

A Correlational Study between Stress And Psychological Wellbeing Among Under Graduate Students

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ABSTRACT- Present study was conducted to study the relationship between stress and psychological well-being among under graduate students of Bihar. There were 200 participants (100 male and 100 female). Participants of the study were drawn from different districts of Bihar using Purposive sampling technique. To measure the Stress, Stressful life events scale developed by Venkatesh Kumar (1995) and psychological well-being, Ryff's Psychological Well-being Scale developed by Carol Ryff (Ryff and Singer, 1998) were administered. Data were analyzed by Pearson's Products Moment Correlation was applied to study the correlation between stress and psychological well-being. Results show that stress and psychological well-being were negatively and significantly correlated with each other.

Keywords: Stress, Psychological Well-being

Introduction- People say they are stressed when they take an examination, when having to deal with a frustrating work situation, or when experiencing relationship difficulties. Stressful situations can be viewed as harmful, as threatening, or as challenging. Stress is a factor which influences day to day life in an adverse way. It happens in the most cases due to inability to deal with the situation and sometimes insufficient skills. People who have better psychological well-being are somewhat able to tackle with these obstacles and proceed smoothly.

Stress- stress in the same way or even bother to attempt a clear-cut definition. According to Selye, an important aspect of stress is that a wide variety of dissimilar situations are capable of producing the stress response such as fatigue, effort, pain, fear and even success.

Basowitz, Persky, Korchin & Grinker (1955) "stress refers to that class of stimuli which are more likely to produce anxiety, a conscious and reportable experience of intense, dread and foreboding".

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Signs of Stress: -When a child or adolescent is experiencing difficulties in coping with stress, he or she is likely to show changes in mood, behavior and/or physical appearance.

- **Physical:** physical changes include muscle tension, headache, stomachache, trouble sleeping, trouble eating and lack of energy.
- **Emotional:** emotional changes include nervousness, anxiety, loss of enthusiasm about things he or she used to enjoy, anger or hostility towards peers, shyness or withdrawal and feelings of helplessness and hopelessness.
- **Behavioral:** behavioral changes include poor eating habits and excessive weight gain/loss over a short period of time (Romer, 1993).

Types of Stress: There are four major types of stress that people experience in life:

- i. **Chronic stress:** Chronic stress is long-term stress that occurs frequently and if not dealt with accordingly many serious health problems may develop such as depression, diabetes, heart disease or weight-gain or weight-loss. People suffering from this type of stress get used to it and may even not realize that they are under this type of stress. Chronic stress is the most serious type of stress that can lead up to harmful health problems or even death.
- ii. **Acute stress:** Acute stress is experienced in response to directly perceived threat, either physical or psychological. The threat can be real or imagined; it is the perception of the threat that activates the response. This type of stress is short-term and caused by exposure to trauma, such as rape, robbery, combat or natural disaster.
- iii. **Distress:** Distress is a negative stress brought about by changes or alterations in an individual's life. Distress is also referred to as anxiety, severe trauma or mental suffering resulting from exhaustion or an accident. Distress is a reaction to an upsetting event such as being in a bad accident, serious injury or losing a loved one. When distress and anxiety go untreated for long enough, people can get depressed. There are essentially two types of distress: acute stress and chronic stress.
- iv. **Eustress:** Eustress is a type of short-term stress that is a positive type of stress. When a person needs to have some extra energy or inspiration, eustress gives us the motivation we need to winning or achieving first place in a competition, achieving a promotion or giving a speech. This stress provides the focus and energy needed in order to perform at the highest level of the individual's ability.

Psychological well-being—Psychological well-being in simple terms could be defined as the state of being well, happy or prosperous. Psychological well-being is a subjective term means different thing to different people. As summarized by Huppert (2009) “psychological well-being is about lives going well. It is the combination of feeling good and functioning effectively. People with psychological well-being report feeling happy, capable, well-supported, and satisfied with life and so on. The term Psychological well-being is used throughout the health industry as a kind of a catch-all phrase, meaning, contentment, satisfaction with all elements of life, self-actualization (a feeling of having achieved something with one’s life) peace and happiness. Psychological well-being refers to both cognitive and affective aspects (Schlosser, 1990). Psychological well-being means a person’s evaluative reactions to his or her life either in terms of life satisfaction, cognitive evaluation or affect, ongoing emotional reactions (Diener & Diener, 1995).

The concept of well-being is rather difficult to define since it includes affective, cognitive and motivational aspects of life experiences with subjective feelings of satisfaction. There are so many terms such as satisfaction, happiness, hope, optimism, positive mental health and quality of life. It is important to note that happiness and satisfaction are two words which are often regarded as equivalent of well-being. Happiness and satisfaction involve many life situations such as health, marriage, family work, financial situations, educational opportunity, self-esteem, creativity, sense of belongingness and trust in others. Psychological well-being is a somewhat malleable concept which is to do with people’s feelings about everyday life activities. Such feelings may range from negative mental states or psychological strain such as anxiety, depression, frustration, emotional exhaustion, unhappiness, dissatisfaction to a state which has been identified as positive mental health (Jahoda, 1958; Warr, 1978).

Psychological well-being is usually conceptualized as some combination of positive affective states such as happiness (the hedonic perspective) and functioning with optimal effectiveness in individual and social life (the eudaimonic perspective).

Ryff & Singer (1998) used the term ‘human flourishing’ and Felce & Perry (1995) call it a comprising of objective descriptors and subjective evaluation of physical, material, social and emotional well-being. Ryan & Deci (2000) suggests that humans have three basic psy-

chological needs; competence, autonomy and relatedness. The satisfaction of these needs lead to both subjective well-being (increased pleasure and happiness) and psychological well-being. Well-being is one of the most important goals which individuals as well as societies strive for. The term denotes that something is in a good state. The concept of well-being suffers from definitional problems. In their systematic review of the definitions, Pollard & Lee (2003) describe well-being as “a complex multi-faceted constructs that has continued to elude researcher’s attempts to define and measure it”. Well-being has been defined as a dynamic state characterized by a reasonable amount of harmony between an individual’s abilities, needs and expectations and environmental demands and opportunities (Levi, 1987).

Keyes & Ryff (1995) stated that this theory analyzed psychological well-being from a Eudaimonic perspective and combined the psychological functioning theories which are Maslow’s conception of self-actualization, Roger’s fully functioning person, Jung’s individuation formation and Allport’s depiction of maturity. In addition, Erikson’s Buhler’s and Neugarten’s theories on adult development were included as well as Jahoda’s mental health approach and she constructed a measure of well-being around six subscales: Autonomy, Environmental mastery, Positive Relation with others, Purpose in life, Personal Growth and Self-acceptance. The six dimensions of psychological well-being evoke different challenges that people encounter as they try to function positively (Ryff & Keyes, 1995).

- i. **Autonomy:** Autonomy measures the degree to which people seek self-determination and personal authority in a society that at times requires obedience and compliance. However, healthy individuals seek to understand their own values and ideals. In addition, healthy individuals see themselves guiding their own behavior and conduct from internalized standards and values.
- ii. **Environmental mastery:** Environmental mastery is the active engagement of the environment to mold it to meet one’s needs and wants. Healthy individuals recognize personal needs and desires and also feel capable of, and permitted to take an active role in getting what they need from their environment.
- iii. **Positive relation with others:** consists of the ability to cultivate warm, intimate relationships with others. It also includes the presence of satisfying social contacts and relations.

- iv. Purpose in life: Purpose in life captures the adult's perception of having direction in life, even when the world offers none or provides unsatisfactory alternatives. Healthy individuals see their daily lives as fulfilling a direction and purpose, and therefore they view their personal lives as meaningful.
- v. Personal growth: Personal growth is the ability and desire to enhance existing skills and talents and to seek opportunities for further personal development. In addition, healthy individuals are open to experience and have the capacity to identify challenges in a variety of circumstances.
- vi. Self-acceptance: Self-acceptance requires the maintenance of esteem for one's self while facing complex and sometimes unpleasant personal aspects of the self. In addition, individuals accumulate a past and have the capacity to recall and remember themselves through time. Healthy individuals perceive themselves positively across the life course and accept all parts of them.

Objective of the study

- To study the correlation between stress and psychological well-being as well as its different dimensions among undergraduate students

Hypothesis of the study

- There will be no correlation between stress and psychological well-being as well as its different dimensions among undergraduate students

Review of literature-Page Feurer and Jac Andrews (2009) in his study they examined school related stress and depression in adolescents with and without learning disabilities. A total sample of 87 students (38 learning-disabled and 49 nondisabled) from secondary schools in Calgary completed questionnaires on depressive symptoms and on school related stress. Results indicated that the adolescents with LD reported significantly higher levels of academic self-concept stress than their non LD peers. However, the groups did not differ significantly on depression or on the other areas of school-related stress. Significant and positive correlations between school-related stress and depression were found, and the stress variables were found to be significant predictors of adolescent depression.

Chris, Segrin, et.al. (2007) examined social skills, psychological well-being and the mediating role of perceived stress in a sample of 500

university students. The results of the study revealed a significant relationship between social skills and lower levels of perceived stress as well as social skills and greater well-being. The lower levels of perception of stress that accompany higher levels of social skills mediate the association between social skills and depression as well as life satisfaction of students.

Moksnes, Moljord, Espnes and Byrne (2010) investigated whether leisure time physical activity moderated the relationship between stress and psychological functioning (depression, anxiety, self-esteem) among Norwegian adolescents 13-18 years old (n = 1508). In preliminary analyses, girls reported higher scores of depression and anxiety and boys scored higher on self-esteem. Interaction effects of gender by age were found on all outcome variables. Stress was positively associated with depression and anxiety, and negatively associated with self-esteem. Higher frequency of leisure time physical activity was weakly associated with lower levels of depression and anxiety, and higher levels of self-esteem. The primary analyses revealed no support for leisure time physical activity as a moderator of the association between stress and psychological functioning.

Glozah (2013) in this study investigators examine how academic stress and perceived social support influence the psychological well-being of senior high school students in Ghana. Two hundred and twenty six male and female students participated. The general health questionnaire, student life-stress inventory and perceived social support from family and friends scales were used to assess psychological well-being, academic stress and perceived social support respectively. The results indicated that perceived social support buffered the effects of academic stress on psychological well-being. Girls reported higher scores on perceived social support but reported more depression. Boys reported higher academic stress and better psychological well-being, and these have been attributed partly to the socialization role of gender.

METHOD

Sample:-The sample was composed of 200 undergraduate students (100 boys & 100 girls) between age ranges of 17 to 25 years using purposive sampling technique from different districts of North Bihar.

Tool(s):

Stressful Life Event Scale:-Stressful life events scale developed by G. Venkatesh Kumar (1995). The scale was an adapted version of

Holmes and Rahe (1967) Social Readjustment Rating Scale (SRRS). Many social scientists have conducted studies on stress by using SRRS. Researchers had to deal with the problem of retrospective contamination when trying to correlate the relationship between stressful events experienced in the past with a subsequent illness episode. The effect of a number of intervening variables like age, sex, socio-economic status, family background and social support systems have not been adequately examined. In spite of certain methodological difficulties, attempts have made by several Indian contexts (Singh, Kaur, and Kaur, 1981, Dube, 1983). The investigator of the present study has used “Perceived stressful event scale” (PSLES) developed by G. Venkatesh Kumar. It consists of 45 statements like belittling in the class on the basis of caste, poverty and having the burden of other work while learning etc. Each statement is responded to by the students regarding the experience of perceived stress on a three point scale i.e., Severe, Moderate and Nil. The scale was tested for its reliability and validity. The test-retest reliability coefficients were 0.56 and 0.58 for English and Kannada versions respectively. The validity coefficients were found to be 0.50 for English and Kannada versions respectively.

Ryff’s Psychological Well-being Scale-This scale was developed by Carol Ryff (Ryff and Singer, 1998) to measure dimensions of Psychological well-being namely Self-acceptance, Positive relation with others, Autonomy, environmental mastery, Purpose in life and Personal growth. This scale had been used in several researches on well-being and had been to found to have high reliability and validity. The internal consistency of the six scales ranged from .86 to .93 for the 20 items parent scale. There are three versions of the Ryff’s Psychological well-being scale. The parent scale is 20 item versions, the medium form is composed of nine items, and the short form is composed of three items. In this study the nine item version for each dimension was used, which has a total of 54 items. Cronbach’s alpha was .63 for autonomy, .53 for environmental mastery, .78 for positive relations with others, .73 for self-acceptance, .66 for personal growth, and .74 for purpose in life. Principle component analysis demonstrated one component for each dimension.

Statistical Analysis-After data collection an analysis is required to give the meaning to the numerical output of the research. In this study Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation was administered to assess the relationship between stress and psychological well-being.

Results and discussion

Table-1 shows correlation between stress and psychological well-being as well as its all the six dimensions.

Variable	AUTONOMY	ENVIRONMENTAL MASTERY	Personal growth	Positive relation with others	purpose in life	self-acceptance	Psychological well-being
Stress	-.127*	-.161**	-.231**	-.166**	-.183**	-.120*	-.123*

*indicate significant at .05, **indicate significant at .01

ST=stress, A=autonomy, EM=environmental mastery, PG=personal growth, PRO=positive relation with others, PIL=purpose in life, SA=self-acceptance, PWB= Psychological well-being.

Results show that stress and overall psychological well-being negatively and significantly correlated with each other ($r = -.123, p < .05$). As per the dimensions of the psychological well-being is concerned, it was found that stress and autonomy are negatively and significantly correlated with each other ($r = -.127, p < .05$), stress and environmental mastery ($r = -.161, p < .01$), stress and personal growth ($r = -.231, p < .01$), stress and positive relation with others ($r = -.166, p < .01$), stress and purpose in life ($r = -.183, p < .01$), and stress and self-acceptance ($r = -.120, p < .01$) are negatively and significantly correlated with each other.

It means that as the level of stress increases autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relation with others, purpose in life, self-acceptance as well as overall psychological well-being decreases. Therefore, hypothesis ‘there will be no influence of stress on psychological well-being among undergraduate students’ is rejected.

As Page Feurer and Jac Andrews (2009) in their study they found that school related stress and depression in adolescents with and without learning disabilities. A group of secondary schools in Calgary completed questionnaires on depressive symptoms and on school related stress. Result exhibits that the adolescents with learning disabilities reported significantly higher levels of academic self-concept stress

than their non-learning disabilities peers. However, the groups did not differ significantly on depression or on the other areas of school-related stress. Significant and positive correlations between school-related stress and depression were found, and the stress variables were found to be significant predictors of adolescent depression. It is an indication that due to positive correlation between stress and psychological well-being might lead to depressive symptoms in students.

Siddique and D'Arcy (1984) conducted a study on adolescence stress and Psychological well-being and the mental-health consequences of stress in a sample of 1,038 adolescents (526 females and 512 males) from a Canadian prairie city. The study examined the relationship between perceived stress in family, school, and peer group situations and four measures of psychological well-being, i.e., anxiety, depression, social dysfunction, and anergia. All the above three bases of stress are related to the measures of Psychological well-being with high negative effect from the family. This study also strengthen the findings that current group of the participants are less prone to be stuck in critical situation because stress and psychological well-being as well as its all the six dimensions are negatively and significantly correlated with each other. **Conclusions**-Consequently, we can say that stress and psychological well-being as well as its all the six dimensions negatively and significantly correlated with each other. It means that there are less chances of being indulge in depressive symptoms or getting stressed.

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