among adolescents across gender in perceived stress is accepted.

CONCLUSION

The result indicates that there is no significant difference between the levels of Perceived Stress among male and female adolescents studying in class 10. But there is a great level of individual difference amongst the group. This test indicates that there is no difference in stress among the genders. But the mean indicates that there are greater levels of High Perceived Stress in boys as compared to girls which shows that caregivers and teachers must not neglect the stress faced by boys although it may not be overtly expressed. There is also a good deal of Moderate Perceived Stress seen amongst the group which indicates that caregivers should monitor the levels of stress and ensure that it does not crossover to High Perceived Stress.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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