



GENDER-SPECIFIC FEATURES OF STRESS COPING STRATEGIES IN ADOLESCENTS

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Abstract

In this article stress conditions among adolescents and the strategies they use to cope with them. The study focuses on identifying the impact of gender on the choice of coping strategies. It was found that boys and girls perceive stress differently and apply various adaptation mechanisms. Psychological diagnostic methods, such as the Lazarus and Folkman Stress Coping Strategies test, were used to collect data. Based on statistical analysis, gender-specific characteristics in coping with stress were revealed. The findings of the study can be useful for school psychologists, parents, and educators in providing psychological support to adolescents.

Keywords: Adolescents, stress, coping strategies, gender differences, psychological resilience, adaptation.

Introduction

The changes in modern social life, the increasing complexity of the educational environment, growing competition, and both familial and personal problems are contributing to a rise in stress among adolescents. Stress can negatively affect children's psychological, emotional, and social development. Particularly during adolescence - a critical stage for the formation of personal identity - the experience of stress, the ways in which it is managed, and the role of gender in this process are considered highly relevant issues. Research shows that male and female adolescents tend to use different coping strategies in response to stress. A deeper exploration of this topic can help strengthen adolescents' mental well-being, provide appropriate psychological support, and create a positive



atmosphere in both school and family environments. Therefore, this topic is both theoretically and practically significant.

Adolescence is one of the most complex and dynamic stages in personality development. During this period, emotional instability increases, along with a growing need for self-understanding and independent decision-making. In this process, students often face various stressful situations, including family problems, academic pressure, conflicts in peer relationships, and other contributing factors. Understanding how adolescents respond to these stressors, what psychological coping strategies they employ, and how these strategies differ by gender is an important issue. Developing appropriate and effective coping strategies can enhance their psychological resilience, emotional balance, and social adaptation. This research is specifically aimed at identifying the gender-specific characteristics of stress coping strategies among adolescents and developing targeted psychological approaches accordingly.

Adolescence is one of the most important stages in personality development. During this period, emotional instability increases, along with the transition to independent thinking, understanding of social roles, and a strong desire to find one's place in society. At this transformative stage, students are exposed to various external and internal pressures such as academic competition, parental expectations, peer relationships, concerns about appearance, and more. These factors contribute to the emergence of stress conditions.

An individual's approach to stress and their specific behaviors to overcome it are referred to as "coping strategies." In psychology, these strategies are generally classified into two main types: problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies. Problem-focused strategies involve active efforts to eliminate the source of stress, whereas emotion-focused strategies are aimed at managing the internal emotional response to stress.

Gender plays an important role in the selection and application of these coping strategies. Research shows that male and female adolescents respond differently to stress and adopt different approaches:

Female adolescents tend to prefer emotion-focused coping strategies. When faced with stress, they often talk to friends about their feelings, cry, suppress their



anxiety, or withdraw. Girls may be more emotionally sensitive to stress and thus require more social support.

Male adolescents are more likely to choose problem-focused and action-oriented coping strategies. They often try to relieve internal tension through sports, competition, distracting activities, or, in some cases, aggressive behavior. However, this approach is not always positive; sometimes the problem is denied or masked through risky behavior.

These differences can be explained by biological, psychological, and social factors. Gender-based social stereotypes (e.g., boys should be strong, girls should be sensitive) also influence adolescents' attitudes toward stress. Therefore, school psychologists and educators must consider these differences when working with students.

Studies have shown that rather than using a one-size-fits-all approach to stress management, individually tailored strategies that take gender into account tend to be more effective. As such, psychological support should be adapted to the adolescent's gender, behavior, emotional condition, and social context.

Based on this, the following recommendations are proposed:

- For female adolescents: strengthen systems of social and emotional support and provide opportunities for open emotional expression.
- For male adolescents: offer constructive physical activities and training that teaches problem analysis and active coping.
- For both genders: conduct tailored psychological training sessions and workshops on stress management skills.

In stress management, gender-specific individualized approaches may be more effective than universal ones. Therefore, psychological support for adolescents should be tailored to their gender and emotional state. In the educational environment and at home, it is crucial to consider gender differences when developing stress management strategies. This not only strengthens adolescents' mental health but also helps enhance their social adaptation and emotional stability.

This research highlighted the importance of understanding the gender-related characteristics of adolescents' coping strategies for stress and the necessity of shaping psychological assistance based on these findings. In the future, it will be



essential to develop new gender-tailored psychological approaches for supporting adolescents and managing stress.

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