

# A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF STRESS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING OF SCHOOL STUDENTS

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## ABSTRACT

*The present study was conducted to compare the boys and girls school students on the variables stress and psychological well-being. For this purpose, a sample of 100 students (50 boys and 50 girls) and aged between 14-17 years was Purposively selected from different schools of Agra city. The survey technique was adopted. For the measurement of stress, Stressful Life Event Scale developed by G. Venkatesh Kumar, (1995) was employed and for psychological well-being, Ryff's Psychological Well-being Scale developed by Ryff and Singer (1998) was used. For statistical analysis, mean, standard deviation and t-test were employed. The findings of the study show that there is a significant difference between boys and girls school students with regards to stress and psychological well-being.*

**Key words:** Stress, Psychological Well-being, Boys, Girl, School Students

## INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is the period following the onset of puberty during which a young person develops from a child into an adult. Adolescence describes the teenage years between 13 and 19 and can be considered the transitional stage from childhood to adulthood. However, the physical and psychological changes that occur in adolescence can start earlier, during the preteen or "teen" years (ages 9 through 12). Adolescence can be a time of both disorientation and discovery. The transitional period can bring up issues of independence and self-identity; many adolescents and their peers face tough choices regarding schoolwork, sexuality, drugs, alcohol, and social life. Peer groups, romantic interests, and external appearance tend to naturally increase in importance for some time during a teen's journey toward adulthood. Adolescence is usually associated with the teenage years but its physical, psychological or cultural expressions may begin earlier and end later. At this stage of life, adolescents are required to act in accordance with social roles, engaging with peers and members of the opposite sex and to accomplish the requirements of schooling and making important decisions regarding their future career. These pressures in the form of stress make difficult for adolescents to cope with the demands of daily living, thus having negative physical and emotional effects (Chandra and Batada, 2006).

Stress has been described as a two-edged sword that can either stimulate and motivate the students to peak performance or reduce the students to ineffectiveness (Sugiura, et al., 2005). Furthermore, stress has been linked to serious side effects such as emotional exhaustion, anxiety, or depression. These side-effects can lead to alcohol abuse, drug consumption, and even thoughts of suicide. Lazarus and

Folkman (1984) defined stress as “involving a particular relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his or her resources and endangering his or her wellbeing”. School students are a unique group of individuals who face specific intrapersonal, interpersonal, environmental, and academic stressors.

Many of mental disorders have their beginnings in adolescence ages which often go undiagnosed and untreated for years that including emotional and behavioral difficulties and adjustment problems (Stromback, et al., 2013). Numerous studies have shown that adolescent girls have a higher prevalence of psychological disorder such as depression, anxiety and stress than boys that affect on their healthy status and successes as well (Gelban, 2009), Mundy, et al., 2013). In addition, gendered stress and mental health patterns are observed in several countries, indicating that young girls report more problems in compare of boys (Needham, 2009, Moksnes et al., 2011).

It seems stress increases during the teenage years and affect girls more than boys. In fact, both of boys and girls are more seriously are affecting by daily stresses than adults but girls are more sensitive to interpersonal stress than boys (Haraldsson, et al., 2010) and vulnerable to physical symptoms caused by stress as well (Son, et al., 2014). Additionally, stress is a well-documented factor in the development of addiction (Suldo, et al., 2008) and repeated and cumulative exposure to psychological stress may result in adult chronic diseases (Cornelius, et al., 2014).

Adolescents belonging to different categories like socio-economic, demographic groups are thought to be more “vulnerable” for disparities that will impact their health and well-being. From a broad perspective, the measurement and promotion of school going children’s well-being is a desirable social and political objective (Diener, et al., 2009; & Van, Park & Jones, 2001).

Psychological well-being of adolescents means being content and satisfied with life and understanding an abundance of positive emotions, when joined with the absence of psychopathology, is linked with greatest academic function, social skills and support and physical health, being a stage that lays strong foundation for future personality and a critical period during human development in which life goals, values, direction and purpose in life are created (Savage Jessica, 2011; Berman, et al., 2006) guaranteeing psychological wellbeing of adolescents is a socio-psychological necessity. A growing number of longitudinal studies confirm the power of well-being scales to predict outcomes, for example, longevity, physical health, quality of life, criminality, drug and alcohol use, employment, earnings and pro-social behavior (e.g. volunteering) Psychological Wellbeing is the dynamic and active process that gives a sense of knowledge to the people about how their lives are enduring the interaction between their circumstances, activities and psychological resources or ‘mental capital’. “It is about lives going well. It is the combination of feeling good and functioning effectively.” (Huppert, 2009). Feelings of wellbeing are vital to the overall health of individuals, enable them to successfully overcome difficulties and achieve what they want out of life. Well-being is associated with multiple health, job and family-related benefits. Individuals with high levels of well-being are considered to be more productive at work and are more likely to add value to their communities.

Psychological well-being is viewed as a combination of positive affective states such as happiness and functioning with optimal effectiveness in individual and social life (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Some individuals demonstrate the high level of well-being despite adverse circumstances, whereas others show low levels of well-being despite favorable conditions (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). As Ryff and Keyes, (1995) proposed psychological well-being as “the striving for perfection that represents the realization of one's true potential”.

Siddique and Arcy (1984) found that stress is related to the measures of psychological well-being with high negative effect from the family.

Chris, Sergin, et.al., (2007) revealed a significant relationship between social skills and lower level of perceived stress as well as social skills and greater wellbeing. Perez (2012) shows that Filipino male and female adolescents are different in a number of dimensions of psychological well-being. Specifically, they differ in terms of spiritual component (purpose in life, daily spiritual experience), social (relationships with peers and father) and one aspect of cognitive component (autonomy). Similarity between the genders was also demonstrated in terms of affective, (experience of affect), social (relationship with mother and teachers), and cognitive components of psychological well-being (personal growth, environmental mastery, and self-acceptance). Franklin W. Glozah (2013) found that the main effect of perceived social support significant, indicating that psychological wellbeing is significantly higher for students who reported moderate and low perceived support, with a small effect size.

## **RATIONALE OF THE STUDY**

Adolescence is a sensitive period in which person faces some biological changes associated with puberty, increased pressure for social integrity, challenges of new roles conflict with peers and so other problems that can produce stress. There are various kinds of stressors and the way in which adolescence cope with these stressors can have significant short and long term consequences on their physical and emotional health. Life is full of stressors that produce threats to our well-being. The period of adolescence can be seen as the time of struggle, more pressure at this stage lead to poor well-being among adolescents. Hence, an attempt has been made to compare the level of stress and psychological wellbeing of boys and girls school students.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The proposed research is carried out under the formal title:

"A comparative study of Stress and Psychological Well-being of School Students"

## **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

The following is the objective of the present study:

to compare the boys and girls school students on the variables stress and psychological well-being.

## **HYPOTHESIS**

Following hypotheses has been formulated:

1. There will be no significant difference between boys and girls school students on stress.
2. There will be no significant difference between boys and girls school students on psychological well-being.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **DESIGN OF THE STUDY**

The survey type of study was used to get the required data for analysis.

### **SAMPLE**

The sample was composed of 100 adolescents (50 boys and 50 girls) between age ranges of 14 to 17 years. Participants were recruited from different colleges of Agra city through Purposive Sampling technique.

### **TOOLS USED**

- 1 Stressful Life Event Scale(developed by G. Venkatesh Kumar,1995).
- 2 Ryff's Psychological Well-being Scale( developed by Ryff and Singer,1998).

### **STATISTICAL ANALYSIS**

The data obtained was analyzed statistically using appropriate descriptive and inferential techniques. The mean, standard deviation and t-test was used to compare between boys and girls in terms of their scores on stress and psychological well-being.

### **PROCEDURE OF DATA COLLECTION**

First of all, permission was sought from the principals of different schools of Agra city.in the initial stage, the participants were contacted in their respective classes and their willingness to participate in the study was sought. A rapport was formed. The booklet containing the stress scale and psychological

well-being scale were placed in front of the sampled students and were requested to fill out these scales. Appropriate instructions were given to the participants.as soon as the subject completed the tests, the test booklet was collected and scoring was done according to the scoring system of the test.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to test the hypotheses formulated for the present investigation, the data collected through the administration of the selected tools was statistically analyzed by employing Mean, S. D., and t-test. As a result of this, the two groups of school students i.e., boys and girls were compared on stress. The findings of the study have been presented under following heading:

1 Comparison of Stress between boys and girls school students

Table -1

Showing the mean comparison between boys and girls school students on Stress

Gender	N	Mean	S. D	t-Value	Level of Significance
Boys	50	78.21	7.98	6.94	<0.01
Girls	50	64.67	11.23		

It is clear from the table that boys and girls school students differ significantly in terms of their scores on stress ( $t = 6.94, P < 0.01$ ). The mean scores of boys and girls school students are 78.21 and 64.67, respectively. This shows that boys report higher scores on stress than their girls' counterparts. Thus, hypothesis 1 has been rejected. One plausible explanation cited for this difference was that boys have to shoulder the burden of their parents' expectations academic about children's success, conflict peers and conquer for enter to university that all these could lead to high level of stress and mental health problems.

Comparison of Psychological well-being between boys and girls school students

Table -2

Showing the mean comparison between boys and girls school students on Psychological well-being

Gender	N	Mean	S. D	t-Value	Level of Significance
Boys	50	214.32	11.08	3.37	<0.01
Girls	50	206.47	12.21		

It is clear from the table that boys and girls school students differ significantly in terms of their scores on psychological well-being ( $t = 3.37, P < 0.01$ ). The mean scores of boys and girls school students are 214.32 and 206.47, respectively. This shows that boys report higher scores on psychological well-being than their girls' counterparts. Thus, hypothesis 2 has been rejected. This may be due to family restriction; females are not exposed to the outside environment and they do not direct their feelings. Society imposes different demands of socialization on the two genders. Male students can manage disputes, are excellent communicators, and are masters at building and maintain relationship. They have a feeling that they are self-sufficient, independent, and they are worth for the nation. The girls have to bear the discrimination of the majority in every sphere starting from their own family to the society who provide impoverished environment, as a result affect their psychological well-being.

## CONCLUSION

We can conclude by data analysis as follows:

In the present study, boys were found to have significantly higher levels of stress and psychological well-being as compared to the girls' school students.

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