



RELATIONSHIP OF ADOLESCENT STRESS WITH FAMILY ENVIRONMENT AMONG PROFESSIONAL STUDENTS

¹ Mrs. Deepti Singhal , ² Dr. K N Tripathi

Department of Psychology,
Barkatullah University, Bhopal, India
Email - deepti111976@gmail.com

Abstract: Adolescent Stress is becoming inevitable experience of the young students studying in different professional streams. Students feel various expectations and experience pressures arising from family members, society, academic institutions and self. Similarly, Family environment is another factor which has its impact on mental health of the students. Family contributes to the development of competencies and problem solving behavior among children. Family plays a very important role in holistic development of a person. The present study was conducted to understand the relationship of adolescent stress with family Environment of the students doing professional courses. A sample of 100 professional students was selected in this study through random sampling. Family environment Scale and Adolescent stress questionnaire were used to assess the level of stress among the students due to their family environment. Intervention at college level enables the students to face various challenges of their professional life positively. These issues if not dealt effectively may give rise to development of various mental health problems and behavioral issues. The findings of the study may be helpful for the counselors, educators and who can impart coping strategies at their college level and teach them the techniques to handle the various academic pressures effectively.

Key Words: Adolescent Stress, Family environment, professional students.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Stress as a response model was initially introduced by Hans Selye (1956), in which he describes stress as a physiological response pattern, which he describes within his general adaptation syndrome (GAS) model. Selye (1936) defines stress as the non-specific response of the body to any demand placed upon it. He postulated that the stress response /GAS consists of three stages, namely the alarm phase, resistance phase and exhaustion. Lazarus & Folkman(1984) submitted that a person's response towards stress is determined on whether an event is appraised as a challenge or a threat. Stress is inseparable part of life and Eustress represents positive aspect of stress that is positive, motivating, and enhancement of functioning while distress refers to bad and overwhelming stress that impairs functioning. Excessive stress may produce frustration, depression, anxiety and other psychological problems. Completion of assignments on time, exam preparation, parental pressure, and preparing large amount of content in limited time period etc. are important sources of stress.

Adolescent age is a age of stress and storm and emotional upheavals. It is the transitional period between childhood and adulthood. They can be proved as good citizen if they get the right direction and compatible atmosphere which is being provided by family members .This is the age of dreaming about the future and if they are in professional stream then the academic pressure becomes very high and they feel depression, panic attacks and burn out. They face physical and sexual changes with puberty, college demands, maintain friendship too. They need to make career choice and need of independence from family restrictions as they are striving from autonomy versus identity.

Family environment:

Family is the primary institution and the most powerful agent of socialization of children that influences the adolescent's psychological adjustment. The family constituted an interpersonal social system held together by strong bonds of attachment, affection, caring, and yet exercised control, approval and discipline on each other's actions (Harvey & Byrd, 2000; Parke & Buriel, 1998). Parents shape the lives of the children from birth to adulthood. The challenges



that children have to deal with are family issues like divorce or parental separation, financial issues, drug or alcohol abuse, fear of failure.

Good parenting skills, close relationship between parents and children, shared family activities all have a favorable effect on adolescent mental and physical health. The adolescents from family environments characterized by warmth, caring, communication, understanding and support showed fewer psychological health symptoms (SeiffgeKrenke, 1995). Dieu et al. (n.d.) found that academic stress was significantly correlated with area of living, conflict with family, care of mothers, care of fathers.

2. Objectives:

In the light of above the present study was planned to address the following objectives:

- To examine the pattern of perceived family environment among the male and female professional students studying in different levels (grades).
- To examine the level of stress among the male and female professional students studying in different levels.
- To examine the pattern of relationships between adolescent stress and family environment among the students

3. Hypothesis:

In the present study the following Null-hypotheses were proposed for further investigation.

- (1) There will be no significant difference between the Family environment of professional students when they are grouped according to gender and educational level.
- (2) There will be no significant difference in the level of adolescent stress of professional students when they are grouped according to gender and educational level.
- (3) There will be no significant relationship between the Family environment of professional students and their level of stress.

4. METHOD:

Sample. One hundred professional students studying in different levels (first, second and third Year of their courses) were randomly selected to participate in this research. Male (N=37) and Female (N=63) students between 19 to 21 years of age group participated in the study, in which 39 students belonged from group 1 (First Year) and 61 students belonged from group 2 (second and third year).

Measures.

The following standardized measures were used in the present study:

1. Family Environment Scale: Family Environment Scale developed by Harpreet and Chadha (1993) was used to assess the family environment of students. The scale consists of eight dimensions like Cohesion, Expressiveness, Conflict, Acceptance and caring, Independence, Active recreational orientation, Organization and Control.
2. Adolescence is a crucial phase of human life characterized by enhanced exposure and vulnerability to various stressful stimuli. The Adolescent Stress Questionnaire (ASQ) is a useful measure to evaluate possible sources of stressors affecting the adolescent equilibrium. This scale consists of 37 items describing the stress in adolescents life from various sources. Each item had five alternatives varying from the response 'No Stress' to 'Extreme Stress'. Each response carries a score of '0', '1', '2', '3' and '4' respectively.

Procedure: The data were collected using online procedure. Questionnaires were sent to the participants through Google form. They were requested to complete the questionnaire and give their responses. They were also informed that this data will be used only for academic purpose and confidentiality will be maintained, hence they should feel free to give their answer.

5. RESULTS:

With the help of these measures, an attempt had been made to obtain the perceived level of the Family environment and adolescent stress of professional male and female students studying in grade 1 and grade 2. Responses of the students obtained on questionnaires were quantified as per instruction. Obtained scores on Family Environment and adolescent stress measures were subjected to 2X2 factorial design ANOVA. A brief description of pattern of result is displayed below.



Family Environment: Means and standard deviations of the scores indicating level of Family Environment is shown in Table 1. Summary of ANOVA is shown in Table 2

Table 1: Means and Standard deviations of the scores indicating participants’ responses on perceived family environment

| Gender | Group | Mean | Std. Deviation | N |
|--------|-------|---------|----------------|-----|
| 1 | 1 | 96.5833 | 7.54933 | 12 |
| | 2 | 96.5200 | 12.91678 | 25 |
| | Total | 96.5405 | 11.34214 | 37 |
| 2 | 1 | 98.7037 | 8.00392 | 27 |
| | 2 | 98.3611 | 8.22593 | 36 |
| | Total | 98.5079 | 8.06800 | 63 |
| Total | 1 | 98.0513 | 7.83027 | 39 |
| | 2 | 97.6066 | 10.34614 | 61 |
| | Total | 97.7800 | 9.40511 | 100 |

Table 2: Summary of ANOVA on the Scores indicating Family Environment

| Source | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|-----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|------|------|
| Gender | 83.409 | 1 | 83.409 | .924 | .339 |
| Group | .876 | 1 | .876 | .010 | .922 |
| gender * group | .414 | 1 | .414 | .005 | .946 |
| Error | 8665.092 | 96 | 90.261 | | |
| Total | 964850.000 | 100 | | | |
| Corrected Total | 8757.160 | 99 | | | |

Results appeared in Table-2 indicates that Male and female students did not indicate any significant difference on Family environment. Main effect for gender was not significant. Although a close look on mean scores appeared in Table-1 indicates that female students perceived better adjustment (M=98.50) with family environment as compared to male students (M=96.54). Similarly effect of grade of students also did not produce any significant difference on adjustment with family environment. However, mean scores support that younger students indicated higher adjustment (M=98.05) as compared to older students (M=97.60).

Adolescent Stress: Mean and standard deviations of the scores indicating level of adolescent stress are shown in Table-3. Summary of ANOVA is displayed in Table-4. Results indicate that the effect of gender on the level of stress was not significant. Although it is evident from the table -3 that male (M=83.45) students experienced less stress as compared to female students (M=89.19) . The effect of grade on the level of stress was also not significant, but a pattern of mean scores indicated that younger students demonstrated higher level of stress (M=93.17) as compared to older students (M=83.16).

Table 3: Means and Standard Deviations of the scores indicating Adolescent Stress

| gender | group | Mean | Std. Deviation | N |
|--------|-------|---------|----------------|-----|
| 1 | 1 | 90.9167 | 50.20043 | 12 |
| | 2 | 79.8800 | 30.38273 | 25 |
| | Total | 83.4595 | 37.58811 | 37 |
| 2 | 1 | 94.1852 | 29.35726 | 27 |
| | 2 | 85.4444 | 37.16715 | 36 |
| | Total | 89.1905 | 34.06249 | 63 |
| Total | 1 | 93.1795 | 36.35271 | 39 |
| | 2 | 83.1639 | 34.39001 | 61 |
| | Total | 87.0700 | 35.32883 | 100 |



Table 4: Summary of 2X2 ANOVA on the scores indicating Adolescent Stress

| Source | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|-----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|------|
| gender | 414.680 | 1 | 414.680 | .330 | .567 |
| group | 2078.925 | 1 | 2078.925 | 1.654 | .201 |
| gender * group | 28.017 | 1 | 28.017 | .022 | .882 |
| Error | 120632.520 | 96 | 1256.589 | | |
| Total | 881683.000 | 100 | | | |
| Corrected Total | 123564.510 | 99 | | | |

Co-relational Analysis

Inter relationships between genders, grade, Family environment and adolescent stress were obtained and reported in Table-5. A close look on the table reveals that gender was positively related with Family environment. Female students showed slight better adjustment with their family environment than male students. Result also indicates a negative relationship between grade and adolescent stress. It indicates that students studying in first year showed higher adolescent stress as compared to students studying in second or third year. No significant relationship was observed between Family Environment and Adolescent stress.

Table 5: Inter relationships between Gender, Grade, Family Environment and Adolescent Stress

| Correlations | | | | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|--------|--------------------|--------------------|-------|
| | | gender | Family Environment | Adolescent. Stress | Group |
| Gender | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .102 | .079 | -.103 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .315 | .436 | .307 |
| | N | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Family Environment | Pearson Correlation | .102 | 1 | -.005 | -.023 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .315 | | .960 | .819 |
| | N | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Adoles. Stress | Pearson Correlation | .079 | -.005 | 1 | -.139 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .436 | .960 | | .168 |
| | N | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Group | Pearson Correlation | -.103 | -.023 | -.139 | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .307 | .819 | .168 | |
| | N | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Discussion and Implication :

The main objectives of the study were to explore the impact of gender and group (tenure of stay in college which was considered as grade or group) differences on perceived adolescent stress and Family Environment faced by the students of professional course.

The findings of present study show that first year students experienced higher level of adolescent stress. A negative correlation between favorable Family Environment and adolescent stress perceived by professional students were observed. Although it is not significant but it can be observed that the students who have a favorable state of family environment are more likely to be able to deal effectively with any adolescent problems arising in their new college environment as compared to other students who have unfavorable state of family environment.

Thus in the present study proposed Null hypotheses (Ho) were accepted. Present findings did not indicate any significant difference in the perception of family environment or adolescent stress due to gender. Gender and Group differences



were not observed for perceived adjustment with family environment and adolescent stress. Although the close look of the mean scores supported that female students showed better adjustment with family than male students. It was assumed that family environment may have significant negative relationship with adolescent stress but Family environment not found as significant contributors in lowering the adolescent stress of students. Previous studies show that the students who are good at adjustment with families are more likely able to handle the adolescent pressure at college. In the present study too a negative correlation between Family environment and academic stress was observed but it was not significant. This study shows that students who have good family support and adjustment are more likely to handle the stress in their new college environment.

It was observed that the level of adjustment of female students with family environment was little higher as compared to male students. Similarly the stress level of first year students was also higher as compared to second and third year students. Data revealed a non-significant difference but trend can be observed that first year students are more stressful than their seniors. First year students are transferred from school level to professional courses of college. This transition is new for them and they have low maturity level and are not well adjusted to the time management and various academic stressors of the college life.

Based on the findings of the study it is suggested that students were provided information regarding challenges of professional courses well in advance. It may be helpful to them in developing perception about new challenges of their life. Even when they come to professional institution they may be given opportunity of counseling services if required. Numerous studies have supported that in professional institution new students experience higher level of stress. Hence it becomes crucial that authority of schools and professional institutions should organize orientation program for new students and should make effort to maintain a harmonious and supportive environment in the campus. The ongoing stress has negative impact on the academic performance of students, physical health, psychological well-being, sleep quality, employment attainment etc. It may be avoided by using positive strategies.

With Stress management trainings at school level can improve the academic performance of students. Favorable family environment of the students also helps in reducing their level of stress. It is the way through which the stress can be minimize by building up a strong relationship with peer groups, faculty members, family members and with other students. In this way the students can share their problems with them and this will help them to develop resilience.

The implications of the study can be very useful for educators, school counselors and educational leaders who can work at school level. Stress prevention interventions opportunities should be made available to students at college level. Proper career guidance programs should be introduced at school level so that the students can choose their professional career options according to their aptitude and interest that will help in reducing their stress at college level. The findings of the study can serve for strengthening the positive family environment among students by improving parental involvement and support for training of students which can help them to socialize and make necessary adjustment at their professional life.

In future, more studies can be planned on larger sample including students of various professional streams by applying qualitative approach in order to get more information to the role of Family environment in predicting adolescent stress. Based on research findings policy makers can make plan to implement effective intervention strategies for the students' academic growth and enriching their mental health.

CONCLUSION:

- Professional Male and Female students have no significant difference in the adjustment with their family environment, however trend shows that female students have more adjusted than males students.
- First year professional students are slightly more adjusted with their families as compared to students of other educational level, but difference was not significant.
- Professional male and female students did not indicate any significant difference on their stress level. However, mean score shows that female students indicated higher adolescent stress than male professional students.
- First year professional students showed little higher level of stress than students of other educational level.
- There is a negative co-relation between Family environment and adolescent stress among male students as well as between adolescent stress and group (educational level) of the students but the results were not significant.

LIMITATION:

- The sample of the study is based on uneven number of male and female students.
- Only limited number of 100 students were selected for this study which is too small to generalize the findings.
- The study was restricted to only a single professional course of the university.



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