

A Study of Causes of Stress and Stress Management among Youth

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Type of Review: Peer Reviewed.

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21013/jmss.v11.n3.p1>

How to cite this paper:

Bhargava, D., Trivedi, H. (2018). A Study of Causes of Stress and Stress Management among Youth. *IRA-International Journal of Management & Social Sciences* (ISSN 2455-2267), 11(3), 108-117. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.21013/jmss.v11.n3.p1>

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ABSTRACT

Stress is a condition of mental pressure for particular individual facing problems from environmental and social well-being which leads to so many diseases. Young age is the critical period because at this time youth faces lots of changes in his/her life. They are expected to be the elites in the society. Thus, they should enhance their stress management abilities so as to live a healthy life after entering the society. When a child enters into the youth age, they need to not only adapt themselves to the new life and new environment but also be familiar with many new people, events, and things. The life stress on them is considerable. Therefore, understanding the sources of stress among them and how they can cope with the stress is very important. The researcher found that the stress mainly comes from academic tests, interpersonal relations, relationship problems, life changes, and career exploration. Such stress may usually cause psychological, physical, and behavioral problems. This study finds the causes of stress among youth. So after identifying causes the researcher suggests that more emphasis can be given to development stage of child into adolescence. They should be brought up in the positive environment. More emphasis should be given to the outdoor activities and create hostile learning environment by minimizing the negative impact of stressors. The findings will help the individual students, scholars, lecturers, career and counseling centers.

Keywords: Stress, Symptoms, Stressor, Youth

INTRODUCTION

Selye (1956) defines stress as "any external event or any internal drive which threaten to upset the organism equilibrium is stress". **Stress is a condition or feeling experienced when a person perceives that demands exceed the personal and social resources the individual is able to mobilize.**

In the present competitive age it is reported that young generation are found to be more in stress. We got the information related to depression, attempt to suicide and some psychological symptoms among the youth. Sometime we got the information related to suicide, attempted suicide depression, dropout and many more psychological symptoms among the youth. Now scenario has been changing most of us aware about the stressor which affect the college students and maintain the environment which induces the positive thinking among youth. The measures have also taken by the individuals and different organization to conduct the various programs to reduce the stress.

Adolescence is a dangerous period of time where young people experience self organization and role confusion. For them, stress mainly comes from academic tests, interpersonal relations, relationship problems, financial, and career exploration. Such stress may usually cause psychological, physical, and behavioral problems. Taking all these factors into account an effort is made to understand the stress and emotional adjustments of today's youth. The inference of this study may lead to better adjustment and academic performance of the students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There have been many studies (Schafer, 1996; Fisher, 1994; Altmaier, 1983; Greenberg & Valletutti, 1980), which have reported strong relationship between stress and college students. According to Lazarus & Folkman (1984), stress is a mental or physical phenomenon formed through one's cognitive appraisal of the stimulation and is a result of one's interaction with the environment. The existence of stress depends on the existence of the stressor. Feng (1992) and Volpe (2000) defined stressor as anything that challenges an individual's adaptability or stimulates an individual's body or mentality. Stress can be caused by environmental factors, psychological factors, biological factors, and social factors.

Academic stress among students have long been researched on, and researchers have identified stressors as too many assignments, competition with other students, failures, lack of pocket money (Fairbrother and Warn, 2003), poor relationships with other students or lecturers, family or problems at home. Institutional (university) level stressors are overcrowded lecture halls, (Ongori, 2007; Awino and Agolla, 2008), semester system, and inadequate resources to perform academic work. Erkutlu and Chafra (2006) for instance opines that, when these events take place, an individual becomes disorganised, disoriented and therefore less able to cope up, thus resulting in stress related health problems. The pressure to perform well in the examination or test and time allocated makes academic environment

very stressful (Erkutlu and Chafra, 2006; Polychronopoulou and Divaris, 2005; Misra and McKean, 2000). This is likely to affect the social relations both within the University and outside (Fairbrother and Warn, 2004) since there is conflict with the social aspect of one life.

Researchers (Malach Pines and Keinan, 2007; Ongori, 2007; Ongori and Agolla, 2008; Agolla, 2009) have long identified stress symptoms as lack of energy, taking over the counter medication, high blood pressure, feeling depressed, increase in appetite, trouble concentrating, restlessness, tensions and anxiety among others. An individual experiencing one of these factors is likely to be a victim of stress. Although this may also depend on how the individual appraises the situation, and how resilient is the person. While the negative effects of stress on an individual may vary considerably from one student based on their previous encounter with situations and the resilient of the individual student. In their findings (Jaramillo et al., 2005; Stevenson and Harper, 2006) point out that, the perception of the individual determines whether or not the stressor has a detrimental effect; that is whether it causes physical or psychological symptoms of stress in the individual.

Another reason why little have been done on students stress could be due to the fact that students' presence in the institution have no direct relationship to the quality of education they get. We argue that, unless the university puts appropriate measures that take care of well being of the students, the student's health may compromise the quality of education they are supposed to get (Daniels and Harris, 2000; Smith et al., 2000; Finlayson, 2003). Gibbons and Gibbons (2007) and McCarty et al. (2007) have carried out extensive research on stress and found out that, stress is associated with how an individual appraises situations and the coping strategies adopted.

CAUSES OF STRESS AMONG STUDENTS

The events that provoke stress are called stressors, and they cover a whole range of situations — everything from outright physical danger to making a class presentation or taking a semester's worth of your toughest subject. Some of the main stressor among students are:

Academics-The worry about academic performance can cause stress symptoms such as anxiety, insomnia or changes in your appetite and overall mood. According to Morehouse State University, youth have poor study habits and cram last minute studying in the night before exams. The fear of exams and workload create stress among students. The first cause of stress among university students is a lot of assignments.

Finances – All young people feel stress about money! Most young people do not have jobs, or the jobs that they do have don't pay as much as they would like for them to. They want to maintain the lifestyle and fulfill the demand of articles like mobile, bikes and cars etc. If they fail to fulfill the requirement then it creates a stress.

Relationships – Relationships are another big aspect of stress. Everyone wants to have friends, whether they are close friends or just acquaintances. If a person finds that making friends is a bit harder than he/ she had expected, stress is present here as well.

Career- Job Stress is a chronic disease caused among the current youth that negatively affect an individual's performance and/or overall well-being of his body and mind. The high competition, an inconsiderate work colleague, a lack of job security, there are many causes of job stress. The students have fear of not getting the job opportunity and competition in the market.

Time Management-A lack of time management also causes stress on youth, whether secondary or tertiary. Balancing academics, peer activities, and home life can be difficult. Toss in a part-time job and the challenge increases.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The tool employed for generating responses was questionnaire based survey of young candidates who are students or some are working under different organization. The Information was collected from both primary and secondary data.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- ✓ To study the symptoms of stress among Youth.
- ✓ To measure the level of stress among the Youth.
- ✓ To know the strategies to cope up with stressor by the Youth.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The sample is collected from the young male and female from the area Rajasthan, Punjab, Uttarpradesh and Gujarat region of India on random basis. The questionnaire was distributed among 300 young people and got 225 responses.

Tools for data collection

A questionnaire is designed with the three sections. One section highlights the symptoms of stress, second section highlights the stressor and third section highlights the coping strategies used by the Youth. In order to achieve the objective both primary and secondary sources of information are relied upon. The primary data was collected through structured questionnaires apart from discussions with students.

Data Collection:

Data Sources:

- (i) Secondary Data through Internet, Magazine, Journals, Books etc
- (ii) Primary Data through Questionnaire
- (iii) Contact Method
- (iv) Personal Interaction

The questionnaire has main three parts, first part covers the different symptoms on a seven point scale, second part covers the causes of stress through 25 statements on five point scale and last section covers the ten coping strategies.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The respondents are from the different areas of north India, some are working and some are doing studies. The table shows that total numbers of respondent were 225. The maximum respondent belong from the age group 21-23 years ie. 39.11%, 23-24 represents 51% , up to 20yrs represents and 18.18% from >23years. The male respondents are 135 and female are 90. Maximum respondent are from the income level of 10000 to 20000/. Respondent are from the environment where single parent working.

Table 1: Distribution According to Age

Age	N	%
Up to 20 years	56	24.89
21-22 years	88	39.11
23-24 years	51	22.67
Above 25 years	25	11.11
No Response	5	2.22
Total	225	100.00

Table 2: Distribution According to Gender

Gender	N	%
Male	135	60.00
Female	90	40.00
Total	225	100.00

Table 3: Monthly Income (Family) wise Distribution

Income	N	%
Up to Rs. 10000	37	16.44
Rs. 10,0001 - Rs. 20,000	51	22.67
Rs. 20,0001 - Rs. 30,000	39	17.33
Rs. 30,0001 - Rs. 40,000	26	11.56
Rs. 50000 and Above	29	12.89
No Response	43	19.11
Total	225	100.00

The table shows the working status of parents, 14.22 respondents parents are working whereas 85.78 has single working parent.

Table 4: Distribution According to Working Status of Mother

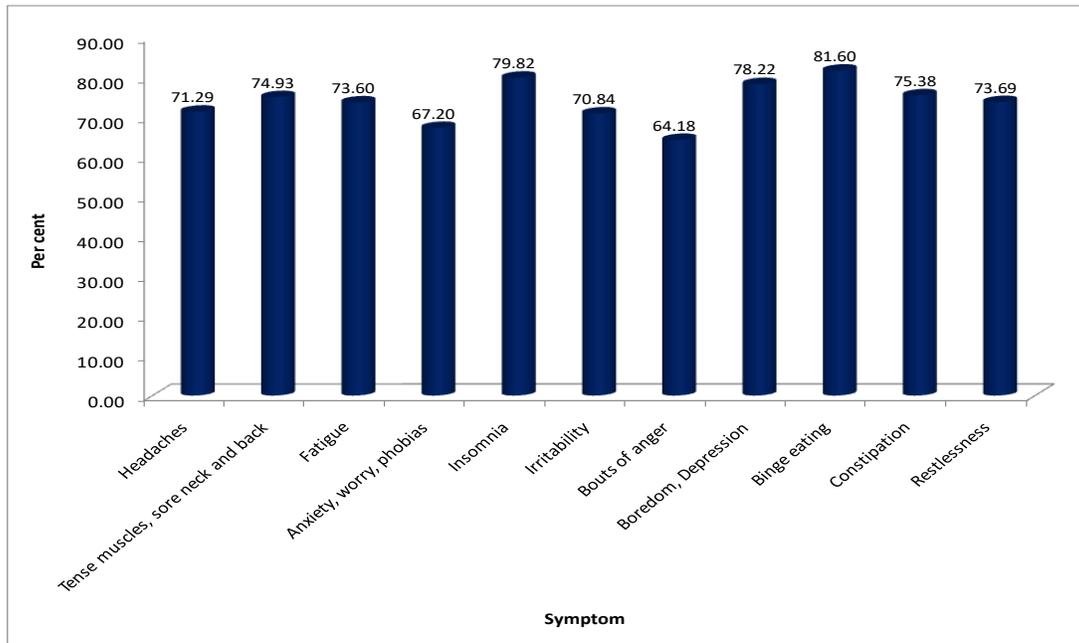
Working Status of Parents	N	%
Mother - Father Both Working	32	14.22
Father Working	193	85.78
Total	225	100.00

Stress Symptoms among youth

The result indicates that students do experience stress and symptoms as shown in Table 3 below. The highest percentage is 81.60% suffering from depression followed by Insomnia (79.82%) and bad eating habit (78.22%). It is observed that most of the youth suffering from depression, tension etc. The lifestyle of youth consist of various desires, they want to fulfill the desires and if they are not capable to fulfill the wishes they feel somewhat stress. The levels of symptoms are toward high. Youngsters may be unable to concentrate on academics and sports. They isolate from family activities or peer relationships. Adolescents may be experimenting with drugs and alcohol. They may have poor appetite and low immunity.

Table 5: Symptoms

Symptoms	%	Rank
Headaches	71.29	8
Tense muscles, sore neck and back	74.93	5
Fatigue	73.60	7
Anxiety, worry, phobias	67.20	10
Insomnia	79.82	2
Irritability	70.84	9
Bouts of anger	64.18	11
Boredom, Depression	78.22	3
Binge eating	81.60	1
Constipation	75.38	4
Restlessness	73.69	6



Graph: 1-Stress symptoms

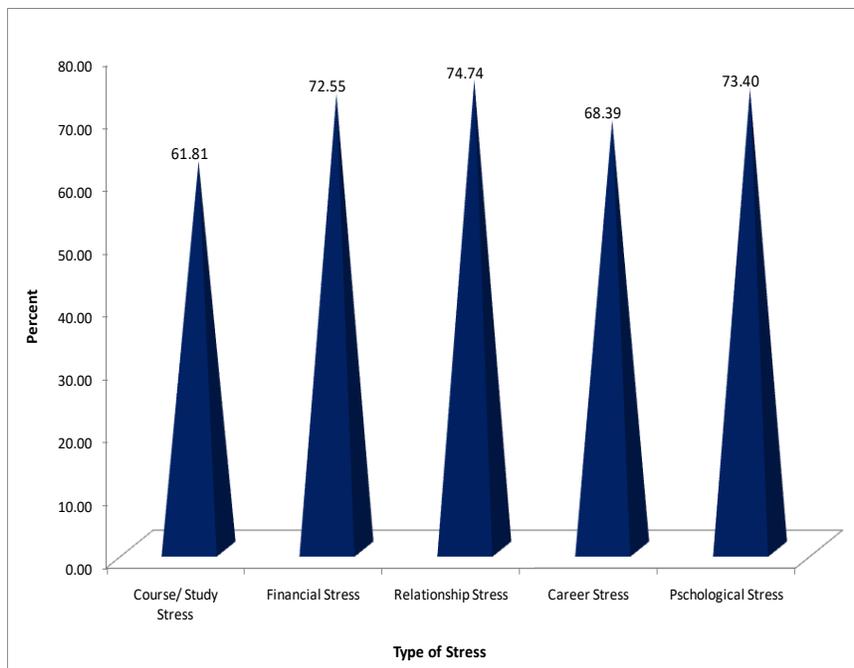
Causes of Stress

The first part of the questionnaire indicates the factor academics which show the stress level 61.81% whereas highest level of stress generates due to relationship. It is observed that due to the increasing use of social media the relationship stress increasing. The other stressor psychological factors have 73.40%, young generation have 72.55% of financial stress and 68.395 having career stress.

The % of all stressor are high it means to maintain the life style

Table 6: Level of Stress of each kind

Kind of Stress	Level of Stress (%)	Rank
Academics	61.81	5
Financial or Economic Stress	72.55	3
Relationship Stress	74.74	1
Future / Career Growth Stress	68.39	4
Psychological Stress	73.40	2
Overall Stress	70.18	



Graph:2-Level of stress

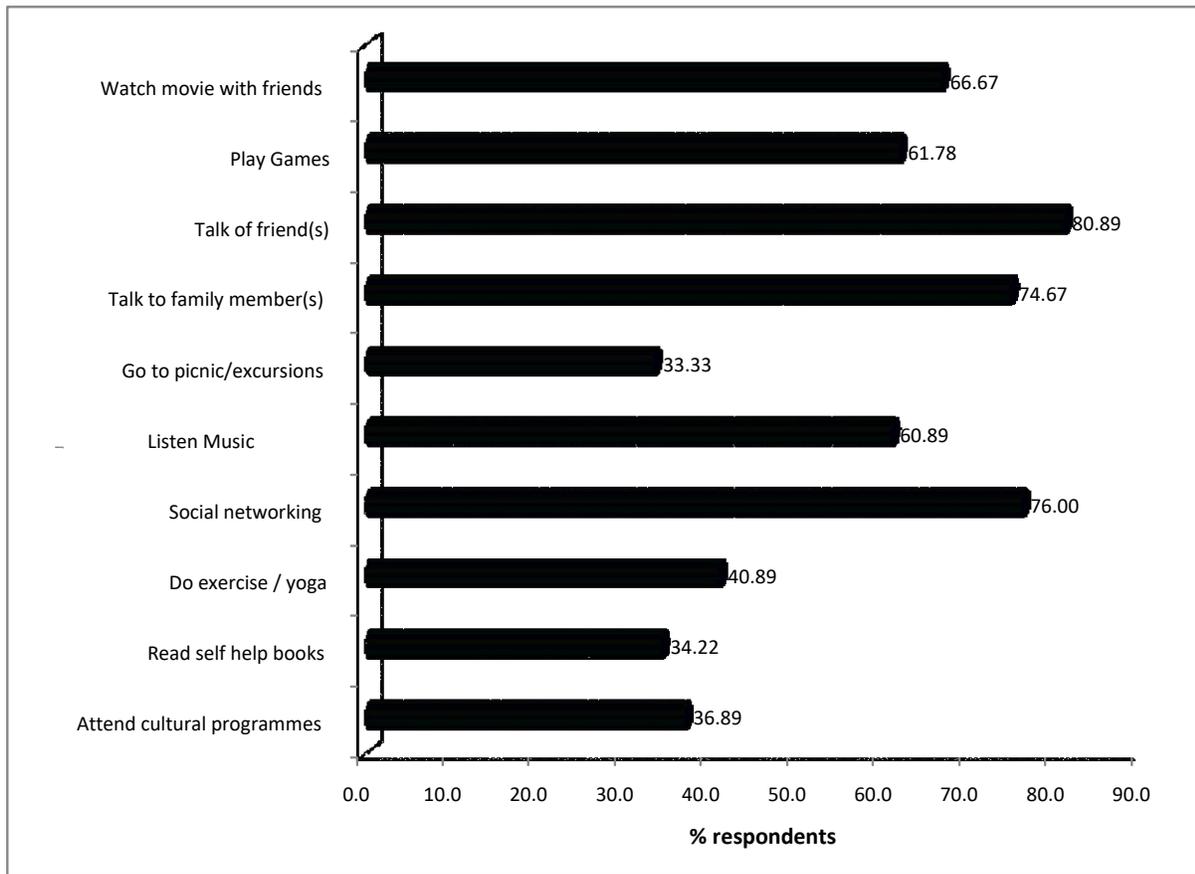
Coping Strategies

The different strategies used by the students to maintain the stress level according to students are:

- ✓ Most of the students want to make friends (80.89%)
- ✓ Students want to become live on social networking sites to cope up with stress (76.00%)
- ✓ Students want to talk with family members to cope up with family members (74.67%)
- ✓ Other strategies are watch movies, play games and use internet.

Table 7: Activity to Reduce Stress

Action	N	%	Rank
Watch movie with friends	150	66.67	4
Play Games	139	61.78	5
Talk with friend(s)	182	80.89	1
Talk to family member(s)	168	74.67	3
Go to picnic/excursions	75	33.33	10
Use Internet (Social networking sites - Facebook, Google+ etc.) or other sites	171	76.00	2
Listen Music	137	60.89	6
Do exercise / yoga	92	40.89	7
Read self help books	77	34.22	9
Attend cultural programmes	83	36.89	8



Hypothesis Testing

To test the significant level between age and stress F test is applied. The non significant result is occurred between the different age group. It shows that the all age group of youth have same factors of stress. There is overall non significant relationship exist between different age group.

Table 7:Age and Stress

Age	N	Mean	SD	F	df	Result
Up to 20 years	56	3.57	0.66	0.518	3, 216	NS (p > 0.05)
21-22 years	88	3.47	0.58			
23-24 years	51	3.54	0.65			
Above 25 years	25	3.43	0.51			

To test the significant level between income level and stress F test is applied. The significant result is occurred between the different income group. It means income affect the level of stress. There is overall significant relationship exist between different income groups.

Table 8: Income and Stress

Income	N	Mean	SD	F	df	Result
Up to Rs. 10000	37	3.55	0.47	8.611	4, 177	*** (p < 0.001)
Rs. 10,0001 - Rs. 20,000	51	3.10	0.41			
Rs. 20,0001 - Rs. 30,000	39	3.41	0.47			
Rs. 30,0001 - Rs. 40,000	26	3.82	1.00			
Rs. 50000 and Above	29	3.50	0.37			

To test the significant level between working pattern of parents and stress F test is applied. The significant result is occurred between the parents working pattern. This is due when both father and mother are working children's not getting so much time to discuss their problems and it create stress. There is overall significant relationship exist between different income groups.

Table 9: Working Status of Parents and Stress

Working Status of Parents	N	Mean	SD	Z	Result
Mother - Father Both Working	32	3.85	0.67	3.557	*** (p < 0.001)
Single Parent is Working	193	3.45	0.57		

SUGGESTIONS

The future of any nation lies heavily on the young people since they are the tomorrow's leaders; therefore, it is important to identify the causes, symptoms, and the consequences of stress on students. The negative effect of stress on youth is likely to pose challenge to the individual, their colleagues, and the society as a whole (Siegrist, 1998; Cartwright and Boyes, 2000). Stress poses a great threat to quality of life for youth (Danna and Griffin, 1999; Dyck, 2001). Some of the suggestions to reduce the stress among youth are:

- Workshops to beat stress along with lectures motivating a positive lifestyle have become part of the academic curriculum, so that youngsters are being inspired to live a healthy life. Workshops play an important role as they help an individual realize their inner strength.
- Set personal and professional objective.
- Keep them organized and planned.
- Time management
- Up-to-date the course work
- Get involved with various activities.
- Maintain communication with family.
- Form healthy relationships.
- Share views and problems with someone.
- Get to know belongings.
- Positive thinking
- Adolescents should develop competencies (academic, social, life skills)
- Adolescents should take good nutritional food and exercise regularly

- Adolescents should take time out to relax or to do recreational activities.→ Adolescents should develop hobbies.

CONCLUSION

From the findings, the results clearly show that youth are stressed toward high level. The symptoms identified are being eating, depression and headaches are more among students. It is identified that among all factors, the main causes of stress among youth is relationship stress, financial and psychological stress. They want to maintain the social network and they are increasing the networking with the use of technology. The next stress they are feeling is career related. They have fear of job opportunity and how they survive in the competitive environment. Young respondents were able to identify some strategies to cope with stress such as meditation, enough sleeping, going out with the friends and counseling.

It is observed that due to the increase us of social media the young generation become self centered and only connect with the technology. It reduces the physical movement of the body and spending time with relatives and friends. All these create stress which increases the case of depression and suicide. It is necessary and suggestions to the young people that make objective planned systematically, use technology within limit and share your emotions with your loved ones.

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