ADOLESCENT EXPERIENCES OF COPING WITH LIFE STRESS

ABSTRACT

In this study a correlational design was used to determine the role of life style, parental pressure, peer group effect and family social support in determining stress and coping of adolescents. The following Hypotheses were formulated.

HYPOTHESES:

1. There exists a negative relationship between family social support and stress among adolescents.
2. There exists a relationship between family social support and coping strategies among adolescents.
3. There is a significant relation between life style and stress among adolescents.
4. There exists a relationship between life style and coping strategies among adolescents.
5. There exists a relationship between peer group effect and stress among adolescents.
6. There exists a relationship between peer group effect and coping strategies among adolescents.
7. There is a significant relation between parental pressure and stress among adolescents.
8. There exists a relationship between parental pressure and coping strategies among adolescents.

SAMPLE:
The sample of the study consisted of 300 college students (girls and boys); with the age range of 12-18 years. The sample was taken randomly from different schools and colleges of Agra city. It consisted of 150 girls and 150 boys. The socio-economic status of the subjects was at least middle class. Their parents’ income per month was between 25,000 to 45,000 per month.
TOOLS:
The following Tools were used (1) Life Style Scale by Chaudhary and Das (2008) was used. Life Style Scale has five categories (i) Food Intake Behaviour (ii) Control on Alcohol Consumption Behaviour (iii) Physical Activity (iv) Sleeping Behaviour and (v) Spiritual Behaviour. (2) Parental Pressure Questionnaire (3) Peer Group Effect Questionnaire (4) Family Social Support Questionnaire and (5) Special Stress Scale for Teenagers were constructed and standardized by the investigator herself. For measuring coping, Coping Strategies Scale by Carver, Scheier and Weintraub (1987) was used.

ANALYSIS: Multiple Regression Analysis

RESULTS:

Table: 1 Multiple Regression Coefficient for Predictors of Stress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Regression Coefficients (b)</th>
<th>Beta (β)</th>
<th>Correlation ( r )</th>
<th>Coefficient of Determination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X1 Food Intake Behavior</td>
<td>12.52063</td>
<td>-0.14296</td>
<td>-0.04164</td>
<td>0.0605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X2 Control on Alcohol Consumption Behavior</td>
<td>-0.50722</td>
<td>-0.08822</td>
<td>-0.09111</td>
<td>0.008037779</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X3 Physical Activity</td>
<td>.0122</td>
<td>0.030206</td>
<td>0.001056</td>
<td>.00003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X4 Sleeping Behavior</td>
<td>.0157</td>
<td>0.055815</td>
<td>0.000307</td>
<td>.000017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X5 Spiritual Behavior</td>
<td>-0.31832</td>
<td>-0.11541</td>
<td>-0.09299</td>
<td>0.010732641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X6 Parental Pressure</td>
<td>-0.02392</td>
<td>-0.01905</td>
<td>-0.01591</td>
<td>0.000303208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X7 Peer Group Effect</td>
<td>0.283262</td>
<td>0.10533</td>
<td>0.082706</td>
<td>0.008711435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X8 Family social Support</td>
<td>-0.00397</td>
<td>-0.03397</td>
<td>-0.04612</td>
<td>0.001566804</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R square=$\sum_r \beta = 0.031919972$
**Regression Equation for Criterion Variable (Y, Stress) and predictor variables** X1 (Food intake behavior), X2 (Control on alcohol consumption behavior), X3 (Physical activity), X4 (Sleeping behavior), X5 (Spiritual behavior), X6 (Parental pressure), X7 (Peer group effect), X8 (Family social support).

\[
\begin{align*}
Y &= B_1 X_1 + B_2 X_2 + B_3 X_3 + B_4 X_4 + B_5 X_5 + B_6 X_6 + B_7 X_7 + B_8 X_8 + C \\
Y &= (-0.142) X_1 + (-0.507) X_2 + (0.0122) X_3 + (0.0157) X_4 + (-0.318) X_5 \\
&\quad + (-0.023) X_6 + (0.283) X_7 + (-0.003) X_8 + 12.520
\end{align*}
\]

Multiple Regression Analysis indicates that Control on alcohol consumption behavior has the strongest negative contribution (b= -0.507) in determination of criterion variable i.e. stress. Spiritual behavior is the 2\textsuperscript{nd} highest negative contributor in the determination of stress. Peer group effect is the 3\textsuperscript{rd} highest positive contributor in determination of stress. Food intake behavior has the 4\textsuperscript{th} highest contribution in the determination of stress. Parental pressure, Sleeping behavior and Physical activity have negligible contribution in the determination of stress. Family social support has very low contribution in the determination of stress.
Table: 2 Multiple Regression Coefficient for Predictors of Coping

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Regression Coefficients (b)</th>
<th>Beta (β)</th>
<th>Correlation (r)</th>
<th>Coefficient of Determination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>31.67645</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Food Intake Behavior</td>
<td>0.060931</td>
<td>0.022413</td>
<td>0.041136</td>
<td>0.000922002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control on Alcohol Consumption Behavior</td>
<td>0.049389</td>
<td>0.01084</td>
<td>0.006108</td>
<td>.00006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Activity</td>
<td>0.115121</td>
<td>0.035951</td>
<td>0.023424</td>
<td>0.000842122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleeping Behavior</td>
<td>0.082667</td>
<td>0.036907</td>
<td>0.025089</td>
<td>0.000925963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Behavior</td>
<td>0.305778</td>
<td>0.14001</td>
<td>0.12414</td>
<td>0.017382065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental Pressure</td>
<td>0.020218</td>
<td>0.020341</td>
<td>0.000398</td>
<td>.000008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Group Effect</td>
<td>-0.133456</td>
<td>-0.06267</td>
<td>-0.084016</td>
<td>0.005265616</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family social Support</td>
<td>0.003703</td>
<td>0.040005</td>
<td>0.03149</td>
<td>0.001259759</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R square=∑r β = 0.026655682

Regression Equation for Criterion Variable (Y, coping) and Predictor Variables.

Y= B1X1+B2X2+B3X3+B4X4+B5X5+B6X6+B7X7+B8X8+C

Y= (0.060) X1 + (0.049) X2 + (0.115) X3 + (0.082) X4 + (0.305) X5

+ (0.020) X6 + (-0.133) X7 + (0.003) X8 + 31.676
Multiple Regression Analysis indicates that Spiritual behaviour has highest positive contribution (b=0.305) in determination of criterion i.e. coping. Peer group effect is the 2nd highest negative contributor in the determination of coping. Physical activity has 3rd highest positive contribution in the determination of coping. Sleeping behaviour is a moderate contribution in the determination of coping. Food intake behaviour, Control on alcohol consumption behaviour and Parental pressure have positive but low contribution in determination of coping. Family social support has very low contribution in the determination of coping.

ADDITIONAL FINDINGS:
In order to study the trend of changes in stress and strain at different levels of predictor variables, an in-depth analysis was also done.

CONCLUSION:
On the basis of results and discussion the following conclusions were made.

Contributors of Stress:
- Multiple regression analysis indicates that Control on Alcohol Consumption Behaviour is the strongest negative contributor in the determination of stress. Strong self control thus keeps the adolescents away from stress and those who do not have control over alcohol consumption and smoking etc. have highest level of stress.
- 2nd Highest negative contribution in the determination of stress was that of Spiritual Behaviour. This indicates that higher the adolescents’ involvement in spiritual behaviour lower is their level of stress. Adolescents with non-involvement is any type of spiritual behaviour generally do not have internal strength to deal with stressfull situation.
• The 3rd highest positive contribution in the determination of stress was that of Peer Group Effect. This shows that those adolescents who are more influenced by their peer groups have to face highest level of stress.

• The 4th highest contribution in the determination of adolescents’ stress is that of Food Intake Behaviour. The regression coefficient is negative, which shows that healthier the food intake behaviour of adolescents, lower is their stress.

• Physical Activity, Sleeping Behaviour and Parental Pressure have negligible contribution in determination of stress.

• Influence of Family Social Support, in no way makes any contribution in the determination of adolescents’ stress. Its contribution is almost zero.

So adolescents should be advised to avoid alcohol consumption. They are further advised to get involved in spiritual behaviour, to resist the influence of peer group and to take healthy food if they want to keep their stress at the minimum.

Contributors of Coping:

• Highest positive contributor for coping is Spiritual Behaviour. This proves that adolescents involved in spiritual activity have minimum of stress and even if they feel stress, spiritual activity acts as a coping strategy in dealing with stress. So adolescents are advised to include spiritual activities in their life style in order to remain free from stress. They get positive energy through spiritual behaviour, be it prayer, meditation or altruistic behaviour.

• The 2nd highest negative contributor is the Peer Group Effect in the determination of coping. The present study shows that the predictor variable peer group effect has a highly negative contribution in the determination of coping. This shows that peer group creates
problems in coping with stress. So adolescents should be advised to be cautious of the influence of their peer group, while they are dealing with stressful situations.

- The 3rd highest positive contribution in the determination of coping was that of **Physical Activity**. The present research findings indicate that physical activity has positive and high contribution in the prediction of coping of adolescents.

- **Sleeping Behaviour** has moderate positive contribution in determination of coping.

- **Food Intake Behaviour** has positive but low contribution in determination of coping. The present study shows that the predictor variable food intake behaviour has a positive but low contribution in the determination of coping.

- **Control on Alcohol Consumption Behaviour** has positive but low contribution in the determination of coping. Better the control on alcohol consumption behaviour, higher is the coping.

- **Parental Pressure** has low contribution in determination of coping.

- **Family Social Support** has positive but very low contribution in the determination of coping.

So it is concluded that spiritual behavior is highest positive contributor in determination of coping. Hence spiritual activity acts as a coping strategy in dealing with stress. Peer group is also important negative predictor in determination of coping. Since peers have a more powerful influence on adolescents as compared to families, peer group effect often creates problem in coping with stress. If peer group has unhealthy lifestyle, the adolescent will face problems in coping with stress.

So in order to cope with life stress, adolescents are advised to get be alert from peer group effect. Healthy life style is also helpful in coping with stress.