

# Study of Academic Stress among Teenagers in Relation to Conjoint Predictability of Coping Strategies, Parental Attachment and Social Support

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**Abstract – The study provides detailed investigation of relative and conjoint predictability of coping strategies, parental attachment and social support for the academic stress among teenagers results indicate that coping strategies and parental attachment attributes high conjoint effect collectively than their separate contributions. Neither social support or its any sub-variable were significant contributors towards academic stress,**

**Key words – Teenagers, Academic Stress, Social Support, Parental Attachment.**

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## INTRODUCTION

The term stress has accompanied homosapians right the time they have evolved. Although in the earlier times also it was part and parcel of their lives, with the changing era stress has empowered their whole being and has started hampering their personality ad capabilities. Stress is one of those peculiar terms which when used in a general context can be understood by everyone as a synonym for tension, anxiety, conflict, ego involvement, frustration, threat worry, withdrawal etc.

“Stress” means pressure, strain, force or emphasis. In other words, it can be said that an individual is under stress when he reaches a breaking point, has weakness or reaches overload. Stress is one’s physical and mental responses to change, whether the change is positive or negative. It has also been defined as the extreme physiological and emotional arousal a person experiences when confronted with threatening situation.

Stress is present at all stages of life but particularly more so at the teenage. Teenage is the period of rapid growth and changes in all aspects of the child’s physical, mental, social and emotional life. It is very crucial period of one’s life, as the growth achieved, the experiences gained and the relationships developed at this stage determine the future of the individual. Life for many teenagers is a painful tug of was filled with

the mixed messages and conflicting demands from the parents, teachers, friends and one’s own self.

Student life for a teenager can be a rewarding experience, as well as a time of considerable anxiety and stress. The combination of the many stressors of student life, such as planning for the future, struggling with exams and assignments, meeting the demands of challenging teachers, deciding on a major, and transitioning into financial and emotional independence, can be an overwhelming experience for many of them. Further, in addition to these stressors, teenagers may wonder whether they will be able to meet their own expectations as well as those of their parents and friends. Even as institutions of higher learning churn out more and more batches of students every years, the quality of education has seriously declined. Given all these factors, teenagers experience of anxiety and stress during their student years may be important to their overall functioning as well as to their to their academic performance. A multitude of variables such as frustration, conflict, pressure, and anxiety may be related to the academic related stress. These stressors have been appraised as taxing or as exceeding the resources that are available to an individual. In the present study attempt has been made to investigate the relationship among the academic-related stress experienced by teenagers and three selected variables that are likely to be relevant to their lives namely, Coping Strategies

(employed usually by students during stressful times), Parental Attachment and Social Support.

Utilizing effective Coping Strategies can help alleviate the negative effects of stress. Coping can be described as the cognitive and behavioral efforts an individual uses to manage specific demands or stressors. Coping strategies can also be viewed as what an individual actually thinks and does in a particular stressful situation. When selecting the Coping Strategies one has many options available to him/her. In a seminal work in the stress and coping literature, Lazarus and Folkman distinguished between two types of coping strategies: problem-focused and emotion-focused. Problem-focused coping strategies tend to be employed when an individual has determined that a harmful, threatening, or challenging situation is amenable to change. Examples of problem-focused coping might be moving out of a stressful roommate situation or creating a study plan for an upcoming exam. Such strategies have been associated with improvements in functioning. In contrast, Emotion-focused coping strategies focus on dealing with the negative emotions that are a product of the stressful situation. When the individual who is experiencing stress perceives the stressful situation to be outside of his or her control, emotion-focused coping strategies may be employed. In other words, these types of strategies are used when an individual has judged that nothing can be done to modify a harmful, threatening, or challenging environment. These types of coping strategies may include Distancing. Escape avoidance.

Accepting responsibility, Self Controlling, Seeking Social Support and Positive Reappraisal, which may be used to maintain hope, deny the implications of the stressor, or act as if the stressor did not matter. Specific examples of these types of strategies may include ignoring an obnoxious roommate, regulating emotions while studying for an exam, or talking to family members during a particular crisis. Such strategies have been associated with maladaptive functioning and strain.

Among these differing coping strategies of stress management, some individuals may have a strong preference to use one particular coping strategy. Different coping strategies are generally not mutually exclusive. Thus, most individuals tend to use different types of strategies so that the selected strategies coincide with the situational context in which the individuals find themselves and with their view of the situational context. Further, different types of coping strategies may be advantageous depending on the specific situations to which they are applied.

Coping Strategies used by teenagers may prove to be an important variable in predicting their perceived levels of academic-related stress. In particular, the

types of coping strategies teenagers tend to select and use may contribute to either an increase or a decrease in their academic-related stress.

Attachment is described as an enduring affection bond of substantial intensity-the first and the most basic forms of love felt by the child towards another human. Bowlby has suggested that human beings at any age exhibit greater social and emotional adjustment when they have confidence in the accessibility and responsiveness of a trusted other. Teenagers benefit from parental support that encourages autonomy development yet ensures continued monitoring and emotional connectedness. Parental support during stressful periods predicts positive teenagers adjustment. Given the potential importance of this relationship, the manner in which parental attachment is associated with academic-related stress deserves further study. A number of studies have suggested that there is a relationship between parental attachment during childhood and a number of behavioral outcomes and patterns related to students' functioning, including stress and depression, self-esteem, self-perception, self-actualization, levels of perfectionism, and performance goals during school. Secure attachment has been increasingly recognized as central to adaptive functioning over the life span. More recently attention has turned towards understanding the role of attachment with parents in healthy adjustment during teenage. Parents play a significant role in supporting secure attachments.

Social support generally refers to helpful functions for an individual by significant others such as family members, friends worker and relatives. Social support has also been defined as "those social interactions or relationships that provide individuals with actual assistance. During times of stress, students may seek social and emotional support from their family and friends.

Social support or receiving emotional, informational, and/or tangible support from other individuals has been linked positively with the maintenance of physical health during stressful situations. In addition, the perceived availability of social support, rather than the actual use of social support, sometimes may actually be more important in protecting individuals from the harmful effects of stressful situations. In view of possibility of crucial role support from family can play in the lives of students during their school careers, particularly as they experience and make attempts to cope with academic-related stress, this variable has been included in the present study. Child development forms a significant constituent of the cognitive psychology curriculum. Stress in the pre-schoolers and teenagers have been the subject of interest to Psychologists, especially those concerned with the child development Most of the studies investigating stress. Coping and social support have

concentrated on the aged population. As far as academic stress and its co-relation among teenagers are concerned, more empirical concerted work needs to be done in this area.

## OBJECTIVE

To find out the relative and conjoint predictability of coping strategies, parental attachment and social support for the academic stress among teenagers

## HYPOTHESIS

The conjoint contribution due to independent variables of coping strategies, parental attachment and social support towards teenagers' academic stress is higher as compared to singularly.

## DELIMITATIONS

The study was delimited only to the teenagers studying in Govt. and Public school of Karnal and Kurukshetra districts. The study was also limited to teenagers of class 'X' only.

## SAMPLE

Sample of the study comprise of 700(350 boys+350 girls) teenagers of class 'X' from Govt. and public schools of Karnal and Kurukshetra districts selected strategically.

## DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Keeping in view the objective of the study, the study was advanced with the help of descriptive survey method involving the description and relationship of academic stress with the variables of social support.

## RESULT AND CONCLUSION

- (i) Various models were set up to ascertain the predictive efficiency of independent variables of Coping Strategies, Parental Attachment and Social Support (singularly and conjointly) for the criterion variable of academic stress. This was done also to decipher the variable, which singularly or conjointly best predicted the Academic Stress.
- (ii) Out of the total seventeen variables and sub-variables considered for the present study, only eight namely, Emotion Focused (totals) ( $R^2=.524$ ), Seeking social support ( $R^2=.0296$ ), Planful problem solving ( $R^2=.311$ ), Escape avoidance ( $R^2=.321$ ), Distancing ( $R^2=.330$ ), Total Parental Attachment ( $R^2=.339$ ), Positive reappraisal ( $R^2=.343$ ) and Self controlling ( $R^2=.348$ ).

- (iii) Emotion Focused Coping Strategy, when taken singularly accounted for 27.5% towards predicting Academic Stress. The addition of Seeking social support, Planful problem solving, Escape avoidance, Distancing, Total Parental Attachment, Positive Reappraisal and Self controlling variables in different models accounted for 29.6%, 31.1%, 32.1%, 33%, 33.9%, and 34.3% variance respectively, thereby explaining in all 34.8% variance for the criterion variable of Academic stress.
- (iv) The Total percentage of variance attributed by the conjoint effect of all eight variables, namely, Emotion Focused coping, Seeking social support, Planful problem solving, Escape avoidance, Distancing, Total Parental attachment, positive reappraisal and self-controlling for prediction of Academic Stress is higher (34.3%) than their separate contribution (the maximum being 27.5% by Emotion Focused Coping strategies) towards Academic Stress. On the strength of the above results, Hypothesis "The conjoint contribution due to the independent variables of Coping Strategies, Parental Attachment and Social Support towards Academic Stress of teenagers is higher as compared to their respective contribution when taken singularly" stands accepted.

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