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Research Article

A Comparative Study of Academic Stress and Coping Mechanisms Among School-Going Adolescents

Rizwan Ahmed[1*], Shikha Duhan[2]
[1]Psychiatric Social Worker, Employee State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) Medical College and Hospital, Faridabad.
[2]Master of Social Work, Dept. of Social Work, Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra.

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***Corresponding author:** Rizwan Ahmed, Psychiatric Social Worker, Employee State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) Medical College and Hospital, Faridabad.

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Abstract:

Background: Academic stress is a prominent factor leading to psychological distress in adolescent life. This study light on the prevalence of academic stress in school-going adolescents and coping mechanisms adopted by them to deal with stress. The findings of the study help the school management for better understand about level of stress among students and identify the stress due to the present teaching method.

Method: A comparative research design was used to conduct the study at a private school in Kurukshetra, Haryana. The 100 participants were assigned (50 males and (50 females) through the simple random sampling technique. The ways of coping questionnaire and academic stress scale were used.

Result: The inadequacy of female respondents (19.16±5.06) was found higher than male respondents (16.46±4.19) and the mean score of Fear of Failure is high in females as compared to boys that were (19.43±5.87) (p value= .039). Self-isolation was (5.09±1.68) in males was higher than 5.64±2.02 in females. Self-isolation was 5.09±1.68 in males and was higher (5.64±2.02) in females. (p value=0.005)

Conclusions: Most students adopt various coping mechanisms to overcome the adverse effects of stress. The student most frequently used active coping skills rather than passive skills.

Keywords: school-going adolescents; Coping Mechanism; Academic Stress

Introduction:

According to the definition of world health organization (WHO), adolescence is a successive stage from puberty to sexual and reproductive maturity. The growth of adult cognition and adult individuality conversion from total socio-economic dependence to relative independence.[1] Adolescence has been well-planned as a phase of increased stress. According to research, academic pressure is one of the most common sources of stress in young people. [2]

In Indian society, education is renowned for its value system. The system is revered for its cleanliness and is inextricably linked with religious obligations. India's education system is workbook-based, with a significant emphasis on cramming courses that need many hours of study daily. This rigorous study schedule from sunrise to sunset offers little to no time for socialising and recreation. [3]

Students frequently experience stress when they are unable to tolerate the dangers associated with higher education. They are frequently encountered

in frightening, abusive, depressed, threatening, competitive, unexpected, and confused settings. College students have a higher suicide rate than the general population, and these suicides are typically linked to scholastic failure or underachievement. [4]

Many psychiatrists have expressed concern about the growth of educational stressors among students, which has resulted in a high rate of suicide. [5-6] According to the research, a large number of youths in India are referred to psychiatrists for school-related distress, including higher levels of anxiety, refusal to attend school, phobia, physical complaints, and susceptibility to depression, weeping spells, irritability, and decreased interest in performing school tasks. [7]

University students frequently try to regulate and minimise their stress by avoidance, religious and social support, or positive reappraisal. Leisure satisfaction and fitness activities serve as stress buffers, giving college students a sense of purpose and competence. Students' academic stress is also lessened and managed using good time management and study approaches. Short-term longitudinal research was done to investigate the pattern of coping behaviour and the link between coping style and depression during adolescence. The findings revealed that 84% of teenagers used an approach-oriented coping style to deal with their stresses, whereas 16% used an avoid-oriented coping style. [8]

Material and Method:

A comparative research design was selected for the research. The 100 participants were assigned (50 Male) and (50 Female) through the simple random sampling technique. The participants were selected from the private school of Kurukshetra (Haryana). The Purpose of the study is explained to the concerned authority of the school then formal written permission is obtained from the school management for the conduct study. The prior informed consent was also obtained from the school before the data collection process. The sample unit was included through the inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Structured and valid tools were used to assess coping mechanisms [9] and the academic stress Scale [10] in order to collect data. The investigator was given a brief overview of the study explained the rationale of the study and requested the participants' complete assistance and confidence the privacy of the data

Written consent was taken from the participants. Participants well cooperated during the time of the data collection process. Descriptive statistics were used for data analysis.

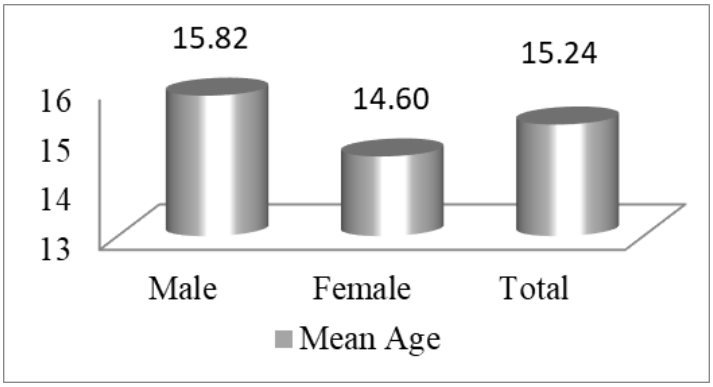
Statistical Analysis:

The study utilized SPSS version 22.0 for statistical analysis, descriptive statistics, chi-square tests, and independent sample t-tests to calculate percentage profiles and categorical and continuous variables.

Result:

Variables	Male N 50 M± SD	Female N 50 M± SD	Total N 100 M± SD
Age	15.82±1.58	14.60±.89	15.24±1.42

Table1 shows that the mean age of the male respondent was 15.82±1.58 and the mean of female respondents was 14.60±.89 and in total the mean age of all respondents was 15.24±1.42



Graph1: Mean age of participants

Table 1: Description of the age of male and female school-going adolescents.

Variables	Male N=50 (%)	Female N=50 (%)	χ^2	df	P
Class			1.663	3	.170
9th	16(32)	12(24)			
10th	10(20)	11(22)			
11th	12(24)	17(34)			
12th	12(24)	10(20)			
Religion			3.942	2	.139
Hindu	30(60)	31(62)			
Muslim	9(18)	3(6)			
Sikh	11(22)	16(32)			
Family type			2.564	1	.109
Joint	22(44)	28(56)			
Nuclear	28(56)	22(44)			
Domicile			1.051	1	.305
Rural	28(56)	33(66)			
Semi-Urban	22(44)	17(34)			
Urban	-	-			

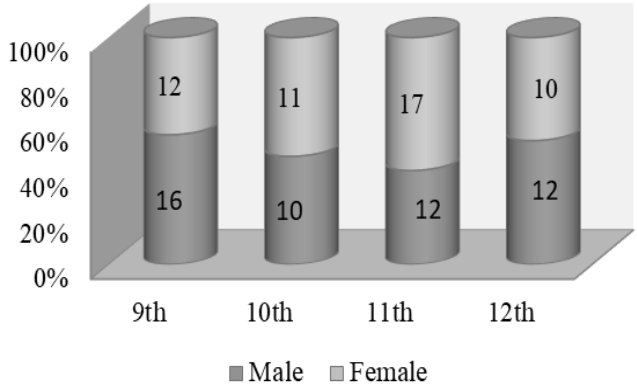
Table 2: Comparison of Socio-Demographic Characteristics of male and female school-going adolescents

Table 2 shows descriptive information about the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents who were divided into two groups' male school-going adolescents and female school-going adolescents' group.
The result shows that the majority of (32%) respondents in the male group belong to the 9th standard in the female group majority of (34%) respondents belong to the 11th class.

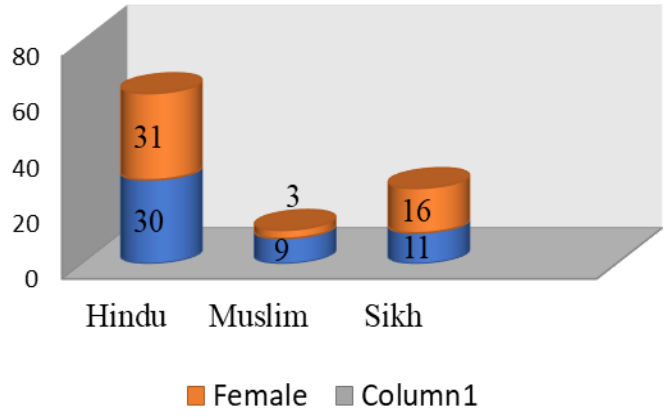
The table shows that of male respondents the majority (60%) belong to the Hindu religion in the male group and (62%) belong to the female group.
In this table (22%) of respondents in the male group belong to the Sikh religion and other hands (32%) of respondents are in the female group. (18%) of the respondents belong to the Muslim religion in the male group and (6%) of respondents in the female group.

The study findings show that (56%) of respondents belonged to a nuclear family in the male group and (44%) in the female group. (44%) of the respondent belonged to a joint family in the male group and (56%) in the female group.

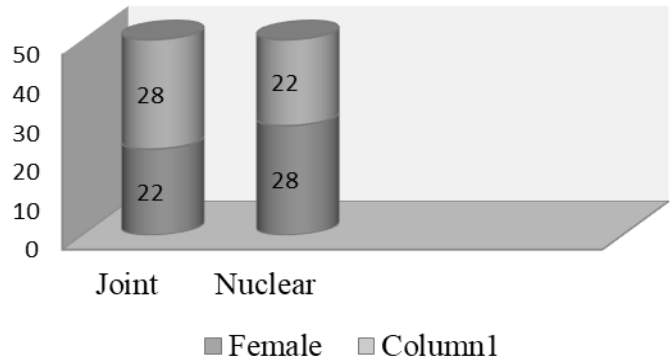
The study finding shows that the majority of male (56%) and female (66 %) respondents belong to the rural background and the rest (44%) male respondents and (34%) female respondents belong to the semi-urban background. The result shows no statistically significant difference was found between the study groups.



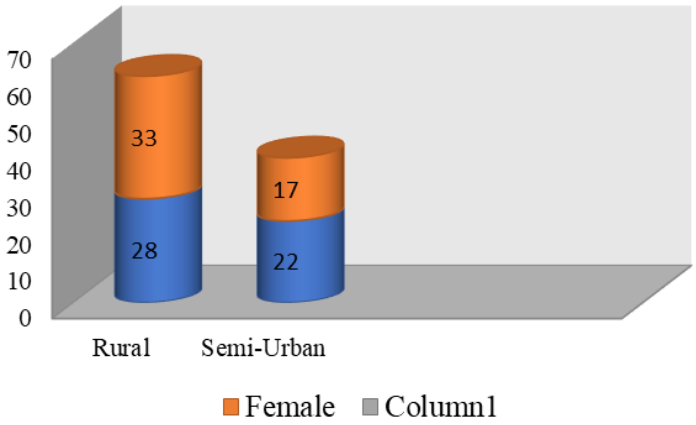
Graph 2: class - wise frequency of participants



Graph 3: Religion of participants



Graph 4: Types of participant's family



Graph 5: Domicile of participants

Sample size N=100

Variable	Sample Group		't' (df=98)	P value
	Boys(M±SD) (N=50)	Girls (M±SD) (N=50)		
Personal Inadequacy	16.46±4.19	19.16±5.06	-2.918	.004
Fear of Failure	17.26±4.42	19.43±5.87	-2.096	.039
Interpersonal Difficulties with Teachers	14.46±5.29	16.45±5.86	-1.789	.077
Teaching Method	16.09±4.61	18.43±5.25	-2.369	.020
Inadequate Study Facilities	17.21±5.43	19.43±7.08	-2.369	.080

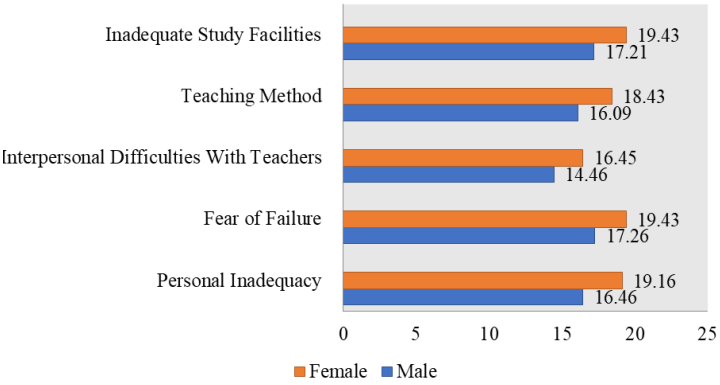
* Significant at 0.05 level

Table 3: Comparison of academic stress between boys and girls.

Table 3 revealed that **academic stress between male and female respondents on all domains of scale.** The mean score **of Personal Inadequacy** of female respondents (19.16±5.06) was found higher than male respondents (16.46±4.19) and the mean score of **Fear of**

Failure was high in females as compared to boys that were (19.43±5.87)

Similarly, the mean score of **Interpersonal Difficulties with Teachers is greater in female respondents that were (**16.45±5.86). The mean score of the **Teaching Method was** (16.09±4.61) in male respondents and (18.43±5.25) in female respondents. **The stress of Inadequate Study Facilities was also high in female respondents that were (**19.43±7.08) the t value computed for this was found to be statistically significant at 0.05 levels. It indicates that significant differences exist among both respondents in terms of **academic stress**. So the current study reveals that the female respondents found more **academic stress** in comparison to male respondents.



Graph 6: Domain wise academic stress between male and female participants**.**

Domain	Male N 50 M±SD	Female N 50 M±SD	t- value df (98)
Seeking social support	11.78±3.48	12.12±3.89	-.454
Emphasizing the positive	7.61±1.97	6.95±2.41	1.495
Tension reduction	4.21±1.74	3.20±1.64	2.931
Self-isolation	5.09±1.68	5.64±2.02	-1.480
Distancing	8.55±3.14	9.33±3.19	-1.223
Self-blame	4.67±2.61	5.25±2.18	-1.191
Problem-focused coping	18.15±4.81	19.60±5.62	-1.389
Wishful thinking	7.78±2.70	8.04±2.50	-.485

* Significant at 0.05 level

Table 4: Comparison of male and female school-going adolescents in terms of ways of coping

Table 4 shows a comparison of male and female school-going adolescents in terms of ways of coping. The comparison was based on the eight domains of ways of coping **(Problem-focused coping, Wishful thinking, Distancing, seeking social support, Emphasizing the positive, self-blame, Tension reduction, and Self-isolation)**. A T-test was used for this purpose. The result shows that the mean and SD of Problem-focused coping were 18.15±4.81 in males and 19.60±5.62 in females. Wishful thinking was 7.78±2.70 in males and 8.27±2.51 8.04±2.50 in females. Distancing was 8.55±3.14 in males and 9.33±3.19 in females. Seeking social support was 11.78±3.48 in males and 12.12±3.89 in females. Emphasizing the positive was 7.61±1.97 in males and 6.95±2.41 in females. Self-isolation was 5.09±1.68 in males and 5.64±2.02 in females. Tension reduction was 4.21±1.74 in males and 3.21±1.83.20±1.64 in females. Self-isolation was 5.09±1.68 in males and 5.64±2.02 in females.

Discussion:

Two hundred forty adolescents (50 male school-going adolescents and 50 female school-going adolescents) were the focus of the present study and the aim was to assess and compare the gender difference among school-going adolescents in terms of academic stress and ways of coping. The samples were collected from class 9^{th} to 12^{th} students of private schools, Kurukshetra (Haryana). The tools administered were a socio-demographic data sheet, an academic stress, and ways of coping questionnaire. The samples of both groups were matched with the variables like age, family type, domicile, and religion.

According to the descriptive data by gender, a greater proportion of participants had significant levels of academic stress. According to the descriptive data, female respondents reported higher levels of stress than male respondents. The t-test also found a significant relationship between gender and academic stress.

The study verifies Misra et al.'s argument that stress levels differ by student gender. The findings are consistent with those of Misra et al., who discovered that female students were more prone to academic stress due to negative assessment and a focus on emotional feelings when facing a stressful situation. [11]

Males, on the other hand, are shown to demonstrate strength when confronted with a challenge. Dahlin et al. also discovered that female students scored higher than male students on four out of seven stress indicators.[12]

The data shows that male and female undergraduate students experience different levels of academic stress. It has been discovered that female students are more stressed than their male counterparts. This could be because genders differ in their perceptions and attitudes towards life. Female pupils are naturally truthful and sensitive, whilst males are often easygoing and optimistic. This research finding was supported by the research results of Sitz et al. [13] and Brougham, et al., [14] that a wide difference is seen in the attitude of the student towards the subject, lectures, academic programs, and classroom and that female students reported an escalated level of stress than male students. Females are more likely to identify with the feminine gender role, whereas males identify with the masculine gender role.

Conclusion:

The current study sought to analyse and compare gender differences among school-aged adolescents in terms of academic stress and coping strategies. The study's findings reveal considerable gender differences among school-aged teenagers in terms of academic stress and coping strategies. Female students

were more likely to experience high academic stress than male learners. Male and female students appraise stressful circumstances differently, which can explain this. Schools and parents should provide greater support and care to help students cope with various stressors and identify students experiencing stress as soon as possible.

Future Direction and Implications:

Based on the current study findings, it is obvious that there are considerable gender disparities among school-aged adolescents in terms of academic stress and coping strategies. With these findings, it would be fascinating to look at the other relevant psychosocial aspects, such as academic achievement, emotional intelligence, parenting style, and so on, and how they affect academic stress and coping strategies. Based on the current study's findings, psychosocial intervention programs can be devised to improve coping and deal with stressors in the lives of school-aged teenagers. Based on the current study findings, a gender-specific intervention package can be produced for school-aged adolescents. These abilities will assist students in dealing with numerous life challenges, as well as in performing well in school. The current study's findings will assist the school mental health program in addressing the issue of stress and coping strategies among school-aged adolescents.

Declaration of Competing Interest:
None

Financial Disclosure:
None

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