

Study of Academic Stress among Teenagers as a Differential Predictor to Coping Strategies, Parental Attachment and Social Support

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Abstract – In this study researcher investigated the differential predictor of teenagers' academic stress to coping strategies, parental attachment and social support. Social support did not emerge as effective predictor of the certain variables of academic stress.

Key Words – Teenagers, Academic stress, parental attachment, coping strategies and social support.

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INTRODUCTION

Stress as a concept, has been borrowed from physics. Life is a constant challenge to meet various biological, Physiological needs that demand satisfaction. Everyone has socio-psychological needs of affection, care, sympathy, understanding and belongingness. All these needs pose challenges to meet with. A certain amount of stress is desirable to provide the individual with the necessary stimulators and motivation to overcome the many obstacles that prevent one from attaining one's various goal. Stress can be regarded as instigator of action. Many researchers suggest that stress can actually prolong life, particularly where the individual undergoes repeated stressful experience over a period of years. To sum up stress can be defined as the level of bio-socio-psychol physiological response an individual makes to either a given event or culmination to life events.

Children are constantly, under the stress of studies and examinations in short they are entangled in the web of "Academic stress." It is a mental stress with respect to some anticipated frustration associated with academic failure or even an awareness of possibility of such failure. Most children experience academic stress, which is linked to their student life in the context of school, academic stress means pervasive sense of urgency of learning all those things which's are related to school. The stress is an outcome of the number of responsibility of failure. In the present scenario, academic success has become the key to educational goal. In the transition from the old education system to the new one, the true meaning of education now lays stress only on 'academics' that slow the report card in term of marks. Children are

pushed into educational stream at an early age. There is an increased pressure on children to excel in academics, sports and interpersonal skills. To do the best is no longer enough for teenagers. They often feel frustrated no matter how well they perform. Excessive concern about errors, in addition to high parental and social expectations leads to depression among them. Many youngsters in today's era believe that they are loved for their grades, honor and abilities only. As a result they do not allow themselves to fail or make mistakes. When they fail, they are overpowered by the feeling of guilt which is some cases lead to suicide.

Sometimes parents who had brilliant academic record may like their teenagers to match if not excel that standard, without taking into consideration their aptitudes, interest and abilities. Parents multiplied expectations from their own children play havoc in their children's lives. Often parents look upon their teenagers as means of achieving their own thwarted ambitions. Children have to fulfill not only their own but also the unfulfilled dreams and wishes of their parents. They feel that every student requires good academic record for getting admission in good and reputed educational institutions. They opt for different ways to make their children come up to their expectation. It was found that father of a 14 years old boy who was to appear in board exams remarked to his son. "If you couldn't get top position in the examination you will be devoid of all parties. Your new bike and pocket money". This is not one case of one father. The same scenario can be seen in most of the homes where children are studying and are often in the last year of schools are preparing to get admission in professional streams. Stress in general

and academic stress in particular is that gift of today's fast moving life to the coming generations. In 1992 the ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India under the chairmanship of prof. Yashpal set up a National advisory committee to advice on the ways and means of reducing academic stress, burden and anxiety among students at all levels. The report highlighted that major sources of academic anxiety among children are the problems of curriculum load and scarcity of leisure time. Another source of anxiety among children is the fear of examinations which is constantly reinforced by teacher and parents, resulting in children losing interest under too much pressure of study. Although present study is not directly concerned with the stress management, however a brief description of the stress management is being submitted here. This is done after utilizing their relevance to social report later.

Since the mid 1970's there has been a strong interest among behavioural and medical scientists alike in the roles that social network and social support they provide, play an important role in influencing health and well being. Two competing theories about the nature of the relation between social support and health provide a central focus. The "Stress buffering" hypothesis argues that social support positively influences health and well being by protecting people from the pathogenic effects of stressors. Alternatively the "main effect" hypothesis argues that social support positively influences health irrespective of whether or not person faced stressful events. Social support is a multidimensional concept and it has been conceptualized in many different ways. Definitions vary in their degrees of specificity, breadth of transactions encompassed and the importance attributed to the stability of interpersonal relationship. In order to clarify the concepts of social support have distinguished different aspects of social relationships that the term social support refers to social support is sometimes defined conceptually or operationally in terms of existence or quantity of social relations in generally or of a particular type such as marriage, friendship or organizational membership. Terms such as social integration or isolation are most often used to refer to the existence. Social support has also sometimes been defined in the terms of structure of a person's social relationship. The term social network is most often used to refer to the structures existing among a set of relationships. It draws attention to multiple aspects of these ties and analyze the effects of deferent patterns. The most commonly studied properties of social network are size and density of networks. Social support generally refers to helpful functions performed for an individual by significant others such as family members, friends, worker and relatives. Social support also has been defined as "those social interactions or relationships that provide individuals with actual assistance individuals within a social system believed to provide love caring or sense of attachment to a value social group."

OBJECTIVE

To assess the relative and conjoint predictability of Coping Strategies, Parental Attachment and Social Support for the Academic Stress among teenagers.

HYPOTHESIS

Coping Strategies, Parental Attachment and Social Support will be differential predictors of teenagers academic Stress.

DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study was delimited only to teenagers studying in class X of Govt. and public schools of Karnal and Kurukshetra districts of Haryana state.

SAMPLE

Sample comprised of 700 students (350 boys and 350 girls) of X grade from seven Govt. Schools and eight public Schools of Karnal and Kurukshetra districts was selected by using stratified sampling technique.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The study was advanced with the help of descriptive survey method by involving the description of academic stress as well as its relationship with the variables of coping strategies. In order to rave the analytical picture of relationship multiple regression was applied.

RESULT AND CONCLUSION

The independent variables of Coping Strategies included Problem Focused and Emotion Focused coping strategies along with eight subvariables (coping behaviors) namely, Confrontive Coping, Planful Problem Solving, Distancing, Self-Controlling, Seeking Social Support, Accepting Responsibility, Escape Avoidance and Positive reappraisal; there were four sub-variables of Parental Attachment namely, Parental Trust, Parental Communication, Parental Alienation plus Total Parental Attachment; Social Support constituted three measures namely, Number of Support, Satisfaction with Support and Total Social Support. Thus by involving a total of seventeen variables as independent variables in the stepup regression equation, certain models were formulated by keeping in view the guiding principles that: Only those independent variables will be included which showed significant value of product moment correlation in the bivariate analysis. The variable which had the strongest positive or negative correlation with the dependent variable, was to be entered first followed by other variable in the descending values of 'r' in the model; If the addition of a certain variable or a sub variable did not significantly add up the contributory variance towards

certain variables. It was deleted from further models. Emotion Focused coping and Problem Focused coping strategies were included in the models with a view to get more meaningful picture as stated by Folkman and Lazarus (1988), for examining their contribution towards academic stress.

In the light of these guidelines seven models as described and discussed below were considered in order to examine the variance of independent variables taken singularly and conjointly towards the criterion variable of academic stress. All these models have been presented in table:

Table

Multiple Regressions Between Various Variables of coping strategies, Parental attachment and Social Support

Model	Independent Variable	R2	F	R2 Change	F
I	EF	.524	263.742**	.275	
II	EF+CSS	.296	146.224**	.021	21.00**
III	EF+CSS+CPP	.311	104.768**	.016	15.750**
IV	EF+CSS+CPP+CEA	.321	81.850**	.009	9.265**
V	EF+CSS+CPP+CEA+CDG	.330	68.33**	.010	10.014**
VI	EF+CSS+CPP+CEA+CDG+PATOT	.339	59.067**	.008	8.862*
VII	EF+CSS+CPP+CEA+CDG+PATOT+CPR	.343	51.627**	.005	4.958*
VIII	EF+CSS+CPP+CEA+CDG+PATOT+CPR+CSC	.348	52.686**	.005	4.870*

The following conclusions may be drawn from the above results:

- (i) Emotion Focused Coping Strategy, when taken singularly accounted for 27.5% towards predicting Academic Stress. The addition of more 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.
- (ii) Out of the total seventeen variables and sub-variables considered for the present study, only eight namely, Emotion Focused (totals), Seeking social support, Planful problem solving, Escape avoidance, Distancing, Positive reappraisal, Self-controlling and Total Parental Attachment came out to be significant predictors of the criterion variable of Academic stress. The sub-variables of Parental Attachment and Social support did not emerge as effective predictors of the criterion variable of Academic stress. On the basis of these results the hypothesis:

“Coping strategies, Parental attachment and Social Support are differential predictors of teenagers’ Academic Stress.” is accepted

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