

## Perceived Stress, Mindfulness and Well-being among Adolescents

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### Abstract

*Stress is an inevitable part of an individual's life. A person interprets environmental events based on their values and resources and reacts physiologically, psychologically, and behaviorally. This study aims to explore the relationship of perceived stress, mindfulness and well-being. The purposive sampling technique was used for this study. 141 High school going students (73 boys and 68 girls, N= 141) whose age group ranged from 14 to 17 years was selected for the present study. Based on the nature of the problem and objectives for the present research, two randomized groups and correlation design was used.*

*The tools used in the present research were perceived stress scale by Sheldon Cohen, The cognitive and affective mindfulness scale by Feldman, et al. And Adolescent well-being test by Margaret, et al. Finding shows that Girls are more perceived stress than boys. Boys are greater mindful qualities than girls. First-order children's are more perceived stress than second-order children. Mindfulness was significantly and negatively correlated with perceived stress. Mindfulness was significantly positively correlated with well-being. Perceived stress was significantly and negatively correlated with well-being.*

**Key words:** Perceived Stress, Mindfulness, Well-being, Adolescents.

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### I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of mindfulness is rooted in Eastern philosophy. Mindfulness has gained precedence in positive psychology. The last three decades have witnessed the remarkable augment in theorizing and research on mindfulness. Most practitioners also have shown greater interest in the application of mindfulness-based interventions in a clinical and non-clinical setting. The present study was conducted using the survey to explore the relationship between mindfulness, perceived stress, and well-being among adolescents.

**Perceived Stress** - Perceived stress is a dynamic multidimensional concept, with a wide spectrum of causative and conducive factors. The perceptions comprise medical, physical, psychological, and psychosocial aspects and are both culturally and socially context-dependent. The degree of stress experienced and the ways in which a person reacts to it can be influenced by various factors such as personal characteristics, lifestyle, social support, and appraisal of the stressor(s), life events, and socio-demographic and occupational variables.

**Mindfulness**- The Concept of mindfulness is principally originated in Buddhism. A contemporary definition of mindfulness denotes full and non-judgmental openness to present-moment experiences, which exist in individuals as a dispositional attitude that can be enhanced by training and maintained through practice (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Kabat-Zinn, 2003)

**Well-being**- The concept of "well-being" is the focal point in the field of positive psychology. A combination of optimal functioning and experience is referred to as well-being (Ryan

and Deci, 2000). The concept of well-being, however, tends to incorporate two approaches- hedonic (subjective well-being) and eudemonic (psychological well-being). Subjective well-being is defined as a sum of three components-life satisfactions, the presence of positive effect, and the absence of negative effect together called "Happiness" (Diener and Lucas, 1999). On the other hand, the eudemonic view talks about psychological well-being as "engagement with existential challenges of life" (Keyes, Shmotkin and Ryff, 2002).

**Mindfulness and Perceived Stress**- Studies comparing meditators and non-meditators have shown that individuals with a higher level of mindfulness tended to experience lower stress and stress-related symptoms such as anxiety, neuroticism, depression, negative emotions, nervousness, sadness, hopelessness, and unpleasant affect.

Lykins and Baer (2009) reported that meditators were significantly lower on psychological symptoms, rumination, thought suppression, fear of emotion, and difficulties with emotion regulation, compared to non-meditators. Based on their comprehensive study Sharma, Sharma, and Sharma (2011) argued that meditation can have far-reaching physical and psychological effects. Meditation can reduce psychosomatic symptoms and are helpful in the prevention and treatment of anxiety, depression, obsession, arthritis, diabetes, heart disease, stroke, migraines, and tension headaches. In previous research, it has also been found that people with higher levels of natural mindfulness (without mindfulness practices) reported feeling of less stress, anxiety and depression, (Cardaciott et al., 2008; Feldman et al., 2007; Good et al., 2016; Walach et al., 2006).

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Weinstein, Brown, and Ryan (2009) investigated the effects of Mindfulness on stress perception and reported that individuals with higher level of dispositional mindfulness, perceived less stress.

**Well-being and Perceived Stress-** There is a lot of research conveying mindfulness meditation's positive impact on psychological well-being. In fact, a vast literature of controlled studies have found that mindfulness meditation is related to improved mental health across a variety of disorders, including different anxiety disorders, depression, eating disorders, substance abuse, and chronic pain symptom reduction. Yet, the idea of mindfulness has become a buzzword of sorts, and despite research regarding positive outcomes, specific mechanisms associated with mindfulness and psychological well-being is unclear.

## II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

What is the relationship between perceived stress, mindfulness and well-being?

## III. OBJECTIVES

1. To find out the gender difference in perceived stress, mindfulness and well-being.
2. To find out the birth order difference in perceived stress, mindfulness and well-being.
3. To examine the relationship between perceived stress, mindfulness and well-being.

## IV. HYPOTHESES

1. Boys and girls would have a difference in their perceived stress, mindfulness and well-being.
2. First and second-order child would have a difference in their perceived stress, mindfulness and well-being.
3. Perceived stress, mindfulness and well-being would be significantly associated with each other.

## V. METHOD

### A) Sample

One hundred and fourth one students of higher secondary school level from Chavara Public School of Dhule District have participated in this study. The age group of participants ranges from 14-17 years. Seventy- three (BO-I – 35 and BO-II-38=75) of the participants were boys and sixty-eight (BO-I – 32 and BO-II-36= 68) were girls. The sample depicts as follows:

Sample Distribution

| Gender | Birth Order |        | Total |
|--------|-------------|--------|-------|
|        | First       | Second |       |
| Boys   | 35          | 38     | 73    |
| Girls  | 32          | 36     | 68    |
| Total  | 67          | 74     | 141   |

### B) Variables

**The Independent Variables:** Gender, Birth Order

**Dependent Variables:** Perceived Stress, Mindfulness, and Well-being.

### C) Research Design:

Two randomised group and correlation design was used for this study.

### D) Administration of Tools

1. **Perceived Stress Scale (PSS)-** By Sheldon Cohen. (1998)

It is 10 items self-report measure. Participants responded on 5-point scale ranging from 0 to 4. The PSS was found to be highly reliable. ( $\alpha = 0.91$ )

2. **Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Scale- R (CAMS-R) :** By Feldman, et al., (2007)

It is 10 items self-report scale. Participants responded on 4-point scale ranging from 1 to 4. The CAMS-R was found to be highly internal consistency. ( $\alpha = 0.78$ )

3. **The EPOCH Measure Adolescent Well-Being Scale:** By- Margaret L., et al., 2011 - A self report measure, these scales consist of a total of 5 subscales (Engagement, Perseverance, Optimism, Connectedness and Happiness with four items under each). It is five point rating scale.

## VI. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

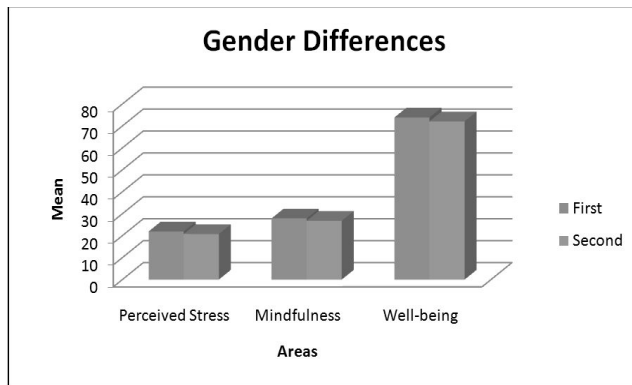
H1: Boys and girls would have a difference in their perceived stress, mindfulness and well-being.

Table No. 1: Table showing the difference between boys and girls in their perceived stress, mindfulness and well-being.

| Group Statistics |        |    |        |        |       |
|------------------|--------|----|--------|--------|-------|
| Areas            | Gender | N  | Mean   | S.D.   | t     |
| Perceived Stress | Boys   | 73 | 20.750 | 3.371  | 2.53* |
|                  | Girls  | 68 | 22.144 | 3.120  |       |
| Mindfulness      | Boys   | 73 | 27.865 | 4.397  | 2.17* |
|                  | Girls  | 68 | 26.142 | 4.992  |       |
| Well-being       | Boys   | 73 | 73.826 | 9.566  | 1.80  |
|                  | Girls  | 68 | 70.809 | 10.347 |       |

$df=139$ ,  $0.01=2.63$ ,  $0.05=1.98$  \*\* $P < 0.01$ , \* $P < 0.05$  significant

The table shows the difference between the groups of boys and girls in various areas. It was concluded that girls are more perceived stress ( $t(139) = 2.53$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), than boys. Boys are greater mindful qualities ( $t(139) = 2.17$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) than girls. But there is no significant difference found in boys and girls on well-being. In order to be significant at 0.05, the minimum required value of 't' was 1.98. Since the obtained value is smaller than what is required to be significant at the 0.05 level, our hypothesis Boys and girls would have a difference in their perceived stress, mindfulness and well-being partly accepted. This analysis is showing in the following graph clearly.



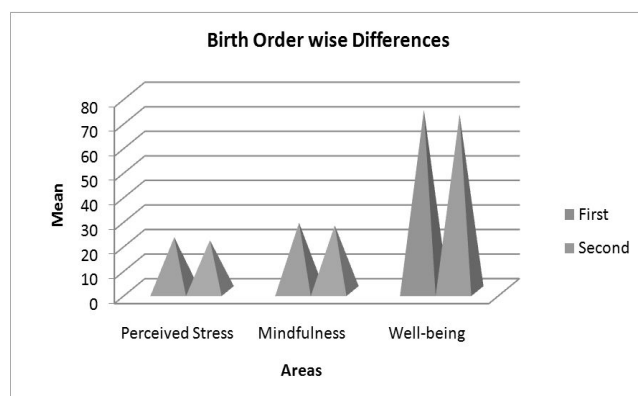
H2: First and second order child would have a difference in their perceived stress, mindfulness and well-being.

Table No. 2: Table showing the difference between first and second child in their perceived stress, mindfulness and well-being.

| Group Statistics |             |    |        |        |       |
|------------------|-------------|----|--------|--------|-------|
| Areas            | Birth Order | N  | Mean   | S.D.   | t     |
| Perceived Stress | First       | 67 | 21.960 | 3.330  | 2.01* |
|                  | Second      | 74 | 20.771 | 3.662  |       |
| Mindfulness      | First       | 67 | 27.885 | 5.074  | 0.87  |
|                  | Second      | 74 | 26.800 | 4.213  |       |
| Well-being       | First       | 67 | 73.914 | 10.974 | 1.07  |
|                  | Second      | 74 | 72.120 | 8.553  |       |

df=139, 0.01=2.63, 0.05=1.98 \*\*P<0.01, \*P<0.05 significant

The table no. 2 shows the difference between the groups of first-order child and second-order children in various areas. It was concluded that first-order children's are more perceived stress ( $t(139) = 2.01, p < 0.05$ ), than second-order children's. But there is no significant difference found first-order children and second-order children on mindfulness and well-being. In order to be significant at 0.05, the minimum required value of 't' was 1.98. Since the obtained value is smaller than what is required to be significant at the 0.05 level, our hypothesis First and second-order child would have a difference in their perceived stress, mindfulness and well-being partly accepted. This analysis is showing in the following graph clearly.



H3: Perceived stress, mindfulness and well-being would be significantly associated with each other.

Table No. 3:-Descriptive statistics and correlations of all variables (N=141)

| Variables           | Mean  | SD    | 1       | 2      | 3 |
|---------------------|-------|-------|---------|--------|---|
| 1. Mindfulness      | 27.88 | 5.08  | 1       |        |   |
| 2. Perceived Stress | 20.77 | 3.66  | -0.23** | 1      |   |
| 3. Well-being       | 73.91 | 10.97 | 0.44**  | -0.17* | 1 |

df=139, 0.01=.208, 0.05=.159 \*p<.05, \*\*p<0.01

Above table shows that mindfulness was significantly and negatively correlated with perceived stress ( $r = -0.23, p < 0.01$ ) and positively correlated with well-being ( $r = 0.44, p < 0.01$ ). Perceived stress was significantly and negatively correlated with well-being ( $r = -0.17, p < 0.05$ ). In this manner, our Hypotheses Perceived stress, mindfulness and well-being would be significantly associated with each other's was accepted.

## VII. CONCLUSIONS

1. Girls are more perceived stress than boys. Boys are greater mindful qualities than girls.
2. First-order children's are more perceived stress than second-order children.
3. Mindfulness was significantly and negatively correlated with perceived stress.
4. Mindfulness was significantly positively correlated with well-being.
5. Perceived stress was significantly and negatively correlated with well-being.

## VIII. LIMITATIONS OF THE PRESENT RESEARCH

The present problem researcher acquired some limitations. The researcher is mainly focused on 8th and 9th std. CBSE English medium school children of one school from Dhule city. The sample size is very small.

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