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Research Article

**A CROSS-SECTIONAL RESEARCH ON STRATEGIES OF  
STRESS MANAGEMENT TO FIGHT AGAINST DEPRESSION,  
ANXIETY AND STRESS AT EARLY STAGE OF LIFE**<sup>1</sup>Muhammad Muneeb Amjad, <sup>1</sup>Awais Ahmed, <sup>2</sup>Shumaila Qasim<sup>1</sup>House Officer in Allied Hospital Faisalabad<sup>2</sup>Woman Medical Officer (WMO) in THQ Hospital, 90SB, Sargodha**Abstract:**

**Objectives:** In our research study Secondary school students, ages (from 15 to 19) were included to find out the handling strategies for stress. Youngsters affected with anxiety, stress and depression in their early life, are prone to suffer from depression in upcoming future lives, by using inappropriate methods for its cure.

**Methods:** This research is a cross sectional survey among 1028 young students who were managed at Mayo Hospital, Lahore (September, 2016 to November, 2017).

**Results:** Among the participants About (26%) narrated that they shout, (20%) listen music, (13%) eating, (11%) like isolation, (13%) recite the Holy Quran, (8%) start fighting, (3%) exercise, and (6%) like talking to a person.

**Conclusion:** Maximum of our secondary school students, in the survey have focus on emotional responses due to stress instead of focusing problem resolving. Due to this there is a bigger chance to develop depression in the upcoming life. There is need for making strategies for early diagnosis of the stress. It is found that talking with friends and relatives can serve as a good tool against stress. Handling tactics for stress used by high school students were seen and put into two cadres, one focusing on problem and the other, focusing on emotions. In the cadre, problem focus, person works to change the conditions which are producing stressed for example putting extra efforts towards exam stress and working hard to gain marks. In the cadre, focusing on emotion, the person puts efforts to reduce the stress such as relaxing himself, yelling etc. Various researches have reported depression among student but the aspect of handling strategies to overcome their depression needs to be discussed. Our study aims to advise on better techniques for the young students to handle stress.

**Keywords:** Coping strategies, Adolescents and Stress.

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**INTRODUCTION:**

A reported was presented by UNICEF in (year 2011) according to which (20%) adolescents from all over the world population are having behavioral as well as mental problems [1]. Teen agers are most likely prone to depression which further leads to many diseases among them. It was reported in a study in UK that 4% – 6% of adolescents at any given point are depressed. Many researches stated that the young students who got depressed in their early life, gets permanently depression as disease in their life [2]. Depression in the initial stage of life provides its severe stage in the upcoming life as It rises suicidal tendencies and teen agers are at advanced hazard of psychological diseases like anxiety, depression, stress and disorders in conduct [3, 4]. There are many factors which cause stress, biological, cognitive and environmental, but coping styles matter a lot as managing strategies include cognitive or behavioral struggles are exercised to achieve the short and long term goals in life [5 – 8].

**METHODS:**

This research is a cross sectional survey among 1028 young students who were managed at Mayo Hospital, Lahore (September, 2016 to November, 2017). Students in the age bracket of (15 – 19 years) participated in the study, it was designed to examine the managing tactics youngsters have been adopting to

manage their stress. An Informed consent was provided to all the participants and ethical approval was acquired from the ethical board and school administration. A list was gained from the progress section to manage the strength in groups, the participants in grades (10 – 12) were included in the study. It was made sure that all the participants were mentally healthy. Participation was voluntary. A planned form was established to be filled in by the participants. The first part contained socio demographic information of the participants. Comprising over age, school grade, history of medication etc. The questionnaire was constructed based provided from field experts. The participants were asked what kind of strategies they used if they were stressed.

**RESULTS:**

Total (1028) young student participants were interviewed. A majority of the participants were of 15 – 18 years of age. At their last exam, (72%) students scored excellent grades, (22%) very good (5%) good (0.5%) fair grades. Among the participating students About (26%) narrated that they shout, (20%) listening to music, (13%) eating, (12%) isolation, (12%) reciting the Holy Quran, (8%) verbal argument or a fight. (3%) workout, and (6%) like talking to a friend.

Detailed outcomes are appended below:

**Table – I: Sociodemographic**

Variable	N (1028)	Percentage	
Age of respondents (years)	15	111	11
	16	352	34
	17	369	36
	18	183	18
	19	14	1
School Grade	10th	317	31
	11th	340	33
	12th	371	36
	Public	278	27
Type of accommodation living in	Villa	903	88
	Apartment	82	8
	One floor flat	31	3
	Others	12	1
Order of respondent among sibling	Eldest	259	25
	Middle	607	59
	Youngest	162	16
Father's education level	< 10th grade	16	2
	Secondary (11 -12)	75	7

	Bachelor's degree	366	36
	Master's degree	154	15
	Doctorate	247	24
	Others	170	17
Fathers Occupation	Doctor	98	10
	Teacher	85	8
	Engineer	156	15
	Business	248	24
	Military	81	8
	Banker	37	4
	Unemployed	13	1
	Others	310	30
Mother's education level	< 10th grade	79	8
	Secondary (11 -12)	252	25
	Bachelor's degree	467	45
	Master's degree	68	7
	Doctorate	45	4
	Others	21	2
	I don't know	96	9
Mother's Occupation	Doctor	28	3
	Teacher	263	26
	Housewife	569	55
	Business	31	3
	Banker	18	2
	Others	119	12
Academic scoring	Excellent (100 - 90%)	735	72
	Very good (89 – 80%)	229	22
	Good (79 – 70%)	53	5
	Fair (69 – 60%)	7	0.5
	Repeater (< 60%)	4	0.5

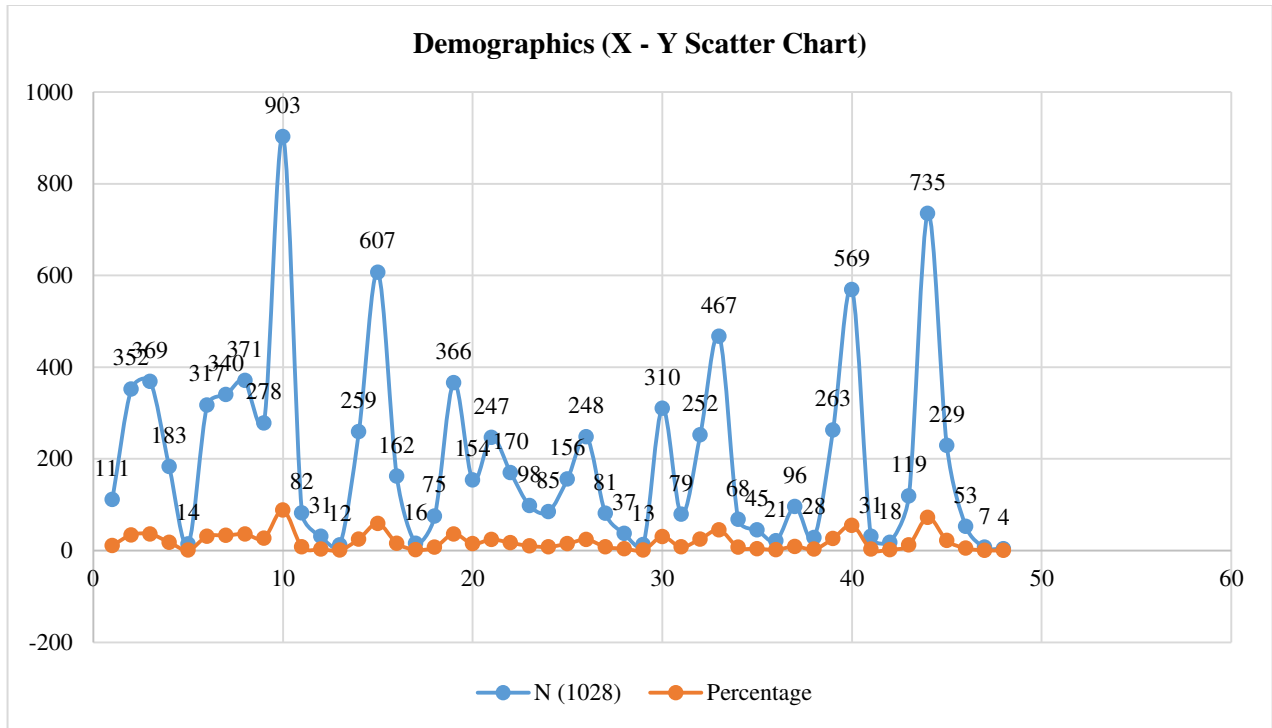
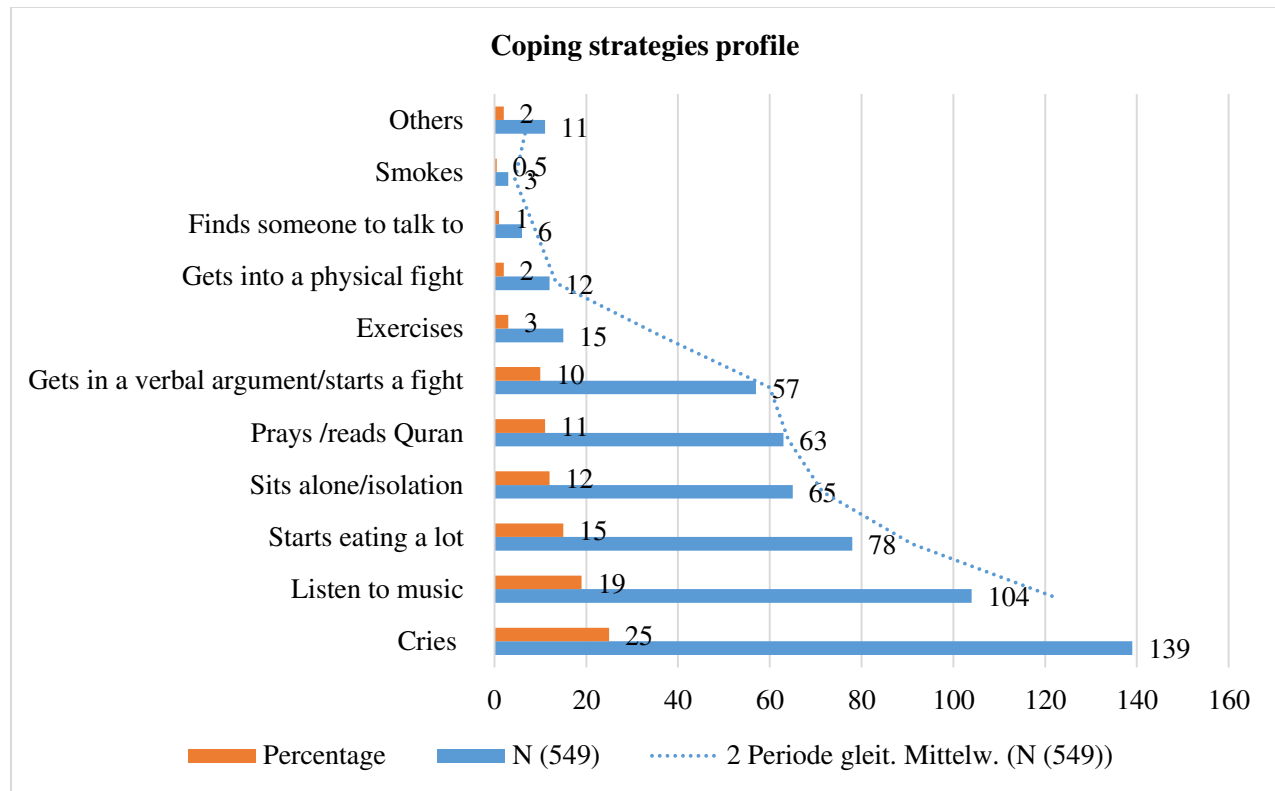


Table – II: Coping strategies profile of the study participants

Coping strategy	N (549)	Percentage
Cries	139	25
Listen to music	104	19
Starts eating a lot	78	15
Sits alone/isolation	65	12
Prays /reads Quran	63	11
Gets in a verbal argument/starts a fight	57	10
Exercises	15	3
Gets into a physical fight	12	2
Finds someone to talk to	6	1
Smokes	3	0.5
Others	11	2



### DISCUSSION:

Stress is part of life but as it is said that excess of everything is bad. Stress beyond a normal limit is also harmful for health and strategies in “how to cope up with the stress” play an even more vital role interfering with the health of a person. When the person adept wrong strategies for coping the stress than it has effects on mental health of young students and in upcoming adulthood life [11 – 12].

It was observed in our study that, the focus of girls in coping up the stress is more on emotions rather than finding a solution of problem. Instead of solution finding tact they bring themselves into solitude cutting off with the society and applying emotional ideas to reduce the stress. Its consequences could be in the shape of depression in the upcoming life. A study related that the trend to act passionately at times of stress shows that the person feels himself in a state of helplessness which further generates depression and more stress [13 – 14].

Such type of attitude toward stress increases it more instead of reducing it. When a person adopts emotional reaction against stress he finds it more difficult and gets a link with the other thought disorders including anxiety and depression. It was observed in our study that the participants have more focus on emotions instead of solving problem with a

tact like sharing the problem with a friend. No doubt the remedial strategies are found to have an effect on life, considering the problem and finding a solution for it such as sharing the issue, facing the origin of stress and energetic approach towards solution have resulted into reduced depression later on in upcoming adulthood [8 – 12]. Maximum out of the total participants reacted emotionally, like cutting off social interactions with the others and crying, simply trying to run away from the stress. Whereas, many others exposed focus on emotions by fighting and quarrelling. Others studies have also depicted that the trend of personal was more towards emotional tact rather than focusing on the issue behind the stress. To Overcome stress religious practices are also performed and the trend of religious practices was reported by female participants more than male participants in comparison [15]. Total (11%) participants of our study stated that they offer prayers and use religious customs to cope up stress and anxiety. It is seen that religious persons are in habit of forgiveness and they are more calm and mentally healthy as religiosity and mysticism plays a defensive role against progress of stress. In a research report in 2013, was published that there is mutual link between the religious aspect and spirituality and when we observe outcome for these we find self-esteem and reduced stress. Participants in our study, displayed that no one of them sought for the help from their family members but the studies

represents that good relations, sharing views and meeting with family members is a great source of happiness as well as helping in reducing stress. In strict culture like in our tribal areas and strict religious tribes as well in many rural areas females have to rely on brothers, father and husbands in the house leading to the good life due to confine social interaction. Restricted environment, limited mobility, limited interaction with peer group lead to a limited connection and conversation, hence reducing the exposure to large social interaction and forming a good ambience for interacting personal behaviors and friendships among them [16 – 18]. We are in need to create a happy ambience for a healthy person and society and for its establishment here are a few recommendations derived from our research study [19];

There is need for spreading consciousness among families, friends, and teachers About the real element that round about (31%) of young teenagers are stressed to much degree.

Furthermore, there is need for counselling to help these youngsters to know about the stress and anxiety. There is need for an in time diagnosis of stress among these adolescents. The effected students must be provided with the support to adopt a problem resolving strategies instead of being emotional. They must be focused to fight with the stress, not to fight with their emotions and they must attempt to decrease the growth of anxiety and depression growing its roots latter on in adulthood [20].

Moreover, at school level teachers can be prepared in diagnosing the initial symptoms of stress and depression among their students and they can help in early diagnosis and remedial measures.

There is need to train the students on how to efficiently compete stress as well as to get escape from its transformation into depression. Above all Parents can be educated and counselled to be supportive to the youngsters and can help their offspring at the time of tension. The effective link for sharing the issues and stress with the parents, especially with the mothers can effectively support young students. There is need to be emphasized on sharing practices in a way to handle stress, and talking about their routine issues. Well-known leaders and icons can help in counseling teenagers with regard to better ways to address their stress as the adolescents are much inspired with their favorite and successful personalities. Religious activities are a great source for grounding stress and anxiety. Religious aspect covers a major portion of our life and it encompasses home as well as school

environment. Religious activities are found very helpful in countering the anxiety and obtaining good motivational outcomes. There must be formulation of national policies which could promote healthy student mental health.

#### CONCLUSION:

Maximum of our secondary school students, in the survey have focus on emotional responses due to stress instead of focusing problem resolving. Due to this there is a bigger chance to develop depression in the upcoming life. There is need for making strategies for early diagnosis of the stress. It is found that talking with friends and relatives can serve as a good tool against stress. Handling tactics for stress used by high school students were seen and put into two cadres, one focusing on problem and the other, focusing on emotions. In the cadre, problem focus, person works to change the conditions which are producing stressed for example putting extra efforts towards exam stress and working hard to gain marks. In the cadre, focusing on emotion, the person puts efforts to reduce the stress such as relaxing himself, yelling etc. Various researches have reported depression among student but the aspect of handling strategies to overcome their depression needs to be discussed. Our study aims to advise on better techniques for the young students to handle stress.

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