

STRESS AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS IN JAMMU DIVISION

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Abstract

Stress among higher education students has been an area of interest for both researchers and teachers for many years because it affects not only their academics but also their physiological and psychological health. The present study is an attempt to study stress among students of higher education. The main objective of the present study was to find the gender differences in pressure, physical stress, anxiety, frustration and total stress score among college students. The present study was completed through descriptive cross-sectional design. Multi stage randomized sampling technique was used to collect a sample of 1000 students (500 males and 500 females). Stress scale developed by Dr. Vijaya Lakshmi and Dr. Shruti Narayan were used to collect the data. The results of the study reported no significant differences in pressure, anxiety and frustration among male and female college students while as significant differences were found in physical stress and total stress score among male and female college students.

Key Words: *stress, pressure, physical stress, anxiety, frustration*

INTRODUCTION

Stress can be described as a real or perceived threat to the physiological or psychological balance of an individual that results in the physiological and behavioral responses. Stress can be viewed in different ways in different countries like in eastern nations, stress has been viewed as an absence of inner peace or tranquility while as in the western side it has been observed as a loss of control. Stress is something which is unavoidable and unfortunately it produces headache, neck crick and causes many health problems that include depression, anxiety, heart disease and stroke (Clark, 2013).

So far as the problem of stress is concerned D'Zurilla & Shetty (1991) stated that college students are more at risk and their life is highly stressful as a consequence of their transition from high school to a new educational environment. If we look at college students from a

close angle, we can observe that they encounter a number of challenges in their day to day life like , for the first time they went away from home, new friend circle, demands and expectations of parents, new roles as adolescents etc. therefore the whole idea of an exciting and vibrant college life is exposed by these challenges which in turn resulted in stress and if not dealt effectively it can only escalate and hamper their academic performance, emotional and social well-being. Ford (2007) stated that college is an important transition period in a students' life. It is the stage when students are often no longer under direct parental supervision, and are faced with new social and academic pressures in the form of adjustment in a newly social and educational environment.

Gender differences also influence student's perception and reaction to academic stressors (Misra et al., 2000). For example, female students more often report letting out their feelings, whereas men more often report controlling their emotions, accepting the problem, not thinking about the situation, and engaging in problem-solving efforts (Hyde & Plant, 1995; Milkie & Thoits, 1993).

The main objective of the paper is to find the levels of stress as well as the gender differences in stress among college students in Jammu division. As we all know Jammu and Kashmir is a highly volatile area due to military insurgency from the last couple of decades. It is the youth who are most effected segment of population. Their mental health is deeply impacted by the armed conflict which is still prevailing in Jammu and Kashmir. Keep this objective in mind the investigator wants to know the stress levels of college population in Jammu division which is one of the part of Jammu and Kashmir state and the investigator also has reviewed a number of studies in order get deeper insight of the issue which are discussed as follows.

Anderson, et al. (1991) concluded that females showed higher anxiety and stress levels as compared to males. McCann, et al. (1991) revealed that women showed significantly higher levels of worry than men. Stewart, et al. (1997) observed that females showed high anxiety and sensitivity than males. Moreover Carson, et al. (1998) in abnormal psychology and modern life reported that depression was higher in female as compare to male. Wang and Ko (1999) pointed out that girls feel upset more easily than boys, mostly because of

their concerns about physical appearances. Girls may perceive themselves as “very ugly”, feel that they are too fat, too short, too high, or dislike their hair color or skin color. Rosenthal & Schreiner (2000) found that women had higher levels of psychological symptoms, i.e., anger, anxiety and depression, than men, and students older than 25 years had lower levels of depression and anger symptoms than younger students. Ribichaud, et al. (2003) observed a significant gender differences in worry, as women showed more symptoms of worry than men.

Matud (2004) investigated that women have more daily stress, with more chronic problems and conflicts and daily demands and frustrations. Nearly half of the stressful events described by women and men were significantly different, women reporting more family and health related events experienced by other people in their environment. While as men reported events related to work and finances and relationships with friends and lovers more. Hankin, Mermelstein and Roesch (2007) assessed that girls showed more depressive symptoms and stressors in certain contexts (e.g., interpersonal) than boys. Seedat, et al. (2009) revealed that psychological distress mostly depression and anxiety, stress, frustration is of growing problem, especially among women. Gupta and Kumar (2010) observed that male students possess better mental health, emotional intelligence and self – efficacy than female students. Al-Sowygh (2013) revealed that female students perceived more stress than did males. Hosseini and Khazali (2013) reported that female scored higher in the subscales of physiological anxiety and worry than male students, indicating that the level of anxiety among females were greater in these subscales. While as in overall scores of anxiety, significant difference was observed between males and females. Gallagher, et al. (2014) observed that female students showed significantly higher levels of perceived stress than their male counterparts.

In the above mentioned discussion it was concluded that females showed higher levels of stress, worry, depression and distress as compared to males.

The investigator has also reviewed few other studies such as Mangotra (1982) concluded that girls possess better mental health and were more capable of facing the realities of life around them and were in a better position to overcome the mental health disequilibrium

while as the mental life of boys were dominated by the feeling of depression and neurotic behavior. Misra and Castillo (2004) observed that male respondents reported more stress than females. Albuquerque, et al. (1990) found that male students reported relatively greater degree of distress as compared to their counterpart. Vijaya and Karunakaran (2013) concluded that majority of boys expressed high level of stress and moderate stress compared to girls. Whereas majority of girl students exhibited low level of stress compared to Boys.

The Above mentioned studies revealed that females possess better mental health as compared to males.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Stress is a psychological state in which people experience extreme distress and anxiety in different situations. Stress is the part of the human life, every person experience stress according to their level of intelligence, personality and other traits. Nature has endowed everyone a capacity to cope up with stress, which is known as frustration-tolerance or stress-tolerance. When the limit is crossed we get upset and depressed that can be injurious to mental and physical health. So it is a kind of silent-killer.

The students studying particularly at higher level are having a kind of fear and pessimistic feelings about what would be their future. The parents expect them to perform outstandingly to earn good grades and get high ranked jobs for themselves. The academic pressure created by self, parents and the society affect the health of the students and they undergo high level of stress during their studies. Further, the students are uncertain about the examinations and too many class tests, presentations and preparation for the same create a level of stress which college students cannot comprehend.

Further, it is needless to mention that knowledge related to renders a great help to student, teachers, teacher educators, guidance workers, curriculum designers as well as educational managers in the improvement of total teaching learning process as well in guidance and counseling services for students. In order to improve the educational

processes and problems of students at higher stage stress should be systematically investigated.

The researcher has not come across intensive studies in the area stress in relation to college students. Particularly in Jammu Division no such study has been conducted in relation to this variable. Due to feeling an enormity of the problem, the investigator therefore, selected the problem entitled Stress among college students in Jammu division.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To know the level of stress with respect to gender.
2. To study the differences among male and female college students with respect to:
Pressure
Physical stress
Anxiety
Frustration and
Total stress scores.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

Hypothesis1: There will be no significant differences among male and female college students with respect to:

H1.1 Pressure

H1.2 Physical stress

H1.3 Anxiety

H1.4 Frustration and

H1.5 Total stress scores

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A descriptive cross-sectional design was used to detect the gender differences in stress. The population of the present study includes all B.Sc. /B.A. Part III students enrolled in 45 arts/sciences govt. degree colleges of Jammu, Udhampur, Samba, Kathua, Reasi, Doda, Kishtwar, Ramban, Rajouri and Poonch districts in Jammu division. Jammu division is one of the part of J &k state. Multi stage randomized sampling technique was used to draw the

sample. A Sample of 16 colleges was selected according to the share of each district in total number of colleges and was selected randomly. After the random selection of sample colleges the investigator decided to select a sample size of 1000 students comprising of 500 male and 500 female students studying in part third of the three year degree course in the sample government degree colleges. The sample of 1000 students was divided among sample colleges of each district using a standard formula. Finally the sample respondents were selected randomly from the sample colleges. For collecting the data the researcher has used stress scale developed by Dr. Vijaya Lakshmi and Dr. Shruti Narayan. It consists of 40 items.

RESEARCH TOOLS

The researcher has used stress scale developed by Dr. Vijaya Lakshmi and Dr. Shruti Narain. The scale consists of 40 items measuring four dimensions of stress i.e. pressure, physical stress, anxiety, and frustration.

ETHICAL ISSUES

Before accessing the students, the researcher gets the approval from the heads of the selected colleges. By filling out the questionnaire during their class time, they were informed about their participation in the study. Participants' confidentiality and anonymity were assured. Consent to participate in the study obtained by a statement in the invitation letter saying: 'Returning the completed questionnaire to the researcher indicates your consent to participate in the study.'

DATA ANALYSIS

For analysis and interpretation of data the investigator has used percentage analysis to identify the levels of stress among students and Anova (one way) to see the significant difference between two Mean samples. Percentage analysis is shown in table 1 as follows while as results of Anova is shown in table 2.

Table 1 levels of stress scores among males and female college students (Male=500, Female=500)

	Levels of stress					
	High		Moderate		Low	
Dimensions of stress	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Pressure	242 (48.4%)	162 (32.4%)	245 (49%)	305 (61%)	13 (2.6%)	33 (6.6%)
Physical stress	167 (33.4%)	243 (48.6%)	167 (33.4%)	130 (26%)	166 (33.2%)	127 (25.4%)
Anxiety	184 (36.8%)	129 (25.8%)	208 (41.6%)	296 (59.2%)	108 (21.6)	75 (15%)
Frustration	67 (13.4%)	37 (7.4%)	247 (49.4%)	287 (57.4%)	186 (37.2)	176 (35.2%)
Overall stress	129 (25.8%)	71 (14.2%)	274 (54.8%)	328 (65.6%)	97 (19.4)	101 (20.2%)

The review of table 1 indicated that more number of boys (48.4%) were showed higher level of pressure, 49% showed moderate level of pressure and 2.6% showed low level of pressure while as 32.4% girls showed higher level of pressure, 61% showed moderate level of pressure and 6.6% were showed low level of pressure.

The review of the table 1 further revealed that 33.4% boys showed higher level of physical stress, 33.4% reported moderate level of physical stress and 33.2% reported low level of physical stress in comparison to 48.6% girls reported higher level of physical stress, 26% moderate level while as 25.4% reported low level of physical stress.

Furthermore the review of the table 1 indicated that 36.8% boys showed higher level of anxiety, 41.6% reported moderate level and 21.6% reported low level of anxiety in

comparison to 25.8% girls reported higher level of anxiety, 59.2% moderate level while as 15% reported low level of physical stress.

The review of the table 1 further revealed that 13.4% boys showed high level of frustration, 49.4% reported moderate level and 37.2% reported low level of frustration in comparison to 7.8% girls reported high level of frustration, 57.4% reported moderate level, while as 35.2% reported low level of frustration. From the above discussion we can that frustration was high among boys than girls.

In overall stress score 25.8% boys showed higher level of stress in comparison to 14.2% of girls, 54.8% boys showed moderate level of stress in comparison to 65.6% of girls while as 19.4% boys showed low level of stress in comparison to 20.2% of girls.

Table 2 shows the ‘F’ values of male and female college students in pressure, physical stress, anxiety, frustration and total stress

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Pressure	Between Groups	4.761	1	4.761	1.125	NS
	Within Groups	4223.238	998	4.232		
	Total	4227.999	999			
Physical stress	Between Groups	24.336	1	24.336	18.482	Significant at 0.01 level
	Within Groups	1314.108	998	1.317		
	Total	1338.444	999			
Anxiety	Between Groups	15.876	1	15.876	2.399	NS
	Within Groups	6605.228	998	6.618		
	Total	6621.104	999			
Frustration	Between Groups	.961	1	.961	.245	NS
	Within Groups	3915.710	998	3.924		
	Total	3916.671	999			
Total stress	Between Groups	145.924	1	145.924	4.305	Significant at 0.05 level
	Within Groups	33829.100	998	33.897		
	Total	33975.024	999			

Review of TABLE 2 showed that the calculated 'F' value for male and female college students in pressure is 1.125 is well below (3.86) the table value of 'F' at 0.05 level of significance for degrees of freedom 1 and 998. It means the calculated 'F' value is not significant. Therefore, we can say that there were no significant differences in pressure among male and female college students. So, the hypothesis which states that there will be no significant differences among male and female college students with respect to pressure is accepted.

Review of TABLE 2 further showed that the calculated 'F' value for male and female college students in physical stress is 18.482 is greater than (6.69) the table value of 'F' at 0.01 level of significance for degrees of freedom 1 and 998. It means the calculated 'F' value is significant. Thus, we can say that there were significant differences in physical stress among male and female college students. Hence, the hypothesis which states that there will be no significant differences among male and female college students with respect to physical stress is not accepted.

Perusal of TABLE 2 showed that the calculated 'F' value for male and female college students in anxiety is 2.399 is well below (3.86) the table value of 'F' at 0.05 level of significance for degrees of freedom 1 and 998. It means the calculated 'F' value is not significant. Therefore, we can say that there were no significant differences in anxiety among male and female college students. So, the hypothesis which states that there will be no significant differences among male and female college students with respect to anxiety is accepted.

Review of TABLE 2 revealed that the calculated 'F' value for male and female college students in frustration is .245 is well below (3.86) the table value of 'F' at 0.05 level of significance for degrees of freedom 1 and 998. It means the calculated 'F' value is not significant. Therefore, we can say that there were no significant differences in frustration among male and female college students. So, the hypothesis which states that there will be no significant differences among male and female college students with respect to frustration is accepted.

Review of TABLE 2 showed that the calculated 'F' value for male and female college students in total stress score is 4.305 is well above (3.86) the table value of 'F' at 0.05 level of significance for degrees of freedom 1 and 998. It means the calculated 'F' value is significant. Therefore, we can say that there were significant differences in total stress score among male and female college students. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that there will be no significant differences among male and female college students with respect to total stress score is not accepted.

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

The first aim of this study was to examine the level of stress among male and female college students.

The results of the present study indicated that in overall stress score 25.8% boys showed higher level of stress in comparison to 14.2% of girls.

The findings of the present study were not supported by the findings of various studies as some handful of researchers revealed that men tend to have lower level of distress. Because the males role was associated with greater social and economic resources than the females. When women assumed non-traditional roles, they tended to have lower depression and psychological distress than women in more traditional female roles (Radloff, 1975; Rosenfield, 1980 and Horwitz, 1982). Bhatia, Vij and Madhura (2013) revealed that the stress level in boys were significantly higher than the girls, irrespective of the schools they are studying in The available literature also showed that college students are more prone to stress due to the transitional nature of college life (Sayedfatemi, Tafreshi and Hagani, 2007).Sprock and Yoder (1997) reported that females experience higher level of stress or mental health problems than males. Girls are more affected by stressful events than boys (Compass, 1987, Frydenberg, 1997, Groer, Thomas and Shoffner 1992). Matud (2004) reported that women scored significantly higher than men in chronic stress and minor daily stressors. Women rated their life events as more negative and less controllable than men. Women scored significantly higher than man on somatic symptoms and psychological distress. Women suffer more stress than men and their coping styles are more emotion focused than that of men.

The findings of the present study were supported by the results of previous research studies reported that female students tend to be more anxious and worry oriented than male students (Bernstein, Garfinkel, & Hoberman, 1989; Gierl & Rogers, 1996; Plancherel & Bolognini, 1995). Some research findings have revealed that females experience more stress and express it more than males (Garton & Pratt, 1995; Steiner, et al., 2002). Hudd, et al. (2000) observed that female students reported higher level of stress than male students.

The second aim of this study was to examine if there was any significant gender differences in the various dimensions of stress among college students in Jammu division.

The results of the present study reported no significant differences in pressure, anxiety and frustration while as significant differences were found in physical stress and total stress score among male and female college students.

The available literature found that adolescent boys and girls experience equal amounts of stress, but the source and affects may differ. Girls tend to be more stressed from interpersonal situations and stress is more likely to lead to depression in girls than in boys. For boys however specific events such as changing schools or poor grades appear to be major sources of stress (Ford, 1998).

The findings of the present study do not supported by findings of following research studies. Ojha (2002) also reported that female were more anxious than male. Raghwa (1980) observed that girls have level of anxiety higher than boys. Siddiqui and Aktar (1983) also demonstrated that girls were more anxious than boys. Dahlin, Joneborg and Runeson (2005) observed that female students have higher level of depression and stress than males. Verma (1990) reported that female adolescent learners had significantly more anxiety than male adolescent learners. Hosseini and Khazali (2013) reported that female students have more physiological anxiety and worry than male students.

The findings of the present study were supported by the results of Dodia (2001) reported that there were no significant difference in anxiety between male and female.

The results of the present study were not supported by the findings of following research studies.

Kumar and Muthumanicakam (2013) revealed that male and female D.T.Ed., teacher trainees differ significantly in their frustration. While as females are more frustrated as compared to males. McCann, et al. (1991) revealed that women reported significantly higher levels of worry than men.

The findings of the present study were supported by the results of Singh and Choudhary (2015) observed no significant difference between the frustration level of male and female adolescent students. Sadhu (2014) found no significant gender differences in frustration.

FINDINGS

1. The results of the present study reported no significant differences in pressure, anxiety and frustration among male and female college students.
2. The results of the present study reported significant differences in physical stress and total stress score among male and female college students.

SUGGESTIONS

Keeping in view the limitations of the study the researcher has given following suggestions for future researchers.

1. Future studies can take samples from colleges in different parts of J & K, and examine the reliability of present findings.
2. The researcher has studied the psychological wellbeing of students in general, has not compared students of different castes and categories. It would be worthwhile if future research is directed towards a comparison across students belonging to different castes and categories.
3. Stress and mental health could be studied in relation to nature and nurturing style of parents. Or a comparative study could be done among students in relation to with or without one of the parents.

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