



IDENTIFYING THE COPING MECHANISMS TO OVERCOME STRESS AMONG COACHING STUDENTS: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO COACHING STUDENTS OF KOTA CITY.

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ABSTRACT:

This study is aimed to draw the attention of parents, mentors, coaching industry, counsellors and other stakeholders towards the growing stress among coaching students who are heading towards the so called 'Kota factory' to fulfil their academic aim of getting admission in topmost JEE and Medical Institutes of India. From the last 3-4 decades Stress among students is growing due to social demands, parental pressure and continuously increasing competitive environment among students at various levels. Various studies have stated that this developing coaching culture resulted in poor mental health, stress, depression, anxiety and suicidal ideation among coaching students. They are not able to cope with the parental expectations, large academic syllabus, increasing study hours and lack of proper guidance. This cut throat competition results in psychological disorders, mental sickness and increasing number of suicides among coaching students. Thus in order to overcome all these problems of coaching students there is an urgent need to find out the Stress Coping Mechanisms which can be used by the students, counsellors and parents to overcome the Stress, fostering a healthy environment to save them from mental sickness and taking wrong steps like committing suicide as well as to direct them towards creative and constructive activities and to enhance their capabilities, talent, interests, skills and encourage them to achieve their aims.

KEYWORDS:

COACHING, STRESS, PARENTAL PRESSURE, DEPRESSION, ANXIETY, SUICIDE, COPING MECHANISMS.

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Introduction

In ancient days, Indian Education System was known for its values, morals, innovations and integration among students, teachers and the society. Now a days the education system has been drastically changed and it involves only extended study hours for students from morning since night. Due to this, students are not getting time for socialization and recreational activities (Deb, S., Strodl, E., Sun, J., 2015). Many psychiatrists have pointed out the strain faced by the students which is drifting them towards the raised number of deaths by committing suicides (Verma, S., Sharma, D., Larson, R.W., 2002). Researches has postulated that youth in India are asked to visit psychiatrists for study related stress, anxiety, phobia, depression, irritability and decreased interest in performing academic tasks (Verma, P. K., 1998). Academic and family related stress causes depression among students, it negatively affects academic performance and their learning outcomes (Deng, Y. et. al. ,2022). Academic and familial stress on students', their depression levels and impact of stress on their academic performance can be find out using Lazarus' cognitive appraisal theory of stress (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). In present scenario students

are judged not by their individual or vocational parameters rather they are scored on the basis of their academic performance only. It was also reported that the reason behind the suicide could be the academic stress which students face from parents, school, peers and society (Verma, P. K. ,1998)

PURPOSE

The main purpose of the study is to identify stress among students of Kota coaching students and suggest coping Mechanisms that can be used by the students themselves, parents, counsellors, stakeholders, mentors and others to help the students in coping up with stress.

OBJECTIVES

- To create awareness and minimize the level of stress faced by students taking admission in coaching institutes of Kota city.
- To make parents alert about the negative effects of stress caused to these coaching students if their stress is not treated properly.
- To unleash the fact that Parental Pressure is a

major component in causing stress among coaching students of Kota City.

- To prevent children from psychological problems which they face due to heavy competition being posed at them by the society when they come for preparation of NEET and JEE exams from coaching institutes of Kota City.
- To create awareness about early identification of student's Stress and preventive measure that can be taken for its prevention.
- To suggest coping mechanisms that can be used by the parents, stakeholders, mentors, coaching institutes etc for reducing stress among coaching students of Kota city.

METHODOLOGY

For the present study, articles were retrieved by performing a search of the database by including the keywords like stress, peer pressure, academic stress, anxiety, mental disorders, parental pressure, suicide, depression among coaching students etc. Researches were limited to the literature from 2015-2024 which are done within Indian context specially targeting Kota coaching students. The studies in English language were only included for the review. Technical reports, working papers, newspaper publications were also included in the search.

STRESS

Stress is becoming a prevalent feature in the modern societies. Regardless of gender and age, a large number of people are facing stress, and its harmful results. According to studies, stress is an emotional response which results from human and environmental interaction. Stress can be defined as a state of discomfort and tension caused by external factors. Malach, Pines and Keinan (2007) defined stress as the insight of incongruity between stressors and person's ability to fulfil these demands.

In students, stress can be caused by a number of factors. It may include factors like the unfriendly environment, examination pressure, relationships with teachers and peers, the parental pressure for academic achievement, competitive environment, financial problems, future prospects, lack of self-confidence and personal factors. Students suffering from stress reported to be feeling unhappy, staying alone, suffering from body pains, insomnia and lack of sleep, mental health problems, depression etc. Parental Pressure, Anxiety and Mental Health among Indian High School Students is causing academic Stress to students (Deb, S., Strodl, E., & Sun, H., 20

ACADEMIC STRESS, ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION AMONG STUDENTS

The psychological distress heading towards academic challenges or failure or even a cognizance of the possibility of academic failure is referred as academic stress (Verma, S., Gupta, J.,1990). The school related situations such as

regular assessments, rankings, study hours, self-imposed need to excel in future as well as that prompted by others are found to be the central sources of stress for high school students (Kouzma, N. M., Kennedy, G.A.,2004) Students who had complex levels of academic stress were likely to experience feelings of depression. Thus, the academic stress is pain giving and counted as a major risk factor for psychopathology

Reports on Suicide as a consequence of Stress and Parental Pressure among Kota Coaching Students

Report 1 In an analysis published in **Hindustan Times (August 2023)** reported that out of 23 students who committed suicide in Kota in 2023 showed that more than half were belonging to the minor group, 12 died by suicide within six months of arriving in Kota. In the 55 days between June 24 and August 18, 2023, eight students died by suicide in Kota. Total 23 such deaths have taken place in 2023, already the highest since the district administration began collecting such data in 2015. It is a sign of just how deep is the mental health crisis of students in India's coaching hub, in those 55 days alone.

Report 2 **Hindustan Times (November 2023)** reported that Several educationists have emphasized the importance of counselling parents and to make them aware that their unrealistic expectations for their children are responsible for the increasing rates of suicides in Kota. Even when children voice their anxieties to their parents, they are reprimanded and forced to continue studying at Kota "coaching factories."

Report 3 In **The Diplomat (February 2024)** an article was published heading 'Student Suicides in Kota's 'Coaching Factories' Point to India's Broken Education System'. It states that coaching students are caught between unrealistic parental aspirations and inability to cope with academic pressure, these students spiral into depression and sometimes die by suicide. The pressure of clearing the JEE and NEET examination has been driving an increasing number of teenagers to suicide. In January and February 2024 alone, 6 students in Kota have died by suicide.

Report 4 In **India Today (January 2024)** a story revealed that an 18-year-old JEE aspirant Niharika left a suicide note for her parents stating, "I can't do JEE. I'm a loser." The teen added she was killing herself since it was the "last option." The girl ended up her life because she was not able to bear the pressure of failure and was not able to come up to the parental expectations.

THE TRANSACTIONAL MODEL OF STRESS AND COPING

Lazarus and Folkman's transactional model of stress and coping and its extension by Wolfers and Schneider provide a useful theoretical framework to identify the functions of various agencies in the stress-coping process. According to the transactional model of stress and coping, individuals experience stress when the demands placed on them exceeds their resources and they become unable to cope

up with stress.

MODELS OF COPING

A). Coping Mechanisms used by (Lazarus, et al. 1986)

Being a pioneer in formulating coping strategies, Lazarus described the following two types of coping areas with their sub-parts:-

Problem focused coping: - (a) Confrontative Coping (b) Seeking Social Support (c) Plan full Problem-Solving

Emotion focused coping:- (a) Self-Control (b) Seeking Social Support (c) Distancing (d) Positive Appraisal (e) Accepting Responsibility (f) Escape/Avoidance

B). The Brief-Cope by Carver

Carver, C. S. (1997) designed Brief-Coping Orientation to Problems Experienced Inventory (Brief-COPE). It is a 28 item self-report questionnaire designed to measure effective and ineffective ways of coping by a person in response to a stressful condition. Coping may be defined as an effort used to minimize distress associated with negative life experience (Carver 1997). This scale can determine primary coping styles with scores on the following three subscale:

Problem-Focused Coping: It includes dimensions like-Active coping, Use of informational support, Positive Reframing and Planning

Emotion-Focused Coping: It includes Emotional Support, Venting items, Humour, Acceptance, Religion, Self-blame

Avoidant Coping: It includes Self-distraction, Denial, Substance use, Behavioral Disengagement

IMPORTANCE OF COPING MECHANISMS

As it is quite relevant from the above mentioned articles, reports and researches done under different disciplines that Stress is a factor that is growing day by day among coaching students of Kota city. Thus there is an urgent need to find Stress Coping Mechanisms for the coaching students of Kota city.

Guidelines Issued by the Government to Private Coaching Institutes for the benefit and well-being of coaching students

The Union Ministry of Education issued strict guidelines to be enforced by all states to regulate the functioning of private coaching centres. Institutes have been barred from enrolling students below the age of 16. (The Hindu, January 2024), Moreover, institutes cannot issue misleading advertisements about guaranteeing ranks and good marks. The move was prompted by the realization that these coaching centres have become 'money-minting centres' with little regard for student wellbeing.

CONCLUSION

Parents should understand that academic excellence is not the only criteria to judge the achievements of a child. Parents should not impose their own dreams and expectations upon their ward. Apart from becoming

doctors and engineers there are other fields also in which children can show their calibre and get respectful position in life. There are many instances which proved that children from challenged environment like slums, poverty, illiterate parents, and economically weak backgrounds got highest achievements in the academics and are sitting on the highest professional posts of the country. There are many other professions which can bring high name and fame to the students like music, dancing, sports, politics, literature, arts etc.

Parents need to be counselled that they should not force their children to become doctors and engineers rather they should allow them to choose a field of their own choice. Parents should focus on the holistic learning and allow children to pursue their interests even if it is in creative fields.

IMPLICATIONS

This article can be helpful in reducing the stress of coaching students of Kota city and suggesting them better coping mechanisms for their emotional and mental well-being. It can also be helpful for the counsellors for counselling sessions conducted for parents as well as coaching students.

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