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Relationship Between Stress, Depression, And Adjustment Among School-Going Adolescents

Dr.Seema Kumari

RCI Reg.Clinical Psychologist,Counselor JNV Kolebira Jharkhand

Abstract

The main purpose of this research was to examine the relationship between stress, depression, and adjustment among school-going adolescents in Ranchi. The total sample consisted of 320 high school students from various government schools selected from Ranchi city. The sample was chosen using purposive sampling. I utilized tools such as the Students' Stress Scale developed by Akhtar (2011), Beck's Depression Inventory created by Aaron Beck (1961), and the Adjustment Inventory for School Students developed by Sinha and Singh in 1993. The findings reveal that there is a positive relationship between stress, depression, and adjustment related to religion (Hindu and Muslim). Additionally, there is a positive relationship between stress, depression, and adjustment based on gender (boys and girls) and education level (9th and 10th grade) among school-going adolescents.

Keywords:Stress, Depression, Adjustment,Adolescent, School students.

Introduction

The relationship between stress, depression, and adjustment among school-going adolescents is a key area of research in adolescent mental health. Studies consistently demonstrate a strong connection between these factors, with increased stress and depression symptoms often leading to difficulties in adjustment across different areas.

1. Stress and Adjustment:

- **Adjustment Disorders:**

  These involve emotional or behavioural responses to a stressful event or change, resulting in significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other essential areas of functioning, according to the Cleveland Clinic and the Mayo Clinic. These can include a wide array of experiences, both positive and negative, such as losing a job, facing relationship issues, encountering financial struggles, or even undergoing significant life changes like relocating or starting a new job.How individuals cope with stress significantly impacts whether they develop an adjustment disorder or not. Poor coping strategies can exacerbate the negative effects of stress.

2. Stress and Depression:

Prolonged exposure to stress can increase the risk of developing depression.Stress can disrupt the body's stress response system, impacting neurotransmitters and potentially contributing to depressive symptoms, according to the Mayo Clinic.Depression can also make individuals more sensitive to stress, creating a negative feedback loop where stress exacerbates depression and depression makes stress more challenging to manage.

3. Adjustment and Depression:

If adjustment disorders are not effectively addressed, they can sometimes evolve into more severe conditions like major depressive disorder or anxiety. Adjustment disorders with depressed mood can have overlapping symptoms with major depressive disorder, though the severity and duration of symptoms. Recognizing the connection between stress, adjustment, and depression is crucial for early intervention. Therapy and, in some cases, medication, can help individuals manage these conditions and improve their overall well-being. In essence, stress can be a trigger for adjustment difficulties and, if not managed, can contribute to the development of depression. Conversely, pre-existing depression can make individuals more vulnerable to the negative impacts of stress and make it harder to cope with stressful situations and life changes.

Review of literature

Ranamanikham and Vasanthal (2008) conducted a study on the relationship between students' academic stress, anxiety, and adjustment related to their academic achievement. The findings were: (i) there was a significant positive correlation between academic stress and academic achievement. (ii) Academic stress scores gradually increased as the parents' qualification decreased. (iii) Different sibling groups showed significant differences in stress levels. (iv) It was found that as the number of siblings increased, the stress scores also increased.

Nagaraju (2009) conducted a study with 224 class X students and reported that (i) the correlation between academic stress and anxiety was positive and significant, (ii) the correlation between intelligence and stress was negative and significant, and (iii) the correlation between achievement and stress was positive and significant.

Methodology

Objectives

1. To investigate the interrelationship between stress, depression, and adjustment among school-going adolescents.

Hypothesis

1. There will be strong connections between stress, depression, and adjustment among school-aged adolescents.

Sample

The sample for the study comprised 320 secondary school students from various government schools in Ranchi, Jharkhand. The participants were divided into two religious' groups (Hindu and Muslim), two gender categories (boys and girls), and two educational levels (9th and 10th grade). In each of the 8 subgroups, 30 participants were selected using purposive sampling, totaling 320 cases.

Tools

Student Stress Scale (SSS-AZ)

This scale was developed by Dr.Zaki Akhtar (2011) to assess the major types of stress faced by adolescent students aged 13 to 18 in the modern world. It contains 51 items, each with five response options: always, often, sometimes, rarely, and never. Reliability was tested using the split-half method at 0.78, and the test-retest reliability was 0.71. Validity: The construct validity was found to be .72.

Beck's Depression Inventory (BDI)

This scale features a 21-item self-report tool for assessing depression severity in adults and adolescents aged 13 and older. It was originally created by Aaron T. Beck in 1961. The BDI includes 21 depressive symptoms and attitudes. It relies on verbal descriptions provided by patients. Each item is rated on a 4-point scale from 0 to 3 based on severity. Internal consistency estimates for this instrument were high (coefficient α=.92, average inter-item correlation=.35). The BDI-II total score showed moderate, significant correlations with self-report measures of hopelessness (r=.63), anxiety (r=.53), and suicide-related behaviors (r=.57), supporting its validity as a depression measure.

Adjustment Inventory for School Students (AISS):

This scale was developed by Sinha and Singh in 1993. The study aimed to assess social adjustment using 60 items and to determine the level of social adjustment, especially among children aged 14-18 years. Responses are based on 'Yes' and 'No' options. Reliability was measured with the split-half method and was found to be 0.93. In the item analysis, validity coefficients were calculated and found to be significant at the .001 level.

Analysis

Table -1

Showing correlation among Stress, Depression and Adjustment in relation to religion (Hindu, N=160)

Variables	Stress	Depression	Adjustment
Stress	1		
Depression	0.651**	1	
Adjustment	0. 663**	0.717**	1

**** = significance at 0.01 level**

1. The Pearson's product-moment r of correlation between Stress (Hindu) and Depression (Hindu) is 0.651, which is significant at the 0.01 level. The positive sign indicates a positive correlation between stress and depression. Therefore, if stress increases, depression among Hindu school-going adolescents also increases.
2. The Pearson's product-moment r of correlation between Stress (Hindu) and Adjustment (Hindu) is 0.663, which is significant at the 0.01 level. A positive sign indicates a positive correlation between stress and adjustment. Therefore, if stress increases, then adjustment problems for Hindu school-going adolescents also increase.
3. The Pearson's product-moment r of correlation between Depression (Hindu) and Adjustment (Hindu) is 0.717, which is significant at the 0.01 level. A positive sign indicates a positive correlation between depression and adjustment. Therefore, if depression increases, adjustment problems for Hindu school-going adolescents also increase.

Table -2

Showing correlation among Stress, Depression and Adjustment about religion (Muslim, N=160)

Variables	Stress	Depression	Adjustment
Stress	1		
Depression	0.634**	1	
Adjustment	0. 612**	0.705**	1

**** = significance at 0.01 level**

1. The Pearson's product-moment r of correlation between Stress (Muslim) and Depression (Muslim) is 0.634, which is significant at the 0.01 level. The positive sign indicates that there is a positive correlation between stress and depression. Therefore, if stress increases, then depression for Muslim school-going adolescents also increases.

2. The Pearson's product-moment r of correlation between Stress (Muslim) and Adjustment (Muslim) is 0.612, which is significant at the 0.01 level. The positive sign indicates a positive correlation between stress and adjustment. Therefore, if stress increases, the adjustment problems for Muslim school-going adolescents also increase.
3. The Pearson's product-moment r of correlation between Depression (Muslim) and Adjustment (Muslim) is 0.705, which is significant at the 0.01 level. The positive sign indicates a positive correlation between depression and adjustment. Therefore, if depression increases, adjustment problems for Muslim school-going adolescents also increase.

Table -3

Showing correlation among Stress, Depression and Adjustment concerning gender (Male, N=160)

Variables	**Stress**	**Depression**	**Adjustment**
Stress	1		
Depression	0.603**	1	
Adjustment	0. 586**	0.613**	1

**** = significance at 0.01 level**

1. The Pearson's product-moment r of correlation between Stress (Male) and Depression (Male) is 0.603, which is significant at the 0.01 level. The positive sign indicates a positive correlation between stress and depression. Therefore, if stress increases, depression in male school-going adolescents also increases.
2. The Pearson's product-moment r of correlation between Stress (Male) and Adjustment (Male) is 0.586, which is significant at the 0.01 level. A positive sign indicates a positive correlation between stress and adjustment. Therefore, if stress increases, then adjustment problems for male school-going adolescents also increase.
3. The Pearson's product-moment r of correlation between Depression (Male) and Adjustment (Male) is 0.613, which is significant at the 0.01 level. The positive sign indicates a positive correlation between depression and adjustment. Therefore, if depression increases, the adjustment problems for male school-going adolescents also increase.

Table-4

Showing correlations among Stress, Depression, and Adjustment in relation to gender (Female, N=160)

Variables	**Stress**	**Depression**	**Adjustment**
Stress	1		
Depression	0.649**	1	
Adjustment	0. 683**	0.702**	1

**** = significance at 0.01 level**

1. The Pearson's product-moment r of correlation between Stress (Female) and Depression (Female) is 0.649, which is significant at the 0.01 level. The positive sign indicates a positive correlation between stress and depression. Therefore, if stress increases, depression among female school-going adolescents also increases.
2. The Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient between Stress (Female) and Adjustment (Female) is 0.683, which is significant at the 0.01 level. The positive sign indicates a positive correlation between stress and adjustment. Therefore, if stress increases, the adjustment problems for female school-going adolescents also increase.
3. The Pearson's product-moment r of correlation between Depression (Female) and Adjustment (Female) is 0.702, which is significant at the 0.01 level. The positive sign indicates a positive correlation between depression and adjustment. Therefore, if depression increases, the adjustment problems for female school-going adolescents also increase.

Table-5

Showing correlation among Stress, Depression and Adjustment in relation to education level (9th class adolescents, N=154)

Variables	Stress	Depression	Adjustment
Stress	1		
Depression	0.625**	1	
Adjustment	0. 664**	0.603	1

**** = significance at 0.01 level**

1. The Pearson's product-moment r of correlation between Stress (9th class adolescents) and Depression (9th class adolescents) is 0.625, which is significant at the 0.01 level. The positive sign indicates a positive correlation between stress and depression. Therefore, if stress increases, depression among 9th grade school-going adolescents also increases.
2. The Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient between Stress (9th grade adolescents) and Adjustment (9th grade adolescents) is 0.664, which is significant at the 0.01 level. The positive sign indicates a positive relationship between stress and adjustment. Therefore, if stress increases, adjustment problems for 9th grade school-going adolescents also increase.
3. The Pearson's product-moment r of correlation between Depression (9th class adolescents) and Adjustment (9th class adolescents) is 0.603, which is significant at the 0.01 level. The positive sign indicates a positive correlation between depression and adjustment. Therefore, if depression increases, then adjustment problems for 9th class school-going adolescents also increase.

Table-6

Showing the correlation among Stress, Depression, and Adjustment relative to education level (10th grade adolescents, N=166)

Variables	Stress	Depression	Adjustment
Stress	1		
Depression	0.632**	1	
Adjustment	0. 706**	0.583**	1

**** = significance at 0.01 level**

1. The Pearson's product-moment r of correlation between Stress (10th class adolescents) and Depression (10th class adolescents) is 0.632, which is significant at the 0.01 level. The positive sign indicates a positive correlation between stress and depression. Therefore, if stress increases, depression among 10th class school-going adolescents also increases.
2. The Pearson's product-moment r of correlation between Stress (10th class adolescents) and Adjustment (10th class adolescents) is 0.706, which is significant at the 0.01 level. The positive sign indicates a positive correlation between stress and adjustment. Therefore, if stress increases, adjustment problems for 10th class school-going adolescents also increase.
3. The Pearson's product-moment r of correlation between Depression (10th class adolescents) and Adjustment (10th class adolescents) is 0.583, which is significant at the 0.01 level. The positive sign indicates a positive correlation between depression and adjustment. Therefore, if depression increases, the adjustment problems for 10th-grade school-going adolescents also increase.

Discussion

The main purpose of this study was to measure the relationship between stress, depression, and adjustment among school-going adolescents. The study concluded that there is a positive relationship between stress, depression, and adjustment in religion (Hindu and Muslim), in relation to gender (Boys and Girls), and in relation to education level (9th and 10th grade) among school-going adolescents.

Conclusion

The finding of the result indicates that there is a positive relationship between stress, depression and adjustment in religion (Hindu and Muslim),in relation to gender (Boys and Girls),and in relation to education level (9^{th} and 10^{th} grade) among school going adolescents.

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