

A Study of Relationship between Parenting Style and Stress Levels among High School Students

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ABSTRACT

Education plays a pivotal role in causing a holistic development of an individual. Every stage of life including academic learning and personal growth has many sub stages. Stage adolescence is considered the most critical because individuals face multiple physical, emotional, and social changes. This stage makes adolescents to develop their own identity and to be aware of their surroundings. In this present scenario, students are suffering elevated pressure as a result of academic demands and expectations from society and family. The stress is more prominent among high school students. Many factors contribute to the stress including board examinations' pressure as the primary cause of stress, which play a crucial role in their future. Consequently, most of the students suffer from stress, anxiety, and emotional imbalance, which further plays a role in affecting their performance and well-being. In these situations, the role played by parents is very crucial. The way parents are engaged with their children, supervise them, and encourage them decides how well their children deal with stress. Varying parenting styles create distinct environments at home, which may cause either elevate or lessen the stress levels among children. Therefore, it becomes indispensable to study the relationships between parenting style and stress levels among high school students.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Stress

Definitions of Stress

1. **Hans Selye (1956):**
Stress is defined as *"the non-specific response of the body to any demand made upon it."*
→ This means the body reacts to any kind of pressure, whether physical or mental.
2. **Lazarus and Folkman (1984):**
Stress is *"a relationship between the individual and the environment that is appraised as taxing or exceeding one's resources."*
→ In simple words, stress occurs when a person feels they cannot cope with a situation.
3. **Oxford Dictionary:**
Stress is *"a state of mental or emotional strain resulting from adverse or demanding circumstances."*

High school students, especially those studying in Class 10, often experience stress in their daily academic life. For instance, many students stay up late at night due to the pressure of board examinations and completing their syllabus on time. They also develop a fear of scoring low marks, which may lead to parental scolding or disappointment. In addition, the growing pressure from coaching centres and tuition classes adds to their academic burden. Students frequently compare themselves with their peers in CBSE and PSEB schools, which increases competition and anxiety. Moreover, balancing school work with extracurricular activities becomes challenging for many students, further contributing to their overall stress levels.

1.2 Parenting Style

Definition of Parenting

1. **Baumrind (1967):**
Parenting is defined as a set of behaviours and practices through which parents raise their children and guide their development.
2. **Maccoby and Martin (1983):**
Parenting refers to the patterns of parental control, responsiveness, and communication that shape a child's personality and behaviour.

In simple terms, parenting style is a way in which parents interact with their children in day-to-day life. Parenting involves mentorship, supervision, assistance, and communication with their offspring. Every family has its own style of doing parenting depending on many factors including set of beliefs, norms, and family ambiance. No doubt, parenting plays a significant role in every single stage of children. Of this, adolescence becomes a crucial age in which role played by parents lay huge impact depending upon the way the same is served. The key reasons of paying more attention by parents to children are that they face many changes and need time to time guidance alongside emotional support. The concept of parenting styles was first systematically introduced by Diana Baumrind (1971), who is considered the pioneer in this field. Baumrind identified parenting as a combination of two key dimensions: parental responsiveness (warmth) and parental demandingness (control). Based on these dimensions, she initially proposed three basic parenting styles: authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive.

1.3 Types Of Parenting Style

The level of control and emotional aid provided by parents leads to the classification of parenting styles into many types. Diana Baumrind was the first to explain three main types of parenting styles. Later Maccoby expanded types of parenting styles to four. All these types differently contribute in shaping the behaviour of the children. Each of the styles has its own remarkable features and its significant effects on children's development.

1.3.1 Authoritative Parenting Style

The authoritative parenting style emerged as a more balanced and refined approach in response to the limitations of authoritarian parenting. As psychological research developed, it became clear that strict control without emotional support could negatively affect children's development. This led to the evolution of authoritative parenting, which combines firm discipline with warmth, communication, and understanding. Baumrind (1971) identified this style as high in both demandingness and responsiveness. It is considered a progressive development in parenting, reflecting a shift towards recognizing children's emotional and psychological needs.

1.3.2 Authoritarian Parenting Style

The authoritarian parenting style is considered one of the earliest and most traditional forms of parenting. Its origin can be traced to early social and cultural systems where strict discipline, obedience, and respect for authority were highly valued. In such settings, parents believed that children should follow rules without questioning, and control was seen as essential for proper upbringing. Diana Baumrind (1971) later identified and defined this style as high in demandingness but low in responsiveness. This style laid the foundation for the scientific study of parenting, representing the initial form from which other parenting styles gradually evolved.

1.3.3 Permissive Parenting Style

The permissive parenting style developed as a reaction against the rigidity of authoritarian parenting. With changing social values and increased emphasis on individual freedom and self-expression, some parents began to adopt a more lenient and non-controlling approach. This style emphasizes warmth, acceptance, and independence, while placing few demands or restrictions on children. Baumrind (1971) classified permissive parenting as high in responsiveness but low in demandingness. It represents a shift away from strict discipline towards a more child-centered approach, though often lacking necessary structure and guidance.

2. Objectives Of Study

- To compare the stress levels of male and female students.
- To compare the stress levels of students studying in private and government schools.

3. Hypotheses Of Study

Based on the objectives and research questions, the following hypotheses are formulated:

- There is no significant difference in stress levels between male and female students.
- There is no significant difference in stress levels between students studying in private and government schools.

4. Parenting Styles

Parenting styles refer to the patterns of behaviour, attitudes, and strategies adopted by parents in raising their children. In the present study, parenting styles are measured in three categories:

- Authoritative Parenting: A balanced style characterized by warmth, support, and reasonable control.
- Authoritarian Parenting: A strict and controlling style with high demands and low responsiveness.
- Permissive Parenting: A lenient style with high freedom and low control over children.

5. Stress

Stress refers to the mental and emotional strain experienced by students due to academic, social, and personal pressures. In this study, stress is measured through students' responses on a standardized stress scale.

6. High School Students

High school students refer to learners studying at the High level. In the present study, it specifically includes students of Class 10.

7. Academic Stress

Academic stress refers to pressure related to studies, examinations, homework, and academic performance faced by students.

8. Gender

Gender refers to the classification of students as male and female for the purpose of comparison in the study

9. Type of School

Type of school refers to the category of school in which students are studying, classified as government schools and private schools.

10. Locality

Locality refers to the residential background of students, categorized as urban and rural areas.

11. Board of Education

Board of education refers to the educational board under which students are studying, specifically CBSE (Central Board of High Education) and PSEB (Punjab School Education Board) in this study.

12. Delimitation of the study

- The study is geographically confined to Patiala District of Punjab only, and the findings may not be generalized to other regions.
- The study is limited to a sample of 320 high school students, specifically from Class 10.
- The study is restricted to three parenting styles, namely permissive, authoritative, and authoritarian parenting style.

13. Population of the Study

Population is considered an important part of any research study because it represents the entire group from which the sample is selected. In the present study, the population consisted of High school students studying in Class 10 in CBSE and PSEB affiliated schools of Patiala district.

14. Sample of the Study

A sample of 320 High school students was selected from different government and private schools of Patiala district. The sample included both male and female students belonging to urban and rural areas.

Distribution of Sample

- Total Students: 320
- CBSE Students: 160
- PSEB Students: 160
- Male and Female Students
- Urban and Rural Students

15. Validity

Refers to the extent to which a tool measures what it is actually intended to measure. A research tool is considered valid when it accurately measures the particular trait, behaviour, or variable for which it has been constructed. Validity helps in ensuring the accuracy and usefulness of the collected data.

In the present study, standardized tools were used for measuring parenting styles and stress level among High school students. Since these tools were already standardized, their validity had been established by the authors of the respective tools.

16. Questionnaire development

Questionnaire development is an important step in any research study because it helps the investigator collect relevant and accurate information from the respondents. In the present study, standardized questionnaires related to parenting styles and stress level were used for collecting data from High school students.

Before administering the questionnaires, the investigator carefully studied the objectives and variables of the study. The questionnaires were selected in such a way that they could measure the parenting styles and stress level of High school students effectively and accurately.

The Parenting Style Questionnaire included statements related to the behaviour, attitude, guidance, discipline, care, and communication pattern of parents with their children. The questionnaire was designed to measure three major parenting styles namely permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative parenting styles.

Scoring Procedure

After the collection of data, the responses obtained from the students were scored according to the scoring instructions provided in the manuals of the standardized tools used in the present study. The investigator used the Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) developed by Dr. John R. Buri and the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) developed by Cohen, Kamarck, and Mermelstein for scoring the responses.

Scoring of Parenting Style Questionnaire (PAQ)

The Parental Authority Questionnaire consisted of 30 items related to parenting behaviour. The questionnaire measured three parenting styles namely permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative parenting styles. Each item had five response categories:

- Strongly Disagree = 1
- Disagree = 2
- Neither Agree nor Disagree = 3
- Agree = 4
- Strongly Agree = 5

The scores of the three parenting styles were calculated separately by adding the scores of the related items.

Distribution of Items

Parenting Style	Item Numbers
Permissive Parenting Style	1, 6, 10, 13, 14, 17, 19, 21, 24, 28
Authoritarian Parenting Style	2, 3, 7, 9, 12, 16, 18, 25, 26, 29
Authoritative Parenting Style	4, 5, 8, 11, 15, 20, 22, 23, 27, 30

The total score of each parenting style ranged from 10 to 50. Higher scores indicated a higher level of that particular parenting style. The obtained scores were later converted into percentage form for statistical analysis.

Scoring of Perceived Stress Scale (PSS)

The Perceived Stress Scale consisted of 10 items related to stress experienced by students during the last month. Each item had five response categories:

- Never = 0
- Almost Never = 1
- Sometimes = 2
- Fairly Often = 3
- Very Often = 4

The total stress score was obtained by adding the scores of all the items. Some positive items were reverse scored according to the scoring procedure prescribed in the manual of the scale.

After calculating the total score, the stress level of students was interpreted accordingly. Higher scores indicated a higher level of perceived stress among students.

17. Testing of hypotheses

There is no significant difference in stress levels between male and female students.

The total sample of the present study consisted of 320 high school students, which was further divided into two groups on the basis of gender, i.e., male and female students. The first hypothesis of the study stated that there is no significant difference in stress levels between male and female students.

To test this hypothesis, the values of mean, standard deviation, and t-value were calculated from the scores and the results obtained are shown as:

Table 1: showing the stress levels between male and female students.

NO.STUDENTS	GENDER	MEAN	SD	t-value
160	FEMALE	63.39	7.81	0.01789
160	MALE	63.7	7.41	

t-value at 0.05level=1.97

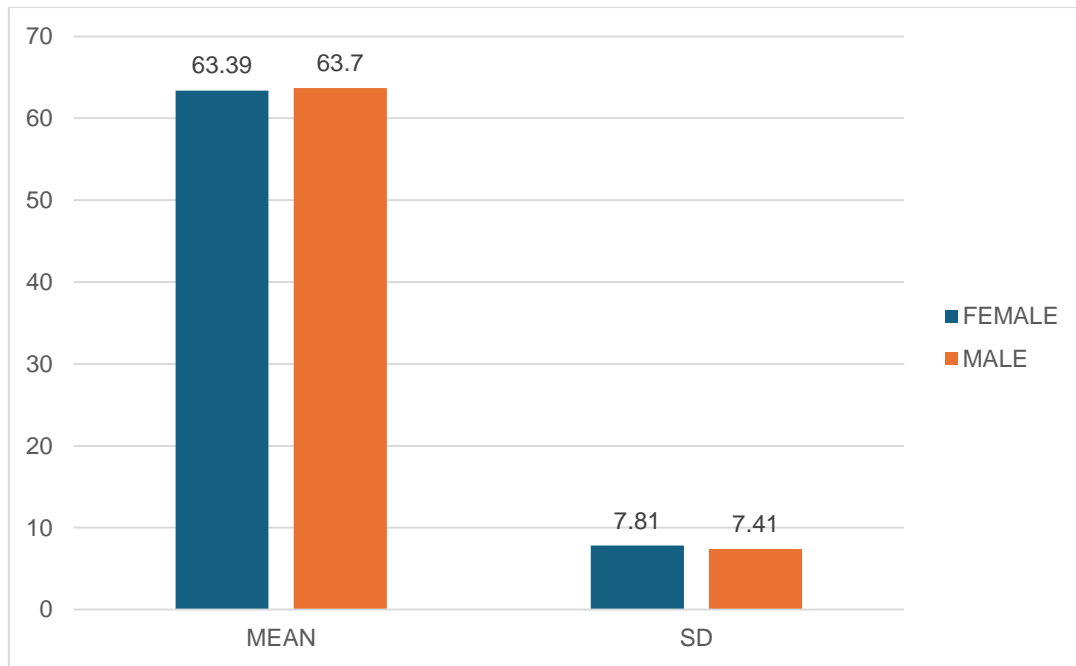


Figure 4.2.1 showing Mean and S.D. of Stress Level among Male and Female Students

Table 4.2.1 and Figure 4.2.1 show that the mean score of stress level of female students was found to be 63.39 with a standard deviation of 7.81. On the other hand, the mean score of male students was found to be 63.7 with a standard deviation of 7.41.

The calculated value of the t-test was found to be 0.01789, which is less than the table value of 1.97 at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the difference between male and female students in terms of stress level is not significant. Thus, the hypothesis stating that “there is no significant difference in stress levels between male and female students” is accepted.

4.2.2 There is no significant difference in stress levels between students studying in private and government schools.

The total sample of the present study consisted of 320 high school students, which was further divided into two groups on the basis of type of school, i.e., private and government school students. The hypothesis of the study stated that there is no significant difference in stress levels between students studying in private and government schools.

To test this hypothesis, the values of mean, standard deviation, and t-value were calculated from the scores and the results obtained are shown as:

Table 2: showing the stress levels between Private and Government students.

Type of school	No.Students	Mean	SD	t-value
PRIVATE	160	64.29	7.64	1.77
GOVT	160	62.79	7.51	

t-value at 0.05 level=1.97

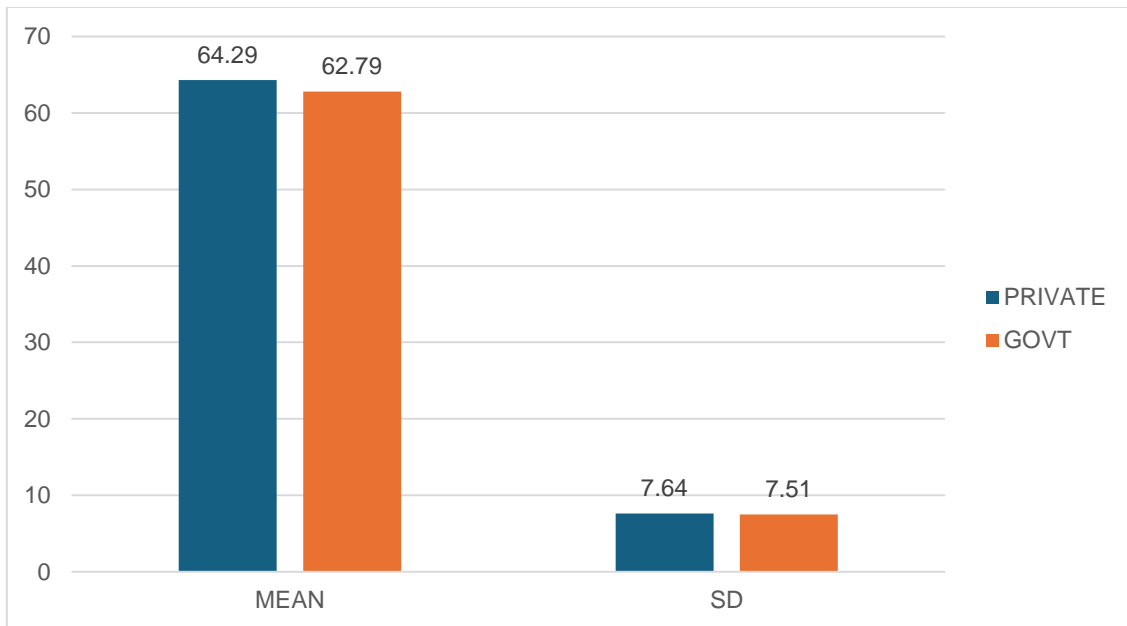


Figure 4.2.2 showing Mean and S.D. of Stress Level among Private and Government School Students

Table 4.2.2 and Figure 4.2.2 show that the mean score of stress level of private school students was found to be 64.29 with a standard deviation of 7.64. On the other hand, the mean score of government school students was found to be 62.79 with a standard deviation of 7.51.

The calculated value of the t-test was found to be 1.77, which is less than the table value of 1.97 at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the difference between private and government school students in terms of stress level is not significant.

Thus, the hypothesis stating that “there is no significant difference in stress levels between students studying in private and government schools” is accepted.

18. Educational implications of the study

1. As there is no significant difference in stress levels based on gender, equal attention should be given to both boys and girls in managing stress and emotional well-being.
2. The study shows that type of school (private and government) does not significantly affect stress levels. Therefore, all schools should focus on creating a supportive and healthy learning environment for students.

19. Suggestions for further research

On the basis of the findings and limitations of the present study, the following suggestions are made for future research:

- The present study was limited to Patiala district only. Future studies can be conducted on a larger sample covering different districts or states for better generalization.
- The study was confined to 320 high school students. Further research can include more participants or students from different classes such as middle and senior High levels.
- The present study focused only on three parenting styles. Future researchers may include other parenting dimensions or modern parenting approaches.
- The study examined only stress level as a dependent variable. Future studies can include other variables such as academic achievement, anxiety, depression, or emotional intelligence.

CONCLUSION

In view of the analysis of the results of the present study, the following conclusions have been drawn:

1. There is **no significant difference** in stress levels between male and female students.
2. There is **no significant difference** in stress levels between students studying in private and government schools.

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