

Stress and Suicidal Ideation among School Students

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This study focused on stress and suicidal ideation among school students. The sample of the study consisted of 120 students of different boards of secondary examination. Equal number of girls and boys were taken in the sample. The age of the students ranged from 14 to 18 years. Subjects were matched in terms of age, sex and educational qualifications. Student Stress Scale and the Suicidal Ideation Questionnaire-R were used. ANOVA, t-test and correlation were used to analyze the data. Study revealed that there is no significant difference in suicidal ideation as far as gender is concerned. The nature of school emerged as a significant factor in the experience of stress. Students belonging to private schools were experiencing more stress. Further, the study reveals that stress and suicidal ideation were significantly and positively related to each other.

Keywords: Stress, Suicidal Ideation, School Students.

Studies on stress and suicidal ideation have a great importance in the present era and have become an important topic in academic circles. Such researches have drawn the attention of behavioral scientists to explore the latent factors, which cause increasing tendency of suicidal ideation. Students feel the effects of stress in a harsh and probably negative ways. Some effects include a sudden drop in grades, depression, general fatigue, and aggression. Studies show that stress and anxiety during adolescence may even have a negative effect on health, too. Stress affects the human body physically, it can also harm a person's emotional well being as well. Stress level affects the students academically and changes the way the person thinks and acts during school or while studying.

It is seen from Banerejee's report (2001) that every year about 25,000 students in a large group of 18 to 20 years commit suicide during the examination month (i.e. March to June). Toero, Nagy, Sawaguchi and Sotonyi (2001) argued that there is a strong link between the pressure to excel in school and suicidal behaviors among children and adolescents. In their study, they showed that the number of suicide cases in a year usually peaked during examination periods where children and adolescents experienced a high level of stress in school. Academic stress among students have long been researched

on, Fairbrother and Warn (2003) researched too many assignments, competitions with other students, failures and poor relationship with other students or lecturers create stress. Students also experience stress because of their perception of the extensive knowledge base required and the perception of an inadequate time. Students report experiencing academic stress at predictable times each semester with the greatest sources of academic stress resulting from taking and studying for exams, grade competition, and the large amount of content to master in a small amount of time. Wilburn and Smith (2005) conducted a study on "Stress, Self Esteem and Suicidal Ideation in Late Adolescents". The sample consisted of 88 students from which 79 were females and nine were males. The life experience survey, the Rosenberg self-esteem scale and the suicidal ideation questionnaire were used for the study. The results revealed that both stress and self-esteem were significantly related to suicidal ideation and low self esteem and stressful life events significantly predict suicidal ideation.

Sulaiman, Hassan, Sopian and Abdullah (2009) found in their study that "female students experience stress differently compared to the male students. This may be because female students tend to be more emotional and sensitive toward what is happening in their surrounding".