

IMPACT OF ACCEPTED & REJECTED BY PEER GROUP ON PERCEIVED STRESS AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT: *Everyone needs to belong to feel connected with others and be with others. The influence of peer whether positive or negative has critical importance in individual's life. The present research was conducted to examine the relationship of perceived stress and peer relationship with university students. Simple random sampling was used for this research. The sample of 200 (100 males and 100 female adults) was taken from university. Index of peer relation and the Perceived Stress Scale were used to collect data. For results, correlation and t-test were used. The findings of the research showed that there was a positive correlation between perceived stress and peer rejection and negative correlation between perceived stress and peer acceptance. Perceived stress was more in rejected university students. There is a significant correlation of Peer relation and perceived stress among university male and female students. Female students rejected by their peers had a greater degree of perceived stress than rejected male university students by their peers. The implications of study suggested that in educational institutions, there should be special trainings for such students to enhance the peers' understandings among students. There must be more leisure time activities, better interaction with the faculty and proper guidance, advisory services and peer counseling at the campus could do a lot to reduce the stress. Peer education and counseling would be an ideal solution for this problem.*

Key words: *peer relationship, perceived stress, students*

INTRODUCTION

Peer interaction leads to the positive social environment and moral growth also important for social development. Friendships are very much an important aspect of the individual's life. Understanding the nature of peer influence can help support youth as they enter into this period. Stress is a part of life. Students experience stress in developing friendships. Normal stress is not harmful, but if the stress level increases, it creates medical and social problems

Peer Relation. Peer gathering is a casual essential gathering of individuals who offer a comparable or level with status and who are for the most part of harshly the same age, had a tendency to go around and communicate inside the social total. Parts of a specific peer group frequently have comparative hobbies and backgrounds, reinforced by the reason of equivalence [1]. Everybody needs to have a place to feel joined with others and be with other people who offer disposition, interests, and circumstances that look like their own. Individuals pick peers who acknowledge and like them and see them in a good light. The impact of peer whether positive or negative has importance in individual's life [2]. Sullivan [3] developed a theory that students prefer to work with peers. As the student grows up and developed his/her peers and peer groups also increased. Students prefer the peers who have the same values and interest. Peer acceptance and friendships are unique builds and help youth advancement. Peer acceptance has been demonstrated to be connected with more prominent sentiments of having relations [4]. Peer acceptance and relations are imperative to youngsters' social and passionate improvement. Peer acknowledgement and fellowship give an extensive variety of learning and advancement open doors for youngsters. These incorporate fraternity, diversion, building social aptitudes, taking part in gathering critical thinking, and overseeing rivalry and clash. They likewise take into account examination toward oneself, enthusiastic development, and

moral and moral improvement. Folks, instructors, and different grownups are a decent wellspring of social backing for youngsters, however, it is in addition to other kids that children figure out how to connect with every other. Peer acceptance is the degree to which a kid or juvenile is socially acknowledged by associates. It includes the level of companionship fame and the simplicity with which a youngster or grown-up can start and keep up agreeable peer relationships. As an individual grows up peer relationship and friendship become important. Positive peer relationships and friendships leads to positive and good self-image, increase social competency and ability of academic achievements also has an impact against negative family troubles. Individuals become aggressive, hyper, isolated and depressed if they find difficult to develop such relationships [5]. A standout amongst the most inadequate issues of youth for both children and adults - is peer rejection. The inconvenience of social quiet, the results of peer rejection are regularly deep rooted and can essentially affect families and groups. Socially rejected people are for the most part less profitable as grown ups and more inclined to participate in behavior that can interfere with or even debilitate the prosperity of others [6]. Peer rejection simply means not being liked or even accepted by peers. Positive nomination means an adolescent is someone a peer most likes and a negative nomination means the adult is most disliked by peers. Rejected adults represent those who receive fewer positive nominations and many negative nominations. Peer rejection can be assessed by other peers' observations of an adult's behavior or teachers observations of behavioral patterns. Rejection or victimization by peers may become a source of significant stress for individuals, contributing to feelings of loneliness and low self-esteem. In addition, peer rejection can increase in a negative developmental curved. That is, when an individual, with poor social skills become rejected, they are often excluded from positive interactions with peer's

interactions that are critical for the learning of social skills [7].

Stress. Stress is anything that stimulates and increases our level of alertness. Stress is a part of day to day living. Students experience stress meeting academic demands, adjusting to a new living environment, or developing friendships. Stress is not necessarily harmful. Mild forms of stress can act as a motivator and energizer. However, if the stress level is too high, medical and social problems can result [8]. Stress is a normal physical response to events that make you feel exposed or upset your balance in some way. When you sense danger, whether it's real or imagined the body's defenses kick into high gear in a rapid, automatic process known as the fight-or-flight-or-freeze reaction, or the stress response [9]. Stress can be external and related to the environment. Selye [10] observed body reaction of human toward stress. He explores that fight and flight response is first on reaction stage, which he named general adaptation syndrome. Stress consists of three stages: alarm reaction, resistance and exhaustion. The first stage is related to fight and flight response, the second is related to physiological reaction and last one leads to the severe effects of stress. The importance of mental health among university students increase in world. Students face anxiety, depression, stress in friendships and educational pressures, they face challenges as hurdles in goal achievement, environmental change and many other [11].

Previous studies suggested as [12] Study on decision assignments, and also peer designations for fellowship, Aggression and the anxiety level was high in those understudies who are rejected by their associate and turn out to be less prosocial in contrast to others. These discoveries are likewise examined inside of the system of multifaceted contrasts in kids' associate relations [13]. A study and their discovering support our outcomes Rejection prompts enthusiastic issues and bothered well being of a person. Concentrate additionally investigate that people who are rejected experience the ill effects of antagonistic and offensive sentiments and low constructive feelings than the individuals who are acknowledged. [14]Peer connection anxiety and social acknowledgment, and they discovered results as a confirmation that side effects of sadness and anxiety are specifically identified with the individual's apparent social acknowledgment. The distinction in the middle of real and saw peer acknowledgment was considered. The youngsters who confronted low acknowledgment or thought little of their acknowledgment were moderately discouraged and discernment. Be that as it may, the kids working for the most part straightforwardly influenced by the detesting of their colleagues. It appears that connection related and status-related anxiety are two distinctive, yet associated, measurements of anxiety in the companion setting. Connection condition and push identified with companion connection was tried by relating two measurements of anxiety with exploitation and friend's support [15].

Rationale of the study

People choose friends who accept and like them and see them

in a favorable light. Adults began to go through physical, mental, emotional and social changes. Peers play a vital role in their life, therefore people who are accepted by peers, they have a good sense of self. Forming a satisfying friendship, relationships with members of their peers is an important developmental task for a student that will have an important effect on friends and relations. The main purpose of this study is to check the level of perceived stress level in those male and female students who are rejected or accepted by their peers. The purpose of conducting this study is to explore that how acceptance and rejection's effect on an individual perceived stress.

Objectives of the study

1. To explore the relation between peer relationship and level of perceived stress among university students.
2. To explore the gender difference in peer relation and perceived stress.

Hypothesis

1. Perceived Stress will be positively correlated with peer rejection and negatively correlate with peer acceptance.
2. Perceived stress level and peer relations will vary in terms of gender among university students.

METHOD

Participants

The sample consists of 200 university students. 100 males and 100 female adult students from Multan university was selected. A simple random sampling technique was used to collect the data.

Instruments

Index of Peer Relationship. The scale consists 25 no of items. IPR [16] is a five point Likert scale consisted on two subscale positive items and negative items. The cutoff score for IPR is 30. The minimum score could be zero and maximum score could be 100. A score of 30 or bellow on IPR indicate accepted by their peers and the score of 31 or above on IPR considered as rejected by their peers

Perceived stress scale. The instrument used in the current study was perceived stress scale (PSS) [17] Pss-10 scores are obtained by reversing the score on the four positive items, item e.g. (0=4, 1=3, 2=2, 3=1, 4=0) and then summing across all items. Item 4,5,7,8 are the positive state item. Individual score on the PSS 0 to 13 would be considered low stress. A score ranging from 14-26 would be considered moderate stress. Score ranging 27-40 would be considered high perceived stress level

Procedure

The booklet including informed consent and required demographic variables sheet, index of peer relation (IPR) and perceived stress scale (PSS) was administered to a sample of 200 adult students. Inform consent was provided to every participant. The participants were given instructions to fill questionnaire. Students required demographic information was private in a separately age, gender. Statistical analysis was done by SPSS (Statistical package for social sciences).

RESULTS

Table 1

Descriptive statistic of participants

| Demographics | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | SD |
|--------------------------------|-----|---------|---------|------|------|
| Gender | 200 | 1 | 2 | .500 | .501 |
| Socioeconomic status | 200 | 1 | 3 | 2.09 | .767 |
| Accepted and rejected by peers | 200 | 1 | 2 | 1.70 | .459 |

Table 2

Correlation coefficient on the scale of Perceived stress and sub categories of Peer Relation scale (N=200)

| Scales | Stress | Peer Acceptance | Peer rejection |
|-----------------|--------|-----------------|----------------|
| Stress | -- | -.104 | .448** |
| Peer Acceptance | | -- | -.002 |

*Note. **P < 0.01*

This table shows correlation between perceived stress and sub category of peer relation, peer rejection and shows negative correlation between Perceived stress and peer acceptance among university students.

Table 3

Correlation coefficient on the scale of Peer relation and Perceived stress in Males and females (N= 200).

| Scale | Perceived stress | | |
|---------------|------------------|--------|--------|
| | Gender | Male | Female |
| Peer Relation | Male | .709** | --- |
| | Female | --- | .796** |

*Note **p < 0.01*

The results of the table show that there is a significant correlation of Peer relation and perceived stress among university male students. There is also a correlation between Peer relation and perceived stress among university female students.

Table 4

Linear regression analysis explaining impact of Accepted by peers on Perceived stress

| Variables | R ² | ΔR ² | B | SE | β | t | P |
|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|--------|------|------|------|------|
| Constant | .005 | .012 | 11.713 | 3.18 | | | |
| Peer Acceptance | | | .063 | .115 | .072 | .550 | .585 |

R²= R square, ΔR²= adjusted R square, P>0.05

Present table of linear regression analysis indicate that there is no significant impact of accepted peers in peer relation on perceived stress among students.

Table 5

Linear regression analysis explaining impact of rejected by peers on perceived stress

| Variables | R ² | ΔR ² | B | SE | β | t | P |
|----------------|----------------|-----------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Constant | .201 | .195 | 9.78 | 2.04 | | | |
| Peer rejection | | | .190 | .033 | .448 | 5.82 | .000 |

R²= R square, ΔR²= adjusted R square, P<0.05

Table shows that rejected peers has more stress. There was significant impact of peer rejection on perceived stress.

Table 6

Mean, Standard Deviation, t-value, p- value on the scale of perceived stress among university students (N=200).

| Groups | N | M | SD | t | P |
|--------|-----|-------|------|--------|------|
| Male | 100 | 18.05 | 5.02 | | |
| Female | 100 | 19.95 | 5.81 | -2.473 | .014 |

Note. N=number of students; M= mean; SD=standard deviation; df = 98 p> 0.05

This table indicates significant difference in the scores for perceived stress in males and females university students.

Table 7

Mean, Standard Deviation, t-value, p- value on peer relation among male and female students (N=100).

| Groups | N | M | SD | t | P |
|--------|----|-------|------|-------|-------|
| Male | 35 | 17.14 | 4.24 | | |
| Female | 65 | 17.15 | 5.03 | -.011 | 0.495 |

Note. N=number of students; M= mean; SD=standard deviation;df = 98 p> 0.05

This table indicates significant difference in the scores for perceived stress in Female adult students have high levels of perceived stress then males students.

DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to explore the peer relation and effect of perceived stress on those adults that were accepted and rejected by their peer. The study was conducted to find out the relationship of perceived stress and peer relationship among adult's males and females.

It was proved and checked by using two scales. One was based on ten questions to check the level of perceived and second was based on twenty five questions to measure the peer relationship.

First hypothesis shows that, there is a positive correlation between perceived stress and peer relation. Peer rejection showed positive correlation with perceived stress and peer acceptance showed negative correlation with perceived stress. The results explore that stress level is more in those university students who are rejected by their peers as compare to those university students who are accepted by peers in a relationship. The results of the table 2 show that there is significant correlation between peer relation and perceived stress among university male students. There is also a positive correlation between Peer relation and perceived stress among university female students.[12] conducted a study and their funding support our results Rejection leads to emotional problems and disturbed wellbeing of individuals. \the study also explore that individuals who are rejected suffer from negative and unpleasant feelings and low positive emotions than those who are accepted. [18] Study findings also support our result that peer rejection is an important factor that leads to stressed behavior.

The second hypothesis of the study was that Perceived stress level and peer relations will vary in terms of gender among university students. The findings of table 3 showed that hypothesis is supported in term of gender there is a significant difference in male and female in their scores. This explore that female rejected by their peers have more stress as

compared to male students. Peer relations are almost same in both gender and there is no significant difference in scores of male and female university students. [19] a study on gender difference in peer relationship their findings support our hypothesis that there is significant gender differences in relationships. this research explores that perceived stress and peer relationship are correlated and rejected females adults feel more stress than rejected adults males. This stress causes bad impact on their lives. It is important to reduce causes of rejection and perceived stress.

CONCLUSION

Research on students' stress and its relationship with peer relations has been conducted; there is a strong positive correlation in perceived stress and peer relation. The study examined the level of perceived stress in the accepted peer and rejected adult's peers. There was a significant difference in peer accepted adults and peer rejected adults. Adults rejected by their peers showed more level of perceived stress than adults accepted by their peers. In peer relation level of rejection is more than level of acceptance. Rejected female adults showed more stress than male. For female students the five most frequently endorsed stresses were test pressure, financial problems, being rejected by someone. Socioeconomic status does not play significant role in the perceived Stress of university students, but it is significant in peer relation.

Implications. In educational institutions, there should be special trainings for such students to enhance the peers' understandings among students. Therefore, it would seem most beneficial to institute a systematic, large-scale, multifaceted, and ongoing public health campaign to educate parents about their children, one that draws on the collective resources and expertise of healthcare professionals, scientists, governmental agencies, community organizations, schools, religious institutions, and the mass media. For university students should be offered more opportunities for recreational and leisure time activities, such as weekly movie shows, event celebrations, excursion tours and musical concerts. Physical activities, sports and socialization are indispensable for individual growth and to foster personal development. Besides more approachable and functional student advisors, peer education and counseling would be an ideal solution for this problem.

Limitation and future recommendations

External validity. Representative sample should be increased for getting more reliable and valid results. The research should be conducted on children and adolescents peer groups. There should be lot of time given to make study more perfectly or extensively reliable

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