



Stress and Coping Strategies of Youth: A Study at Venglai Community, Lunglei, Mizoram

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Abstract

Stress is physical and psychological response to a situation which is triggered by positive forces or a negative forces and it is a common problem faced by every individual on a daily basis. The causes and effects and how individual cope up with it differ depending on the mental health and wellbeing. Youth form a stage where they experience exposures and growth towards education, career and social and personal relationships. The level of stress among the youth is studied using Cohen's Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10). Mizo youth used more active coping style compared to avoidant coping style as the level of stress is moderate. The main coping strategies used by the youth are mainly confined to Personal Efforts, Creating problems, Social Networking, Substance Abuse, Isolation, and Resorting to recreational activities.

Keywords: *Stress, Coping Strategies, Youth, Mizo.*

Introduction

Stress is the physical and psychological response to a situation which is triggered by positive forces or negative forces which brings about changes both in the physical as well as mental wellbeing of an individual. The term stress refers to the body's response to certain situations. It is subjective in nature, so, something that is stressful for one person may not be stressful for someone else (Orzechowska A. et al., 2013). It can affect both physical and mental as well as behavior. Stress is dealt with everyone at some point in their lives, it maybe because of jobs, academics, family illness or financial constraints, these are common triggers for stress to occur in one's life. Stress can be positive or negative, positive stress also known as eustress occurred when the situation offers an opportunity to a person to gain something. It acts as a motivator for peak performance. Negative stress or distress occurred when a person faces social, physical, organizational and emotional problems (Cumplings & Dwyer, 2001).

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Coping refers to the individuals' ways of handling stress in his or her everyday life. It can be a response to physiological stressor which often involves negative event. It is the process of utilizing psychological and physical energy towards management of challenges in life (Shaikh et al., 2004). Coping mechanisms can be categorized into three broad categories such as appraisal focused, problem focused and emotion focused. Coping style of an individual can be positive as well as negative. Positive also known as adaptive coping style decreases the amount of stress which is perceived as well as experienced. In the mean time negative also known as maladaptive coping style moderates indicator of stress without addressing the real causes of problem or stressors (Guthrie & Black, 1997).

It has been observed that stress is a common problem faced by every individual on a daily basis which is being studied in order to understand the causes and effects it has on an individual and how it is being cope up with globally. As has been mentioned, stress occurs to any person, be it anywhere, or of any kinds, various researchers have taken up initiatives in order to explore, evaluate and come to a conclusions for solutions to promote mental health or well-being. A research conducted by Lim, Y. M., *et al.* (2013) in one of the University of Malaysia analyzed the perceived stress, coping strategies and general health of the students where it examines the relationship between perceived stress, coping capability, and general health of university students wherein there are 1785 respondents belonging to tertiary education institutions ranging from 18- 26 years of age. The result shows positive relationship among perceived stress, coping strategies and general health in which the students perceiving higher level of stress have higher score in the general health questionnaire (lower level of general health state) and higher coping strategy. Specifically, students having better coping strategy have better health state.

Rosenthal et al. (2008) Cultural stress among international students at an Australian University aims to determine the cultural stress encountered by students travelling to other countries to pursue higher education or to undertake university. Complex challenges faced by the youth specifically international students can cause stress to occur that affects the physical and psychological well-being, as well as their academic performance which can results in adjustment challenges. It is observed that the cultural distant which occurs between the home and the host of the students caused cultural stress in which the students have to adjust themselves according to the place he or she is in.

The coping mechanism or coping style of an individual when encountering stress determines the level of awareness the person has in regards to his or her stress. Irina Roncaglia (2014) in her paper Coping styles: A better understanding of Stress and anxiety in Individuals With Autism Spectrum Conditions Through Sports and Exercise Models aims to present an understanding of the coping mechanisms and coping styles adopted by individuals on the Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASC) and how stress leads to the adoption of different coping styles. Stressors in sports and performance literature, it is best defined as environmental demands encountered by an individual and have been categorized into three main groups; competitive, organizational and personal stressors (Mellalieu et al., 2009).

A growing problem all over the globe is the rise of stress among youth and this also concerns India as a whole because students have more stresses than ever. In fact, India has the highest rates of suicides among people aged between 15 and 29. Although the reasons are myriad but failure in examination, unemployment, and depression are some of the reasons why people put their life at risk, upto the extend that they commit suicide. Every day 6.23 students commits suicide due to peer pressure; In a recent survey, two thirds (66%) students reported that their parents pressurize them for better academic performance and the pressure from non- graduate parents was more compared to parents those were graduates and post-graduates. Stress is much a part of academic life of students in university and college due to increased expectations. Youngsters are more vulnerable to certain problems which are associated with stress due to academic as this is transitions period at individual and social level. Thus stressed caused due to academic pressure effect mental state and wellbeing of Indian students (Reddy et al., 2018).

As published in Business Today on 10th July 2018 nearly 9 out of 10 Indians suffer from stress. Stress levels are higher in Indian compared with other developed and emerging countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, China, Brazil and Indonesia. The survey further revealed that 95 percent of Indian millennial between the age group of 18-34 are stressed compared to the global average of 86 percent. Making matters worse, one in eight Indians have serious trouble in dealing with stress and nearly 75 percent of the Indian respondents said they don't feel comfortable talking to medical professionals about their stress.

Academic stress and mental health of Indian high school students and associations between various psychosocial factors and academic stress indicate that nearly two-thirds of the students reported stress due to academic pressure with no significance difference across gender, age, grade, and several other personal factors. Pressures from parents are felt by two thirds of the students for better performance in academics. It is observed that the pressure given by the parents differs according to the educational level of the parents respectively (Sibnath Deb et al., 2019).

Mizo youth are dynamics and took major role in social activities. Although the youth in Mizoram face stress it only level up to moderate stress. Academic factor of stress is the dominant factor and family condition also contributed a major role as stressors among the Mizo youth (Gonmei & Devendiran, 2017). With the Mizo society becoming more complex, the women are having more responsibilities at home and having managerial positions at work they are more vulnerable to stress as compared to men (Lalmuanzuali & Rinpari, 2018). Moreover stress among the Mizo youth could be identified with certain social problems like substance abuse especially alcohol and drugs (Vanrozama & Gobalakrishnan, 2018).

Stress has a deep impact in one's life and it affects a person in one way or the other, positive or negative. Studies have not been conducted in regards to perceived stress and coping style among Mizo youth. There has been a research conducted to understand the relationship between Perceived Stress, Anxiety, and Depression among Mizo Women in

which exploration is made in order to understand the relationship among the mentioned topics and through the study it has been observed that perceived stress among women are at a moderate level and perceived stress and anxiety jointly predicted 50% of depression (Lalmuanzuali & Rinpari, 2018).

Methodology and Field Settings

The universe of the study is Mizo youth in Venglai locality, Lunglei and the unit of the study is youth with stress. The study is exploratory research in design using both qualitative and quantitative research in design. Disproportionate stratified sampling method is used in which the strata are the three YMA sections of the locality viz., Section A, Section B and Section C where 20 samples from each stratum are randomly selected. The total number of sample collected is 60 respondents. Primary data was collected using qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative data was collected using Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) to understand the field settings. Quantitative data was collected through survey using a pre tested questionnaire as the information collected were about stress and coping style which is mostly not shared by Mizo youth except to close friends and families. The Quantitative data collected from the respondents is processed using MS Excel and SPSS. Data is interpreted and presented in the form of simple percentage and mean.

Venglai is a locality located within the vicinity of Lunglei town in Lunglei District of Mizoram state, India. The latitude 22.8920502 and longitude 92.7435697 are the geo-coordinate of Venglai. Venglai locality is located in the integral part of Lunglei Town area which is surrounded by different localities, such as, Chanmari in the south, Rahsiveng in the west, Venghlun in the east and Bazar Veng in the north. It is an urban locality which is famous for its commercial area as it is a commercial centre for Lunglei town. It consists of various important governmental institutions as well as educational institutions. It is one of the most populated areas in Lunglei district as there are various people who come to the locality in performing important works with regards to government works as well as institutions for various students.

Statement of the Problem

The review of literature suggests that stress can be caused by multiple factors according to the time, the condition and the environment a person is placed in. Stress can be both positive and negative and it can cause serious effect on a person if it is not well encountered. The stress encountered can bring about negative changes in a person. If the stress is not coping up, it can cause chronic stress which can lead to various physical as well as mental health issues. Coping style of a person can be predicted through personality traits which are mainly classified as problem-focused, emotion-focused, and avoidant coping.

It is observed that mental illness is prominent among the youth in today's world. Mental illness does not occur rapidly but started in a harmless way without causing many disturbances for the person. There are different types of stress as perceived by an individual causing more serious mental problem in day to day life. If an individual cannot cope with it in a positive way or receive no treatment, it could effects mental health of that particular

individual. However, with the increase in mental illness viz., depression, anxiety, suicide related death and substance abuse there is a need to explore the mental health of Mizo especially the youth in order to tackle certain social problems. The present study aims to explore the perceived stress of Mizo youth and coping style as there is a lack of focus from the academic circle and research has not been conducted among the Mizo youth especially in regards to perceived stress and how it is handled. The present study aims to examine the level of stress and the coping style and its association with the normal day to day lifestyle.

Structural Bases of Respondents

The age group of the respondents in the present study range from 19 to 37 years of age. The gender distribution is almost equal where in male. It constitutes the higher percentage followed by female. Christianity constitutes the majority and the educational qualification of the respondents is mostly bachelor degree. Majority of the respondents belongs to nuclear family, followed by joint and extended family. More than half of the respondents' family belongs to Above Poverty Line (APL) and a few constitute Below Poverty Line (BPL). Medium family constitutes the largest, followed by large and small family. The occupational status of the family is government servant followed by business.

Stress and Youth

The youth of today encounter stresses in their daily life which may be positive or negative according to the circumstances encountered. There are certain things in life process which could cause stress in an individual's life which in turn affect both the physical as well as mental health. Therefore, in order to understand stress among youth the following variables are taken for study viz., Level of stress, causes, effect and symptoms.

Level of Stress

The level of stress in the present study is measured using Cohen's Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10). Different 10 statements are rated using a five point scale viz., never (0), rarely (0-1), sometimes (1-2), often (2-3) and always (3-4). The type of stress is classified into three levels viz., low stress level, moderate stress level and high stress level (See Table No 1). The perceived stress among the youth in the present study mostly consist of moderate stress level (63%) followed by high stress level (2%) and low stress level (1%).

Table 1: Perceived Level of Stress (Cohen's Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10))

		N=60	
Sl. No	Particulars	f	Percentage
1	Acute (Low) stress level	1	1
2	Episodic (Moderate) stress level	57	63
3	Chronic (High) stress level	2	2

Source computed

Perceived Stressors among Youth

To understand the stressors among youth, the perceptions of respondents presented in 11 variables are rated using four point rating Likert scale which is further classified and

analyzed using factor analysis (See Table 2). Determinant of the correlation matrix was obtained to test multicollinearity or singularity and Determinant Value of the matrix is found to be 0.081 which is greater than 0.00001. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy shows that KMO value is 0.67 which is higher than 0.5 and therefore we can conclude that sample are adequate for testing. Principal component analysis is used and orthogonal rotation varimax is used as the factors are independent. The latent roots with more than 0.5 are considered to be significant and the rest are disregarded. Before extraction different 11 linear components are identified and after extraction four factors emerged as the Eigen value below 1 are eliminated. Four factors relating to causes of stress known as stressors among the youth are identified viz., Prospect and Wellbeing, Relationship problems, Life Experiences, Poor Academic Performance which represent 63% of the whole components. The primary factor identified i.e. Prospect and Wellbeing (30%) constitute the highest of the variance of variables related to three variables namely Dissatisfied with the present situation, Anxiety about future/career growth, financial constraints. The secondary factor Relationship problems have three variables viz., Problems in friends circle, Problems in my family, Relationship issues with others constituting 12% of the variances of variables. The tertiary factors includes Life Experiences which includes two variables viz., Dissatisfied with my present situation and Past critical incidents constituting 11% which is followed by the last factor having one variable that is Poor Academic Performance.

Table No 2: Perceived Stressors

Rotated Component Matrix ^a		Component			
Sl.No	Stressor	Prospect and Wellbeing	Relationship problems	Life Experiences	Poor Academic Performance
1	Dissatisfied with my present situation	.557		.591	
2	Anxiety about future/career growth	.624			
3	Financial constraints	.701			
4	Health issues	.732			
5	Problems in friends circle		.706		
6	Problems in my family		.708		
7	Relationship issues with others		.778		
8	Past critical incidents			.870	
9	Family pressure				
10	Overthinking				
11	Difficulties in academics				.890
	Eigenvalues	3.3	1.4	1.2	1.1
	% of Variance	30	12	11	10
	Cumulative %	30	42	53	63
	KMO and Bartlett's Test				
	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of	0.67			

	Sampling Adequacy.				
	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity				
	Approx. Chi-Square	136.93			
	Df	55.00			
	Sig.	.00			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
 Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
 a. Rotation converged in 7 iterations.

Effects and Symptoms of Stress

The effect and symptoms of stress are studied to understand how stress impacts the life of youth. The effects and symptoms of stress on youth presented in 32 variables are rated using four point rating Likert scale which is further classified and analysed using factor analysis (See Table 2).

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy shows that KMO value is 0.798 which is higher than 0.5 and therefore we can conclude that sample are adequate for testing. Principal component analysis is used and orthogonal rotation varimax is used as the factors are independent. The latent roots with more than 0.5 are considered to be significant and the rest are disregarded (See Table 3).

Before extraction different 21 linear components are identified and after extraction five factors emerged as the Eigen value below 1 are eliminated. Five factors related to the effects and symptoms of stress are identified viz., Psychological Problems, Sleeping and Eating disorder, Insecurity, Emotional Disturbances and Lack of self-control which represents 71% of the whole components. Psychological problems (34%) is identified as the primary factor related to three variables namely Depression, Loss of interest, Feeling Bored, Constipated, Intrusive thought, Decrease efficiency in Work, and Bout of anger. Sleeping and Eating disorder is the secondary factor constituting 15% of the components which is associated with variables viz., sleeping disorder, insomnia, waking up earlier than desired, wake up at night for no reason, and loss of appetite. Insecurity is the third factor constituting 9% of the component and variables associated are fear, worry excessively, feeling terrified, and stomach-ache. The other tertiary factors include emotional disturbances (8%) and lack of self-control (5%).

Table 3: Effects and symptoms of stress

Rotated Component Matrix(a)		Component				
Sl. No	Effects and Symptoms	Psychological Problems	Sleeping and Eating Disorder	Insecurity	Emotional Disturbances	Lack of self-control
1	Depression	0.796				
2	Loss of interests	0.784				
3	Feeling bored	0.781				
4	Feeling constipated	0.756				
5	Intrusive thoughts	0.747				
6	Decrease efficiency in work	0.60				

7	Bout of anger	0.575				
8	Sleeping disorder		0.872			
9	Insomnia		0.864			
10	Waking up earlier than desired		0.69			
11	Woke up at night for no reason		0.623			
12	Lossof appetite		0.588			
13	Fear			0.795		
14	Worry excessively			0.766		
15	Feeling terrified			0.764		
16	Stomachache			0.725		
17	Lack of Concentration				0.827	
18	Disturbed by nightmares				0.605	
19	Exhausted whole day				0.559	
20	Feeling drowsy					0.862
21	Binge eat					0.818
	Eigenvalues	7.096	3.062	1.976	1.654	1.079
	% of Variance	34	15	9	8	5
	Cumulative %	34	48	58	66	71
	KMO and Bartlett's Test					
	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	0.798				
	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity					
	Approx. Chi-Square	706.66				
	Df	210				
	Sig.	0.000				

Extraction Method: Principal Component analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 8 iterations.

Coping Strategy

Coping strategies of youth in times of stress in the present study is analyzed mainly for the purpose of understanding how the youth manage their stress and the mechanism used to cope with unfavorable situations in life. The coping strategies presented in 30 variables are rated using four point rating Likert scale which is further classified and analyzed using factor analysis.

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy shows that KMO value is 0.60 which is higher than 0.5 and therefore we can conclude that sample are adequate for testing. Principal component analysis is used and orthogonal rotation verimax is used as the factors are independent. The latent roots with more than 1 are considered to be significant and the rest are disregarded (See Table 4). Before extraction different 30 linear components are identified and after extraction six factors emerged as the Eigen value below 1 are eliminated. Six factors are identified viz., Personal Efforts, Creating problems, Social Networking, Substance Abuse, Isolation, and Resorting to recreational activities which represented 69% of

the whole components. The primary factor constituting the main coping strategy for stress among the youth is Personal Efforts which constitutes 20% of the components and the variables associated with it are control situations, improve situations, manage own stress, resort to praying, and seek to understand problems. Secondary factor of coping strategy is creating problems which are mainly for the purpose of seeking attention and the variable associated with it, cause problem in the family, Conflicts with friends, Conflicts with my family, and Suicidal attempt which constitute 14% of the components. The third factor is Resorting to Social Networking which constitutes 11% of the respondents and the related value are resort to social media, use social networking sites, and use mobile phone excessively. The fourth factor is substance abuse, constituting 9% of the components which indulge in substance abuse, Resorts to drinking alcohol and smoking are related variables which constitute the substance abuse factor. The fifth factor is isolation constituting 8% of the components, which is mainly made up of variables viz., sleep away stress, isolate from the others, and listen to music. The sixth factor constitutes 6% of the whole components that is resorting to recreational activities which is made up of variables such as exercise, sports activities and resort to crying.

Table 4: Coping Strategies

<i>Rotated Component Matrix(a)</i>		Component					
Sl. No	Coping Strategies	Personal Efforts	Creating problems	Resorting to Social Networking	Substance Abuse	Isolation	Resorting to recreational activities
1	Control the situations	0.861					
2	Improve the situations	0.849					
3	Manage own stress	0.745					
4	Resort to praying	0.577					
5	Seek to understand problems	0.557					
6	Cause problem in the family		0.821				
7	Conflicts with friends		0.813				
8	Conflicts with my family		0.75				
9	Suicidal attempt		0.601				
10	Resort to social media			0.817			
11	Use Social Networking sites			0.811			
12	Use mobile phone excessively			0.72			
13	Indulge in substance abuse				0.839		
14	Resorts to drinking alcohol				0.793		
15	Resorts to smoking				0.703		
16	Sleep away stress					0.832	
17	Isolate from others					0.668	
18	Listen to music					0.545	
19	Exercise						0.766
20	Sports Activities						0.716
21	Resort to crying						-0.673
	Eigenvalues	4.297	2.992	2.377	1.945	1.59	1.303
	% of Variance	20	14	11	9	8	6
	Cumulative %	20	35	46	55	63	69
	KMO and Bartlett's Test						

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	0.60					
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity						
Approx. Chi-Square	544.52					
Df	210					
Sig.	0.000					

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 7 iterations.

Conclusion

The present study reveals the stress and coping style of youth in Vengalai locality, Lunglei. The findings of this study led to a conclusion that youth's perceived stress is moderate as majority of the respondents who are employed as well as college students are capable of coping with their stress on a daily basis having applied various coping style which enhance the quality of life. Similar result was also observed by Gonmei & Devendiran (2017) in their study on perceive stress and psychological factors of stress. The stressors identified among youth are mainly prospect and wellbeing, relationship problems, life experiences, Poor academic performance.

As the youth (young people) in the present study are mostly in college and school they are in such condition tounderstand their situations. So prospect and wellbeing constitute the main factors for causing stress where the youth are not satisfied with their present situations which is associated with financial constraints and anxiety about future career. Youth are also stressed by factors like relationship problems which they faced in family, friendly circle and others who are close to them. Sometimes stress is caused by life experiences and mistakes from past and inability to accept present status. Stressed is also caused by poor academic performances ac academic expectations increases.

Although the stress level is moderate it has certain impact on the life of youthat different level which could be classified as psychological problems, sleeping and eating disorder, insecurity, emotional disturbances and lack of self-control. Psychological related problems mainly involve depression where the youth have intrusive thought and bout of anger, they feel bored easily, they loss interest easily which eventually results in decrease of efficiency in work. Even these psychological related problems also resulted in problem of constipation disturbing normal daily routine. The other effects and symptoms include sleeping and eating disorder which also disturb the daily life. The youth mainly have sleeping disorder associated with insomnia effecting the sleeping time and waking up time and with this irregularities also resulted in loss of appetite. The youth although have moderate stress level were effected where they developed insecurity because of fear, worry excessively because they are terrified where they sometimes developed ulcer leading to stomach-ache. They also suffered emotional disturbance where they are disturbed by nightmares feeling exhausted for whole day and cannot concentrate on certain responsibilities. Sometimes they

cannot control themselves feeling drowsy every time, effecting their eating habit and even binge eat at certain occasion.

From the present study it can be concluded that Mizo youth use more active coping style compared to avoidant coping style which may be because the level of stress is moderate. The main coping strategies used by the youth are mainly confined to personal efforts, creating problems, social networking, substance abuse, isolation, and resorting to recreational activities. The youth mainly resorted to cope with situation at their personal level trying to manage their own stress by controlling situations and improve situations they are in. As religious faith runs deeply in Mizo society, refuge in religion in the form of prayer and efforts to be contented by understanding of problems are used as a coping measure. Surprisingly the support and advice from Pastors or Church Elders are not observed at significant level. The youth also cope with stress by attracting attention by creating problems in family and conflicts with friends and even attempted suicide. In the meantime social networking is also used to fill leisure time and to escape stress the youth resorted to excessive use of mobile phone. Some youth resorted to substance abuse including drugs, alcohol and smoking. The youth even isolate themselves listening to music and sleep away stress which create detachment from the communitarian society and move towards individualisation. This in turn influence the youth to cope withtheir stress using recreational activities such as exercise and sports. Only few of the youth resorted to crying as a means of ventilation to cope with their stress which is more among female respondents.

As the Mizo youth have moderate stress level they tried to manage their own stress and resorted to more active coping strategies. Resorting to professional help is not still regarded as an effective means or it may be because of the societal influence linking stress with other serious mental illness and also because of the lack of awareness. The stressors among the youth are mainly future prospects and relationship issue. Which is whythe lifestyle of youth is affected isolating themselves from the general population trying to cope with stress. This does not provide a very healthy solution and coping strategy. Most of the effects of stress on youths are psychological related issue where the main coping strategy is efforts at personal leveldiscouragingly eliminating family and professional assistance. This makes it harder for the family members and friends to be aware of it and sometimes the coping strategy of attention seeking can be seen as tantrum and delinquency. This makes it impossible for receiving immediate and primary support to manage stress. Many of the youth in Mizoram experience excessive use of mobile phones, social networking and even substance abuse which are observed and seen as a social problem and the finding of this study suggest that the society need to understand them as a strategy used by the youth to cope with their stress for better and effective intervention to deal with social problems.

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