Original Article

A Comparative Study on Sources of Stress Between Genders Among Children Aged Through 14 To 19 Years

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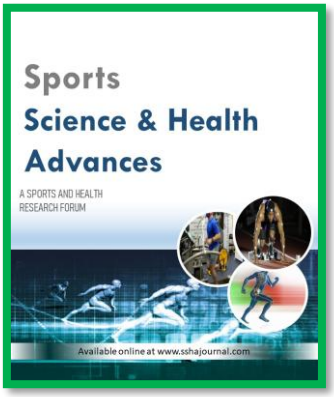

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Abstract

Purpose: Stress is pervasive in the present time. If an individual is unable to manage stressful situations, then it can lead to Depression and Anxiety, preferably when it comes to adolescents. Every teenager has a distinct way of responding to stress. The Present study compared sources of Stress between genders among children aged through 14 to 19 years. **Method:** 150 Boys and 150 Girls were selected to assess the data. "THE STRESS SCALE," developed by Puri Prerna et al., 2011, was used as a tool. A t-test was used for statistical analysis. **Result:** The result revealed that in seven out of ten sources of stress, such as "Generalized stress, Career and academic stress, Stress prone tendencies, Irritability, Low level of stress management skills, Meaningless thoughts and Physical symptoms of stress" Girls have higher levels of significant difference less than $p<0.05$. The result also shows that there is no significant difference between variables "Negative mood states and Apprehensive behavior". The result also revealed that there was no mean difference between boys and girls in the variable "Easy-going personality". **Conclusion**. Overall, Girls are more stressed than Boys. stress can be an emerging problem for adolescents. There should be a prompt for stress management techniques for adolescent girls and boys.

Keywords: Stress, Adolescents, Gender, Meaningless thoughts, Irritability

Introduction

Stress has an inevitable effect on school-going children and adolescents. Stress is present everywhere in our day-to-day life. According to (World Health Organisation, 2023) Stress is "a state of worry or mental tension caused by a difficult situation. Stress is a natural human response that prompts us to address challenges and threats in our lives. Everyone experiences stress to some degree. The way we respond to stress, however, makes a big difference to our overall well-being". Another definition of stress is Stress is brought on by a difference between what should be and what is (FINK, 2017).

In a typical life for an individual, stress is an inevitable feature of life. Stress can be neutral, harmful, or beneficial. Positive events can also be stressful since they need people to adjust to changes, in addition to negative ones. Eustress is stress brought on by happy experiences, whereas stress resulting from bad events is distress. Stress is necessary

for well-being to some degree, regardless of its positive or negative aspects (Lin & Yusoff, 2013). Stress is an internal state that can be brought on by physical strains on the body or by social and environmental circumstances deemed hazardous, unmanageable, or beyond our capacity for coping (Barthwal & Mohi-Ud-Din, 2016). Every human life now inevitably involves stress. Stress levels and their frequency, as well as their lifelong consequences, might vary depending on age and gender (Manchana, 2016).

Higher amounts of harmful foods and beverages, such as beverages for sports, potentially cause stress in young people, particularly in men (Tariq, Tariq, & Tariq, 2019). The modern period presents a lot of challenges and catastrophes for people. This age group is characterized by psychological stress. It is among the most dangerous things that may happen to a person. Despite advancements in science, there are many ailments that negatively impact people in our day and age. Parents play a crucial role in how a family responds to mental stressors (Jenaabadi, 2014). One of the main causes of both ongoing and intermittent stress for young people in Western and Asian nations is academic issues. Exams and study results are the main sources of stress for final-year high school students. Other common causes include having too much on their plate, worrying about the future, making career decisions, having a lot to learn, feeling pressure from others to perform well, and having a self-imposed need to perform well (Sun, Dunne, & Yu Hou, 2012)

The period of life between childhood and adulthood, known as adolescence, lasts from the ages of 10 to 19. It is a special time in human development and a crucial moment to establish the groundwork for long-term health. Teenagers develop in all areas such as physical, cognitive, and psychological (World Health Organization, n.d.). Various stress domains may be more or less noticeable at a given moment. There are three common phases of adolescence: early ages 10 to 13, middle ages 14 to 17, and late ages 18 to early twenties (Anniko, Boersma , & Tillfors, 2019). Adolescence is one of life's most delicate and important stages. Due to the numerous changes that occur in an individual throughout this time, including social, psychological, and physical (Jenaabadi, 2014). Stressful life events negatively impact their physical and mental health (Alghadir , Gabr , & Iqbal, 2020). Teenagers, particularly females, report significant levels of perceived stress and health issues associated with stress (Östberg, et al., 2015).

Although much research has been conducted on the relevance of stress on gender differences but very few have focused on the differences between the causes of stress across different genders (Matud , Díaz , Bethencourt, & Ibáñez, 2020) (Liu, et al., 2020) (Alghadir , Gabr , & Iqbal, 2020). The present study focuses on the different sources and causes of stress on different genders among children aged 14 to 19 years, so that further studies can be conducted to solve the problems. To do so, the following methodology has been implemented

Material & methods

Participants

The researcher selected 300 subjects (150 boys & 150 girls) for the proposed study using a convenient sampling method from different schools in Delhi. The age category of children selected for this study ranged from 14 to 19 years. There were 25 boys and 25 girls in each age group. Demographic details are given in Table 1 and Figure 1 below.

Table 1 Demographic details of different Age Groups/Gender

Age	Boys	Girls	Total Subjects
14yrs.	25	25	50
15yrs.	25	25	50
16yrs.	25	25	50
17yrs.	25	25	50
18yrs.	25	25	50
19yrs.	25	25	50
TOTAL	150	150	300

Tool

"THE STRESS SCALE" was developed by Prerna Puri, Tejinder Kaur, and Manju Mehta (2011), to establish stresses related to different sources of stress and their influence on adolescents. There are 34 items on the scale. It consists of 10 sub-scales: Generalized stress, Career and academic stress, stress-prone tendencies, Irritability, Easy going personality, Low level of stress management skills, Negative mood states, Meaningless thoughts, Physical symptoms of stress, and Apprehensive Behavior each with a four-point Likert scale which ranged from very often to Never. Scoring was conducted for each subject as per the norms given in the scale. The split-half method provided a coefficient of 0.90 for the tool's reliability.

Procedure

The researcher collected data from students in the Delhi region aged between 14 to19 years. using "Stress Scale by Prerna Puri, Tejinder Kaur, and Manju Mehta." To do so, the researcher visited different schools in Delhi. The purpose of the study was explained to the students. Proper instructions were given to the students before filling out the questionnaire. Confidentiality was ensured for students.

Statistical analysis

To analyze the data obtained, the researcher applied Descriptive Statistics, including mean, standard deviation, and frequency distribution, which were first computed to provide an overview of the participants' demographic traits and important factors. The study used an independent samples t-test to investigate variations in the assessed variables depending on gender, using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 22). In order to ascertain whether there were statistically significant differences between male and female participants on a variety of performance and psychological variables. The significance level for all tests was set at 0.05 ($p < 0.05$). The findings were presented together with the relevant degrees of freedom, significance levels, and t-values to help comprehend how gender affected the chosen variables.

Results

The entire population was sampled to get the necessary data, the right instruments were chosen to measure the relevant traits, and the tools were applied to the sample. After that, the essential information was gathered and entered pre-made forms. Before beginning the tests and after choosing the study sample, all questions were answered on the approach to be used in the topic study as well as the goal of the tests. The questionnaire method was employed in this investigation. All individuals completed the questionnaire under the investigator's close supervision and in compliance with the guidelines outlined in the handbook. The result of the analysis is shown in the form of tables and figures, which are explained below.

Table 2 Descriptive statistics of stress in different Age Groups/Gender

Variable of stress	Gender	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	
				skewness	kurtosis
Generalized Stress	Male	32.56	7.27	.000	-2.013
	Female	36.33	6.87		
Career and Academic	Male	9.15	3.10	.313	-.328
Stress	Female	9.93	3.14		
Stress Prone Tendencies	Male	9.79	2.62	.092	-.493
	Female	11.44	2.27		
Irritability	Male	4.42	1.63	.140	-.837
	Female	5.33	1.66		
Easy Going Personality	Male	4.70	1.57	.236	-.656
	Female	4.70	1.58		

Table 2 Continue…

Low Level of Stress	Male	9.04	2.56	.073	-.525
Management Skills	Female	9.82	2.40		
Negative Mood States	Male	5.46	2.37	.656	1.873
	Female	5.80	1.47		
Meaningless Thoughts	Male	2.48	.89	.050	-.979
	Female	2.84	.92		
Physical symptoms of	Male	4.04	1.45	.569	-.125
stress	Female	4.50	1.62		
Apprehensive Behavior	Male	5.32	1.52	.047	-.607
	Female	5.51	1.43		

groups/genders

Table 2 shows the Mean & Standard Deviation of different sources of stress among different Genders. The result revealed that Mean & Standard Deviation of Generalized stress for boys adolescents subjects were 32.56 ± 7.27, and for girls adolescents subjects were 36.33 ± 6.87, Mean & Standard Deviation of career and academic stress for boys adolescents subjects were 9.15 ± 3.10 and girls adolescents subjects were 9.93 ± 3.14, Mean and standard deviation of stress prone tendencies for boys adolescents subjects were 9.79 ± 2.62, and for girls was 11.44 ± 2.27, Mean and standard deviation of irritability for boys adolescents subjects were 4.42 ± 1.63, and for girls adolescents subjects were 5.33 ± 1.66, mean and standard deviation of easy going personality for boys was 4.70 ± 1.57,and for girls adolescents subjects were 4.70 ± 1.58, mean and standard deviation of low level of stress management skills for boys adolescents subjects were 9.04 ± 2.56, and for girls was 9.82 ± 2.40, mean and standard deviation of negative mood states for boys was 5.46 ± 2.37, and for girls was 5.80 ± 1.47, mean and standard deviation of meaningless thoughts for boys adolescents subjects were 2.48 ± .895, and for girls adolescents subjects were 2.84 ± .924, mean and standard deviation of physical symptoms of stress for boys adolescents subjects were 4.04 ± 1.45, and for girls adolescents subjects were 4.50 ± 1.62, mean and standard deviation of apprehensive behavior for boys adolescents subjects were 5.32 ± 1.52,and for girls adolescents subjects were 5.51 ± 1.43.

Table 3 T-test of different age/gender groups on different stress variables.

Variable	Gender	MD	95% CI of the difference		t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
			Lower	Upper			
Generalized stress	Male Female	-3.77	-5.38	-2.16	-4.61	298	.000
Career and academic stress	Male Female	-.78	-1.49	-.06	-2.16	298	.031
Stress prone tendency	Male Female	-1.65	-2.21	-1.09	-5.83	298	.000
Irritability	Male Female	-.90	-1.28	-5.30	-4.74	298	.000
Easy going personality	Male Female	.00	-.35	.35	.00	298	1.00
Low level of stress management skills	Male Female	-.77	-1.33	-.20	-2.69	298	.007
Negative mood states	Male Female	-.34	-.78	.10	-1.49	298	.137
Meaningless thoughts	Male Female	-.36	-.56	-.15	-3.42	298	.001
Physical symptoms of stress	Male Female	-.46	-.81	-.11	-2.62	298	.009
Apprehensive behavior	Male Female	-.19	-53	.14	-1.13	298	.259

Table 3 shows the t-test results for different variables and sources of stress between genders among children aged through 14 years to 19 years. The result revealed that there was a significant difference in generalized stress when compared between genders, t (298) = -4.61, $p<0.05$. It indicated that girls have significantly higher generalized stress (M=36.33) than boys (M = 32.56). Girls are more stressed out in their daily lives about taking care of their families, their health, and their safety and security. They also experience prejudice at home and work.

In career and academic stress, the Result revealed that there was a significant difference when compared between genders, t (298) = -2.16, $p<0.05$. It indicated that girls have significantly higher career and academic stress (M=9.93) than boys (M = 9.15). Girls are anxious about their grades because they want to be respected members of society. Girls experience higher levels of stress than boys because they receive less parental support when it comes to selecting a career.

In stress-prone tendencies, the result revealed that there was a significant difference when compared between genders, t (298) = -5.83, $p<0.05$. It indicated that girls have significantly higher stress-prone tendencies (M=11.44) than boys (M=9.79). Girls are more likely than boys to experience stress because of a variety of factors, including a lack of social support, perseverance, gender bias, low self-esteem, a drive for self-destruction, and multitasking.

In irritability, the result revealed that there was a significant difference when compared between genders, t (298) = -4.74, $p<0.05$. It indicated that girls have significantly higher irritability (M = 5.33) than boys (M=4.42). Girls tend to be more irritable than males for a variety of reasons, including hormonal changes brought on by puberty, mood swings, physical changes, mental health conditions, depression, and other psychological disorders.

In easy-going personality, the result revealed that there was no significant difference when compared between genders, t (298) =.00, $p > 0.05$. There was no mean difference between girls (M=4.70) and boys (M=4.70). Nothing can be decided regarding an easy-going personality.

In low levels of stress management skills, the result revealed that there was a significant difference between genders, t (298) = -2.69, $p<0.05$. It indicated that girls have significantly lower levels of stress management skills (M=9.82) than boys (M=9.04). When under stress, boys and girls respond to stress in different ways. Girls exhibited negative cognitive response styles in stressful settings, including self-blame, self-separation, and difficulty using adaptive emotion-focused techniques. social and emotional assistance. It may result in anxiety and depression. In contrast, boys exhibit a positive cognitive response style to stress.

In negative mood states, the result revealed that there was no significant difference between genders, t (298) = -1.49, $p=0.05$. The mean value of negative mood states was higher in girls (M=5.80) than in boys (M=5.46). Nothing can be decided regarding negative mood states.

In meaningless thoughts, the result revealed that there was a significant difference between genders, t (298) = -3.42, $p<0.05$. It indicated that girls have significantly higher meaningless thoughts (M = 2.84) than boys (M= 2.48). girls perceived stress as a danger. Girls are more likely than boys to think negatively when faced with a stressful circumstance.

In physical symptoms of stress, the result revealed that there was a significant difference between genders, t (298) = -2.62, $p<0.05$. It indicated that girls have significantly higher physical symptoms of stress (M = 4.50) than boys (M = 4.04). In terms of physical symptoms, girls are more likely to experience headaches, gastrointestinal problems, strained muscles or injury, exhaustion, weakness, loss of hunger, trouble sleeping, trembling or irregular heartbeats, pain in the chest or stiffness, changes in menstruation or irregularities, and a higher risk and other infections.

The result for apprehensive behavior revealed no significant difference between genders, t (298) = -1.13. $p>0.05$ The mean value of apprehensive behavior was higher in girls (M=5.51) than in boys (M=5.32). Nothing can be decided regarding apprehensive behavior.

Discussion

The results of the study revealed that girls aged 14 to 19 years have significantly higher generalized stress as compared to boys. when compared between genders, girls have significantly higher generalized stress, career and academic stress, stress-prone tendencies, irritability, low levels of stress management skills, meaningless thoughts, and physical symptoms of stress. there were no significant differences between variable negative mood states and apprehensive behavior across genders. The result also revealed that there was no mean difference between boys and girls in the variable of easy-going personality.

Comparatively speaking, females experienced difficulties with coping in the areas of confidence, physical health, and fitness. Women reported more signs of stress and higher demands. Studies suggest that coping is a significant component of the broader mechanisms of emotion, thought, behavior, physiology, and environmental self-regulation (Compas, Connor-Smith, Saltzman, Thomsen, & Wadsworth, 2001). Highly stressed people are more likely to have sleep issues, feel worse about themselves, and focus their self-esteem on performance. Women, in particular, experience stress and psychological load (Schraml, Perski, Grossi, & Simonsson-Sarnecki, 2011) Regarding issues like upcoming events, peers, and personal health, females are more susceptible to elevated stress (Talukdar, 2022). Notable deficiencies in the creation of programs, the formulation of policies, the collection of data, and the delivery of social services (Sun, Dunne, & Yu Hou, 2012). Individuality type, parent schooling, and the combination of disciplines selected during pre-university are characteristics that may be taken into account when detecting stress in teenage girls (Rentala, Nayak, Patil, Hegde, & Aladakatti, 2019).

A major variable influencing many mental health issues is stress related to academics. There exists a positive correlation between academic stress and psychological problems, as well as parental pressure. In comparison to their male peers, female students are more likely to feel anxiety related to exams and psychological difficulties (Deb, Strodl, & Sun, 2015). When there aren't enough resources to meet the needs of educational institutions, stress frequently peaks (Reddy, Menon, & Thattil , 2017).The future possibilities for career status among adolescents are heavily impacted and channeled. fulfilling academic requirements results in a sense of uncertainty about one's future employment (Hurrelmann , Engel , & Weidman, 1992).

Boys may endure greater, prolonged stress that is not interpersonal, whereas females may endure more interpersonal stress. In their personal lives, especially in their relationships, girls could be more prone to be exposed to the emergence of stress (Shih, Eberhart, Hammen, & Brennan, 2006).

Results revealed that girls have higher stress-prone tendencies than boys. Stress proneness is caused by many elements, including type A personality. People may establish or attribute habituated behaviors that suggest health risks (Erica, Danilo, & Trevor , 2014). Besides this, A high amount of stress and the chance of developing heart disease have been associated with aggressive, competitive, time-sensitive, angry, and irritable behaviors (Jr & Friedberg , 1988). Unfavorable incidents and issues involving friends, family, and close relationships are also the main cause (Rudolph, 2002). Stressors in every area where girls were more likely than boys to be affected, such as general, interpersonal, relational, familial, family members, peers, and romantic (Hankin, Mermelstein, & Roesch, 2007). Compared to men, women reported higher rates of accidents, illnesses, and distress; these occurrences are strongly linked to aches and pains susceptibility and drowsiness. The likelihood of women reporting more functional somatic complaints is higher (Tsao & Zeltzer, 2003).

Irritability is higher in girls when compared across genders. Irritability is recognized as having a low threshold for becoming angry in reaction to frustration, and it is often linked to increased physical or verbal violence (Brotman, Kircanski,, & Leibenluft, 2017). In early adolescence, irritability is linked to both internally and externally perceived symptoms; in girls, the relationship is stronger with internalizing symptoms than in boys (Humphreys, et al., 2019). There was a greater correlation between trauma exposure and irritability in females compared to boys, suggesting that girls were more susceptible to the negative effects of one more traumatic experience. It is linked to internalizing issues that

are recognized as appearing to be more common in teenage females (Henriksen , et al., 2021). Many characteristics are connected to stress. Women have greater ongoing stress, ongoing issues, interpersonal disputes, and day-to-day expectations and disappointment (Matud , 2004). Boys have higher levels of stress management skills as compared to girls. In terms of physical fitness, physical health, and confidence, women underperformed in coping skills when compared to men (Allen & Hiebert , 1991). Girls have more meaningless thoughts than boys. Adolescent females are more likely than adolescent boys to be troubled by unfavorable ideas about their companions and to feel inferior in the eyes of their peers and families (Rudolph, 2002). Girls show higher physical symptoms of stress. between the ages of 15 and 18, females report noticeably more and/or more frequent symptoms. Cough and dry mouth were the most common complaints, followed by limb pains in both genders, sweating, headache, and fainting in the female group. The most uncommon symptom across all age groups and genders was eating and respiration complications with eliminative functions, thus being rather uncommon, particularly in women (Wright & Wright, 1981).

There have been many types of research conducted on stress in different age groups people and between different genders still, more research is needed among adolescents. Research on teenage stress and coping has not kept pace with advances in the field (RUDOLPH & FLYNN, 2007). Stress in adolescence and mental health issues associated with stress are widespread and have been rising in recent decades. Individuals, particularly females in the middle to late stages of adolescence, report elevated levels of stress and symptoms associated with it, including anxiety, depression, trouble sleeping, and physical ailments (Anniko, Boersma , & Tillfors, 2019). In several characteristics connected to stress. Both cognitively and physiologically, men and women typically respond to stress in different ways (Verma, Balhara, & Gupta, 2011).

Teenagers feel stressed out most of the time in their daily lives. The primary causes of elevated stress levels were family disputes and scholastic demands. Peer relationships and social standing issues also had a significant role (Nagabharana, et al., 2021). Men and women typically experience stress in various ways on a biological and psychological level. Research on these variations is also necessary to gain a deeper comprehension of the gender disparity seen in numerous illnesses (Verma, Balhara, & Gupta, 2011). Adolescents who are experiencing stress should not be ignored; instead, appropriate intervention is necessary to prevent further damage. The adolescent years are crucial for the development of self-esteem (Urien & E, 2024). When a youngster reaches youth age, they have to familiarize themselves with a plethora of new people, events, and objects in addition to adjusting to a new life and environment.

Stressful situations can be a result of a lack of use of modern technology to a high cognition level, which can happen suddenly in the secondary school environment. Stress may take many different forms (Gallagher, Jones, Landrosh, Abraham, & Gillum, 2019). Another study examines gender differences in stress and coping styles. result reveals that in response to chronic stress and minor everyday stresses, women scored higher than men (Matud , 2004). Further study reveals that Males would not notice a significant difference in stress levels between the math and spelling tasks, while females would feel more tension on the math assignment than the spelling task (Kania, 2014). Another study reveals that throughout all periods, the school was the most frequent cause of stress, with girls reporting much higher levels of stress than boys (Anniko, Boersma , & Tillfors, 2019).

Further study reveals that in further research, it is hypothesized that significant gender disparities in depression and other kinds of psychopathology during adolescence can be explained by exposure to and assessments of interpersonal stress, as well as biological development factors and the adoption of maladaptive coping mechanisms. Youth who experience social hardship as children are more sensitive to stress in the future, which can lead to depression (RUDOLPH & FLYNN, 2007). A comprehensive examination of the disparities between genders in stress-related consequences should ideally cover the biological, psychological, and social factors that influence how stressors and gender are associated. Regarding the same class of accomplishments or the same health consequence, gender disparities may exist in the way the stress cascade plays out. (Longest & Thoits,

2012). Along with recently experienced stress, women with eating disorders also reported higher levels of stress related to masculine and feminine gender roles. Consequently, compared to women without eating disorders, those with eating disorders reported higher overall stress levels (Bekker & Boselie, 2002). Academic stress is the psychological anguish brought on by the expected frustration of failing an academic course, or even by not realizing that such failure may occur. The relationship between various forms of stress and academic success has also been closely examined, including interpersonal and family fiscal stress. (Ye, Posada, & Liu, 2019). Stress in adolescents is frequently ignored. Students in high school deserve more attention from parents, educators, and schools, particularly during exam season (Lin & Yusoff, 2013). Due to a lack of suitable measuring instruments, there has been little research on the differences between the effects of positive and negative stress on teenage well-being. Research indicates that there are gender-specific differences in the impact of stress on psychological and behavioral consequences.

(Branson, Palmer, Dry, & Turnbull, 2019). To have a more comprehensive understanding of teenage health, it is essential to address the issue of teenage stress. To quantify teenage stress, a legitimate and trustworthy instrument must be available (Byrne , Davenport, & Mazanov, 2007).

Conclusion

From the above result, the following conclusions were drawn: Girls have significantly higher generalized stress as compared to boys. When it comes to career and academics, Girls take more stress than boys. Girls have higher stress-prone tendencies than boys. Irritability is higher in girls compared to boys across genders. Boys have higher levels of stress management skills as compared to girls. Girls have more meaningless thoughts than boys. Girls show higher physical symptoms of stress. There was no significant difference when it comes to negative mood states and apprehensive behavior across genders. There was no mean difference between boys and girls in the variable of easy-going personality.

Conflict of Interest

There are no conflicts of interest

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