

Gender and Institutional Context Differences in Stress Dimensions among School-Going Adolescents

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Abstract

Psychological stress among school going adolescents varies across demographic and institutional context. This study assessed gender and school-type based differences for multiple dimensions of stress in three schools in a state in central India. A cross sectional study was conducted among 1141 school students from three schools. Stress levels were assessed for: Pressure, frustration, anxiety, physical stress, overall stress. Stress levels were categorised as low, moderate, and high. Associations between stress levels, gender, and school type were analysed using chi-square tests. Among the participants, 717 (62.83%) were female and 424 (37.10%) were males. Females reported significantly higher levels of pressure, frustration, anxiety, and physical stress compared to males (all $p < 0.01$). Overall stress levels did not differ significantly by gender ($p = 0.195$). Stress levels across all dimensions were significantly associated with school type (all $p < 0.01$). Strikingly, female students from the special school consistently demonstrated higher moderate-to-high stress levels across most dimensions while females from Co-ed schools exhibited lower stress levels. Per our study significant gender and school type related differences exist in specific stress dimensions among school going adolescents. Female students appear to be more vulnerable to elevated stress levels highlighting the need for targeted, school specific mental health interventions.

Keywords

School-related stress, Academic pressure, Psychosocial outcomes, Perceived stress, Adolescent-stress.