

A study on perceived psychological stress among the Junior High Madrasah students at Paschim Medinipur district in West Bengal

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ABSTRACT

‘Stress’ is not a new term in psychological studies but in today’s modern complex life, it becomes more relevant as it was started to found commonly in early adolescent learners. Current study was aimed to observe the current status perceived psychological stress (PPS) level and its connection with different demographic independent factors among junior high madrasah students at Paschim Medinipur district in West Bengal. A cross-sectional survey design was implemented with the help of 129 sample units. Major findings were suggested low percentage of severe and extremely severe PPS and no significant differences found on PPS level respected to gender, locality of institutes, types of family and sibling counts ($P > 0.05$) among junior high madrasah students at Paschim Medinipur district in West Bengal.

Keywords – Perceived psychological stress, Mental health, Stressors, Wellbeing

INTRODUCTION

In rural areas of India, it is often seen that people are less aware about mental health and its related problems. They are not concerned unless it becomes a major problem requiring medical treatment. These problems are required to be identified at the developmental stage for proper intervention. A few epidemiological studies have been carried out in different parts of the country in different socio-cultural environment. But it is felt that data so gathered are not adequate to generalize the problem for the whole country. Mental disorders are seen to vary across time, within the same population at the same time. This dynamic nature of the psychiatric illness impacts its planning, funding and healthcare delivery (Venkatesh Reddy, B. et al. 2013). As such it is necessary that many more epidemiological studies are conducted in different parts of the country at different time in same or different socio-cultural settings and particularly among adolescent school going children to formulate a proper mental health policy and programme. Education is a stressful period in students’ life in which they need to cope to various reasons as living away from the families, a heavy syllabus, and inefficiency overburden in education programs. A mentally fit student can initiate proper social relationships, be enthusiastic to learn with ambition to implement his/her plans in the future. School is a social and educational setting that allows the child to develop complex skills and strategies for social interaction as well as social withdrawal. The concept of stress is not a new one in psychology but in today’s modern life, it has become increasingly relevant. ‘Stress’ or ‘pressure’ - the terminology was introduced in the theory of elasticity as an amount of force for a given unit area by Cauchy in 1821 but the keen difference in psychology as feeling of pressurized mentally by various stressors could be attributed to psychological stress. Various symptoms of stress were found in general medical studies and further those were divided in emotional symptoms, physical symptoms, cognitive symptoms and behavioral symptoms.

Emotional symptoms of stress include - becoming easily agitated, frustrated, and moody, feeling overwhelmed, like you are losing control or need to take control, having difficulty relaxing and quieting your mind, feeling bad about yourself (low self-esteem), loneliness, worthless, and depressed, avoiding others and so on. Physical symptoms of stress include - Low energy, headaches, feeling unwellness in stomach (diarrhea, constipation, pains, and tense muscles), chest pain and rapid heartbeat, insomnia, frequent colds and infections, nervousness and shaking, ringing in the ear, cold or sweaty hands and feet, dry mouth and difficulty swallowing, grinding teeth and so on. Cognitive symptoms of stress include- constant worrying, racing thoughts, forgetfulness and disorganization, inability to focus, poor judgment, being pessimistic or seeing only the negative side and so on. Behavioral symptoms of stress include- changes in appetite (either not eating or eating too much), procrastinating and avoiding responsibilities, increased use of

alcohol, drugs, or cigarettes, exhibiting more nervous behaviour, such as nail biting, fidgeting, pacing and so on. Also, stress may take many forms like academic stress, peer pressure, relationships, negative emotions and low economic status of family etc. Achievement anxiety is one of the most common causes of stress in students. There is an increasing concern regarding stress and its relationships with mental health problems among school going early adolescents in India. Thus, present study was carried out with an objective to investigate the current status of perceived psychological stress among junior high madrasah school going adolescents and the study also aimed to examine the relationship of different independent factors that may affect on various level of perceived psychological stress among junior high madrasah students.

Significance of the study

In recent days stress is commonly found among adolescent students all over the globe. There may be so many causes can be attributed such as overloaded syllabus, shortage in time for preparing examinations (Bosch, Ring, & Amerongen, 2004), fear of failure in examinations (Misra & McKean, 2000; Macgeorge, Samter, & Gillihan, 2005), sense of hopelessness and so on. Some recent studies also have found that peer pressure and various socio-economic conditions of learners were the influencing factors of their psychological problems in India (Adhikary, 2019). Mild psychological problems like anxiety and moderate depression, later stressful lifestyle may lead to suicidal tendencies among adolescent students. According to the National Crime Bureau (NCB), India accounted for 17.8% of all adolescence population had committed suicide in the year of 2019. Approximately 10% of high school students attempt suicide every year, and it is now the third leading cause of death among adolescents around the world. As we know the importance and sensitivity of adolescence stage, Students of this age tend to make various mistakes such as unprotected sexual behavior, tobacco and alcohol consume and various risky behaviors associated with physical and mental health, these were the major causes of adolescent morbidity (Adak, 2020). Vygotsky (1931) recognized that adolescence stage is the most important stage of a child's development process. Also, Erik Erikson stated in his Social-Emotional Development Theory (SED) that an individual person has an urgent need to find an ideal role model to ask about who he/she is and his/her spiritual and moral values during adolescence stage and this accumulation of identity plays a significant role in the development of personality, which may direct to positive outcomes in later life. This study is mainly aiming at early adolescent learners from Madrasah schools. Comparing to the learners from all junior high schools, Junior Madrasah students have to study extra about the Islamic Education portion such as Arbi Path, IslamerItihas, Islam porichoy with all general subjects that creates extra pressure and stress to the madrasah students during full session. Wide range of studies had made on examining the stress related to academics of general students but in most of the cases, focus on stress level of Madrasah students cannot be highlighted and much attention hasn't given to this issue of them. Therefore, in this present study, researchers tried to investigate the current status perceived mental stress level of junior high madrasah students and formed the statement of the problem as – *“A study on perceived psychological stress among the Junior High Madrasah students at Paschim Medinipur district in West Bengal”*.

Delimitations

Present study was delimited to the following grounds -

- i. Only Junior High Madrasah schools from Paschim Medinipur district of West Bengal was selected for the study.
- ii. The present study delimited to 129 samples from both rural and urban schools of Paschim Medinipur District.
- iii. The variables of the study were delimited to independent variables i.e., Gender, Locality of the Institute, Types of Family, siblings count.

Objectives

Keeping in mind the purpose and delimitations of present study, objectives were formulated as -

1. To find out the existing status of level of perceived stress among the students of Junior High Madrasah Schools of Paschim Medinipur District in West Bengal.
2. To find out the rate of prevalence of perceived stress among the students of Junior High Madrasah Schools of Paschim Medinipur District in West Bengal with respect to their Gender, Locality of the Institute, Types of Family, siblings count.
3. To examine the variation of various demographic variables, such as Gender, Locality of the Institute, Types of Family, siblings count on the level of perceived stress among the students of Junior High Madrasah Schools of Paschim Medinipur District in West Bengal.

Hypotheses

Following hypotheses were made on the basis of aforesaid research objectives –

H₀₁ – Gender has no significant variation on level of perceived stress among the Junior High Madrasah students.

H₀₂ - Locality of the Institute has no significant variation on level of perceived stress among the Junior High Madrasah students.

H₀₃ - Types of Family of students have no significant variation on level of perceived stress among the Junior High Madrasah students.

H₀₄—Siblings count of students have no significant variation on level of perceived stress among the Junior High Madrasah students.

Research design

To fulfill the purpose of the study, researchers were implemented a cross-sectional survey framework with the help of convenient sampling technique. Entire Junior High Madrasah school students from Paschim Medinipur district were considered as the population of the study, whereas 129 sampling units were selected from the different Junior High Madrasah schools of Paschim Medinipur district were identified as sample of the study. Perceived psychological Stress (PPS) was recognized as dependent variable in the study and to investigate the variations on different aspects PPS, the independent factors were pointed out as Gender, Locality of the Institute, Types of Family & siblings count. Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (Dass-21) by Lovibond & Lovibond was used to collect data but to measure the only PPS, researchers adopted and modified the original questionnaire according to the purpose of the study. Reliability and Validity of the modified questionnaire were checked and assured by the researchers before implementation.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics and graphical representation were presented to show level of perceived stress among junior high madrasah students. Further non-parametric inferential statistics, viz. Chi-square test was formed to predict the psychological stress among the junior high madrasah students under four independent variables.

Table 1: Showing sample wise percentage table of PPS.

Description			Stress level
LEVEL	NORMAL	Count	39
		% within	30.23%
	MILD	Count	28
		% within	21.71%
	MODERATE	Count	31
		% within	24.03%
	SEVERE	Count	20
		% within	15.50%
	EXTREMELY SEVERE	Count	11
		% within	8.53%
Total		Count	129
		% Total	100%

Out of total students (N=129), 8.53% showed extremely severe level of stress, 15.50% showed severe level of stress, 24.03% showed moderate level of stress, 21.71% showed mild level of stress and 30.23% showed normal level of stress according to data collection instrument.

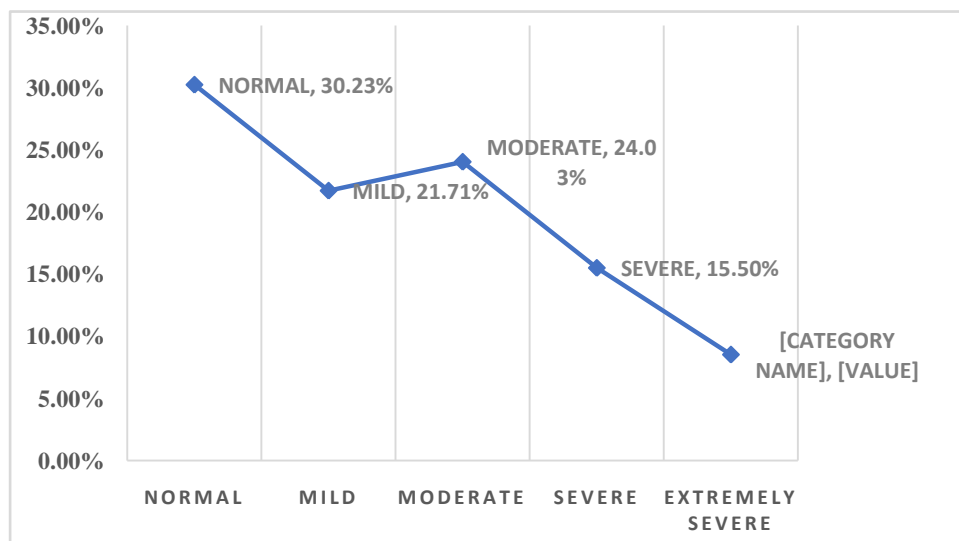


Figure 1: Line graph showing sample wise percentage of PPS.

Hypotheses testing

Table 2: Showing hypotheses testing according to framed hypotheses.

Independent Variables	Dependent Variable	X ²	N	df	Asymp. Sig.	Remarks*	Hypothesis Testing (Null/H ₀) (0.05 level)
Gender	PPS	2.121	129	4	0.714	*NS (P>0.05)	Accepted
Locality of Institute	PPS	2.982	129	4	0.561	*NS (P>0.05)	Accepted
Types of Family	PPS	2.792	129	4	0.593	*NS (P>0.05)	Accepted
Siblings Count	PPS	5.611	129	8	0.691	*NS (P>0.05)	Accepted

*NS- Not Significant

Findings

- 30.23, 21.71 & 24.03 percent of normal, mild and moderate level of stress found on data collection tool among junior high madrasah students respectively.
- Found stress level has not significantly differ between male and female candidates.
- Found stress level has not significantly differ within rural, urban and semi-urban students and also,
- No significant differences found on stress level respected to types of family and sibling counts of students.

CONCLUSION

The study was conducted with the objective of investigating the rate of prevalence of perceived psychological stress among the students aged 11-14 years at junior high madrasah level in West Bengal. In this study the sample has drawn from one district of West Bengal i.e., Paschim Medinipur district. The study sample comprises of male and female students; both rural and urban and semi-urban junior high madrasah level students; belonging to joint and nuclear families and studying in Bengali medium schools. The study also wanted to find out the rate of prevalence of perceived psychological stress on the basis of different variables, viz- family type, locality of Institute, gender and siblings' count. As we know, early adolescence stage is a period of physical, psychological, emotional and personality change (Curtis,2015), which can lead to stress, emotional and behavioral problems. Many adolescent school going children suffer from mental health problems that interfere their normal development and daily life activities which amounts to lower education achievements, substance abuse, violence, depression, anxiety, suicide etc. Poor mental health causes many other diseases in young generation. World Health Organization estimated that mental and behavioral disorders account for about 12% of the global burden of diseases. In India the burden of mental and behavioral disorders ranged from 9.5 to 102 per 1000 population (Venkatesh Reddy B. et al. 2013). Findings of the study suggested 30.23, 21.71 & 24.03 percent of normal, mild and moderate level of stress found on data collection tool among junior high madrasah students respectively and no significant differences found on perceived stress level respected to gender, locality of institutes, types of family and sibling counts of students. Lastly it can be said that this study is not end yet in itself, it is an on-going journey to reveal the scenario of mental health among the junior high madrasah school going students. Therefore, a numerous further study could be conducted on considering various dimensions of different variables and further more sophisticated tools may be developed to measure the rate of prevalence of perceived psychological stress with the sophisticated multivariate statistical analyses and present study was satisfactory in most of the cases.

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