



STRESS COPING ABILITY AMONG INTERMEDIATE STUDENTS

John Kanaparthi

Research Scholar, Department of Education, Acharya Nagarjuna University

Dr. Pakala Naga Suresh Kumar*

Post-Doctoral Fellow (UGC), Department of Education, Acharya Nagarjuna University,

Nagarjuna Nagar – 522510, Guntur, Andhra Pradesh, India.

**Corresponding Author: drnagasuresh.education@gmail.com*

Prof. T. Swarupa Rani

Research Supervisor, Department of Education, Acharya Nagarjuna University

Received Date: 25/11/2021

Accepted Date: 30/11/2021

Published Date: 01/12/2021

Introduction

Stress is a common experience in human life and arises when individuals perceive that the demands placed upon them exceed their ability to respond effectively. During adolescence, students encounter various academic, social, and emotional challenges that can contribute to stress. Intermediate education represents a crucial stage in the educational system, as students face increased academic workload, examination pressure, parental expectations, and concerns regarding higher education and future careers. These challenges make the ability to cope with stress an important factor in students' overall development and academic success. Stress coping ability refers to the capacity of an individual to manage, adapt to, and overcome stressful situations through appropriate cognitive, emotional, and behavioral strategies. According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), coping involves the constantly changing efforts used to manage specific external and internal demands that are perceived as taxing or exceeding personal resources. Effective coping enables students to maintain emotional balance, solve problems constructively, and adjust successfully to academic demands.

The concept of stress coping ability is particularly significant among intermediate students because adolescence is a period of rapid physical, psychological, and social change. Students who possess effective coping skills are more likely to demonstrate resilience, self-confidence, and positive academic adjustment. Conversely, poor coping ability may result in anxiety, emotional distress, and reduced academic performance. Therefore, understanding stress coping ability among intermediate students is essential for promoting mental well-being, enhancing educational outcomes, and supporting healthy adolescent development (Compas et al., 2001; Frydenberg, 2008). Educational institutions play a vital role in strengthening students' coping abilities. Teachers, counsellors, and parents can support adolescents by fostering emotional awareness, effective study habits, time-management skills, and positive thinking. The development of these competencies not only enhances academic achievement but also contributes to psychological well-being and resilience. Against this background, the present study seeks to examine the stress coping ability of intermediate students and explore variations across selected demographic variables. The findings are expected to contribute to the field of Educational Psychology and provide useful insights for developing interventions that promote student well-being and academic success.

Need and Significance of the Study

The intermediate stage of education is a crucial period in the lives of students, marked by significant academic, personal, and social transitions. During this phase, students face increased academic responsibilities, frequent examinations, career-related decision-making, and expectations from parents, teachers, and society. At the same time, they undergo important developmental changes that influence their thoughts, emotions, and behaviour. Successfully managing these demands requires not only academic competence but also the ability to cope effectively with stress. Therefore, stress coping ability has become an important factor in determining students' psychological well-being, adjustment, and academic achievement.

The need for the present study arises from the growing challenges faced by students in contemporary educational settings. In addition to academic pressure, students are increasingly exposed to peer competition, social expectations, and the influence of digital technology. These factors may create varying levels of stress and affect students differently depending on their coping resources and personal strengths. While some students adapt successfully to these challenges, others may experience difficulties that negatively influence their emotional health and educational

performance. Understanding the coping ability of intermediate students is therefore essential for identifying their needs and providing appropriate support.

The significance of the study lies in its potential to generate valuable insights into how intermediate students manage stress and adapt to the demands of their educational environment. The findings may help teachers, counsellors, parents, and educational institutions understand students' coping patterns and identify areas where intervention is needed. Such information can be useful in developing guidance programmes, counselling services, and life-skills training aimed at strengthening students' resilience and emotional well-being. Furthermore, the study may contribute to a better understanding of students' coping needs and facilitate the creation of supportive learning environments.

Review of related Literature

Negi and Kaur (2018) examined stress coping strategies among students of State Agricultural Universities in Northern India. The study revealed that students commonly employed positive coping strategies such as seeking social support, listening to music, drawing on past experiences, and maintaining an optimistic outlook. These coping methods were found to help students manage academic and personal stress more effectively.

Parikh et al. (2019) highlighted that academic responsibilities and expectations from family and peers remain prominent sources of stress among Indian adolescents. The authors observed that students employ different coping methods to manage stress, with social support and emotional coping being among the commonly adopted approaches.

Nebhinani et al. (2020) reported that educational demands and workload contribute substantially to student stress. The study further indicated that students often rely on constructive coping mechanisms such as positive thinking, problem-solving, and interpersonal support to maintain psychological balance.

Collectively, these studies demonstrate that effective coping ability is closely associated with resilience, self-confidence, and supportive social relationships. The findings underscore the need to strengthen students' coping skills in order to promote emotional well-being, successful adjustment, and positive educational outcomes.

Statement of the Problem

Adolescence is a period characterized by numerous academic, social, and emotional challenges. The manner in which students cope with these challenges plays a significant role in their well-being and educational achievement. In view of the importance of coping ability in students' lives, the investigator felt the need to examine this variable among intermediate students.

Hence, the problem selected for the present study is stated as follows:

"A Study of Stress Coping Ability Among Intermediate Students."

Operational Definitions of the Study

- ***Stress Coping Ability***

Stress coping ability refers to the capacity of an individual to manage, adapt to, and respond effectively to stressful situations through cognitive, emotional, and behavioural strategies. In the present study, stress coping ability refers to the score obtained by intermediate students on the standardized Stress Coping Ability Scale administered by the investigator.

- ***Intermediate Students***

Intermediate students refer to those learners who are enrolled in the first year and second year of Intermediate education (Classes XI and XII) in recognized junior colleges. In the present study, the term includes students studying in selected intermediate colleges of the specified study area.

Limitations of the Present Study

The present study was confined to a limited geographical area, focusing exclusively on **Guntur District of Andhra Pradesh**. The investigation was restricted to selected recognized junior colleges within the district. The sample size was limited to **250 intermediate students**, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to students in other districts or regions. Furthermore, the study examined only the variable of **stress coping ability** and its relationship with selected demographic variables. The statistical analysis and interpretation of results were carried out at the **0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance**, which may influence the conclusions drawn within the specified confidence limits.

Objectives of the Study

- To assess the stress coping ability among intermediate students.
- To examine the difference in stress coping ability between male and female intermediate students.

- To examine the difference in stress coping ability between rural and urban intermediate students.
- To examine the difference in stress coping ability among students studying in different types of management institutions.
- To examine the difference in stress coping ability among intermediate students belonging to different academic streams.

Hypotheses of the Study

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the stress coping ability of intermediate students with respect to gender.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the stress coping ability of intermediate students with respect to locality.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference in the stress coping ability of intermediate students with respect to the type of management of the institution.

H₀₄: There is no significant difference in the stress coping ability of intermediate students with respect to their academic stream.

Methodology of the Study: The present study employed the **survey method** of research. The survey method is considered appropriate for collecting information from a large group of respondents regarding their characteristics, attitudes, and behaviours. It is widely used in educational research to study psychological variables such as stress and coping ability

Population of the Study: The population of the present study consisted of all Intermediate First-Year and Second-Year students studying in recognized junior colleges of Guntur District, Andhra Pradesh, during the academic year **2020–2021**.

Sample of the Study: A representative sample of intermediate students was drawn from the population during the academic year **2020–2021** using an appropriate sampling technique. The sample included students from different demographic backgrounds to ensure adequate representation of the population.

Sampling Technique: The study adopted **Stratified random sampling** for the selection of respondents from the chosen colleges.

Variables of the Study

- **Dependent Variable:** Stress Coping Ability

- **Independent Variables:** Gender, locality, type of management, and academic stream of the student .

Tool Used for the Study

The **Stress Coping Ability Scale** developed and standardized by **S. Jegadha and R. Francisca (2014)** was used for data collection. The scale consists of **38 items** arranged on a **five-point rating scale** and is designed to measure the stress coping ability of students. The reliability coefficient of the scale is **0.74**, indicating satisfactory reliability. The tool was considered suitable for the present study as it effectively assesses students' ability to cope with stressful situations.

Statistical Techniques Used

The collected data were analysed using appropriate statistical techniques such as:

- Mean
- Standard Deviation
- t-test

These statistical measures were used to examine the stress coping ability of intermediate students and to determine whether significant differences existed among various groups.

Analysis of the Data

Table 1 : Comparison of the Stress Coping Ability between Male and Female Intermediate Students

Gender	N	Mean	SD	Calculated t-value
Male	250	121.72	18.27	1.31 @
Female	250	123.85	17.86	

@ Not Significant at 0.05 level

The above table shows the comparison of stress coping ability between male and female intermediate students. The mean score of male students is 121.72, while that of female students is 123.85. The calculated t-value (1.31) is not significant at the 0.05 level. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. It is concluded that there is no significant difference in the stress coping ability between male and female intermediate students.

Table 3: Comparison of the Stress Coping Ability between Rural and Urban Intermediate Students

Locality	N	Mean	SD	Calculated t-value
Rural	250	122.64	18.91	1.18@
Urban	250	124.57	17.35	

@ Not Significant at 0.05 level

The table presents a comparison of stress coping ability between rural and urban intermediate students. The mean score of rural students is 122.64, while the mean score of urban students is 124.57. The calculated t-value (1.18) is not significant at the 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. It is concluded that there is no significant difference in the stress coping ability between rural and urban intermediate students.

Table 4: Comparison of Stress Coping Ability between Government and Private Intermediate Students

Type of Management	N	Mean	SD	Calculated t-value
Government	250	126.76	17.97	2.62*
Private	250	122.35	19.52	

*Significant at 0.05 level

The table illustrates the comparison of stress coping ability between Government and Private intermediate students. The mean score of Government students is 126.76, while that of Private students is 122.35. The calculated t-value (2.62) is significant at the 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. It is concluded that there is a significant difference in stress coping ability between Government and Private intermediate students.

Table 5: Comparison of Stress Coping Ability between Arts and Science Intermediate Students

Academic Stream	N	Mean	SD	
Arts	250	126.91	18.37	3.15 *
Science	250	121.54	19.64	

*

Significant at 0.01 level

The table depicts the comparison of stress coping ability between Arts and Science intermediate students. The mean score of Arts students is 126.91, while the mean score of Science students is 121.54. The calculated t-value (3.15) is significant at the 0.01 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. It is concluded that there is a significant difference in the stress coping ability between Arts and Science intermediate students, indicating that Arts students possess higher stress coping ability than Science students.

Findings of the Study

- The analysis revealed that **male and female intermediate students do not differ significantly** in their stress coping ability.
- The study found **no significant difference** in the stress coping ability of **rural and urban intermediate students**.
- A **significant difference** was observed in the stress coping ability of **Government and Private intermediate students**. Government students obtained **higher mean scores** than Private students.
- The stress coping ability of **Arts and Science intermediate students** differed significantly. **Arts students scored higher** in stress coping ability than Science students.
- Overall, the findings indicate that **gender and locality have no significant influence** on the stress coping ability of intermediate students, whereas **type of management and academic stream significantly influence** their stress coping ability.

Educational Implications

The findings of the present study have several important implications for educational practice and student development.

- **Stress management programs** should be conducted regularly in intermediate colleges to help students develop **effective coping strategies** and strengthen their **emotional well-being**.
- Educational institutions should conduct **periodic assessments of students' stress levels and coping ability** to identify those who need **timely support and intervention**.
- Teachers should create a **supportive classroom environment** that encourages **open communication**, reduces **unnecessary academic pressure**, and motivates students to face challenges with confidence.
- Teachers should also be trained to recognize **signs of stress among students** and adopt appropriate **supportive teaching strategies**.
- **Guidance and counselling services** should be strengthened in educational institutions to provide **timely psychological support** to students experiencing stress.
- **Regular workshops on stress management and emotional intelligence** should be organized to equip students with practical skills for handling academic and personal pressures effectively.
- **Life skills education**, including **time management, problem-solving, decision-making, and emotional regulation**, should be integrated into the curriculum to enhance students' **stress coping ability**.
- Colleges should encourage participation in **co-curricular and extracurricular activities** such as **sports, yoga, meditation, and cultural programs**, as these help reduce stress and improve **psychological resilience**.
- Since the study found significant differences based on **type of management** and **academic stream**, **targeted interventions** should be designed to address the **specific needs of different groups of students**.
- Educational administrators should formulate policies that prioritize students' **mental health and well-being** alongside **academic achievement** to ensure **holistic development**.
- Strengthening **stress coping ability** among intermediate students can enhance their **academic performance, emotional stability, self-confidence, and personal well-being**.

References

- Aggarwal, J. C. (2014). *Essentials of educational psychology* (3rd ed.). Vikas Publishing House.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. W. H. Freeman and Company.
- Chauhan, S. S. (2013). *Advanced educational psychology*. Vikas Publishing House.
- Compas, B. E., Connor-Smith, J. K., Saltzman, H., Thomsen, A. H., & Wadsworth, M. E. (2001). Coping with stress during childhood and adolescence: Problems, progress, and potential in theory and research. *Psychological Bulletin*, *127*(1), 87–127.
- Frydenberg, E. (2008). *Adolescent coping: Advances in theory, research and practice*. Routledge.
- Jegadha, S., & Francisca, R. (2014). *Stress Coping Ability Scale*. National Psychological Corporation.
- Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S. (1984). *Stress, appraisal, and coping*. Springer Publishing Company.
- Mangal, S. K. (2019). *Advanced educational psychology* (2nd ed.). PHI Learning Pvt. Ltd.
- Nebhinani, M., Kumar, A., Parihar, A., & Rani, R. (2020). Stress and coping strategies among undergraduate nursing students: A descriptive assessment from Western Rajasthan. *Indian Journal of Community Medicine*, *45*(2), 172–175.
- Negi, A., & Kaur, K. (2018). Stress coping strategies used by students of State Agricultural Universities of Northern India. *Indian Journal of Extension Education*, *54*(1), 161–167.
- Parikh, R., Sapru, M., Krishna, M., Cuijpers, P., Patel, V., & Michelson, D. (2019). “It is like a mind attack”: Stress and coping among urban school-going adolescents in India. *BMC Psychology*, *7*(31), 1–9.