



**EXAMINE THE CORRELATION BETWEEN STRESS & POSITIVE-NEGATIVE
AFFECT AMONG YOUNG ADULTS**

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the study is to examine the correlation between stress and positive and negative affect among young adults. Stress is the body's and mind's reaction to difficult circumstances. Positive affect refers to positive emotions and moods, while negative affect involves negative emotions. Managing stress is crucial for overall well-being, as it can impact both positive and negative affect. Strategies like mindfulness and self-care can promote positive affect, while stressors may

contribute to negative affect. Balancing stress and emotions are key for mental health. The current study is conducted on the college students in order to get better insight about the correlation that exists between the two. A total sample of 81 young adults was collected. The study used two scales perceived stress scale as well as PANAS scale in order to better understand the correlation between stress and positive and negative affect.

Keywords: Stress, Positive Affect, Negative Affect, Young Adults

INTRODUCTION

STRESS

Stress has permeated every part of everyday life in modern civilization, impacting people's emotional moods and general well-being. The relationship between stress and affect, more specifically, good and negative affect, has attracted the interest of scholars and practitioners from a wide range of fields, including sociology, psychology, and the health sciences. It is essential to appreciate the relationship between stress and affect in order to understand human behaviour, coping strategies, and psychological resilience.

Stress is a complex idea that involves environmental, psychological, and physiological elements that impair a person's ability to adapt. It manifests when people feel that their ability to effectively cope with environmental pressures is out of balance. Stressors may appear in many various areas of life, including job, relationships, and economics. They can also range greatly in severity, from little inconveniences to significant life events. Prolonged stress has been connected

to a number of detrimental health consequences, such as depression, heart disease, and cognitive decline.

From the Latin words "strictus," which means tight or narrow, and "stringere," which means to tighten, the term "stress" was originally derived. The inward sensations of constriction and tightness in the muscles and respiration that many individuals experience while under stress are reflected in these root words. Stress is frequently discussed in terms of environmental features that are upsetting to the person. Events known as stressors set off the stress reaction in our bodies. These situations might include commotion, terrible relationships, loudness, or having to commute to work or school every day. Strain is the response to outside stimuli. It's critical to keep in mind that not all stress is harmful or negative per se.

AFFECT

The wide range of subjective sensations and emotions that people feel in reaction to both internal and external stimuli is referred to as affect. It consists of both good and negative affect, symbolised by feelings like anger, anxiety, and sadness, in that order. Positive affect is characterised by feelings of happiness, excitement, and enthusiasm. A person's thoughts, attitudes, and behavioural reactions to stresses are greatly influenced by their affect, which in turn affects their psychological health as a whole.

Relationship between Stress and Positive Affect

Although stress is typically linked to negative emotional states, studies have also shown that stress and good affect have a complex relationship. In some situations, stress may provoke good feelings like challenge, pleasure, and excitement, particularly when people view stressors as chances for personal development. The term "eustress," which describes this phenomenon,

emphasises how adaptable stress is and how it may promote resilience and personal growth. On the other hand, sustained or extreme stress can erode good affect, resulting in burnout, emotional tiredness, and a worse quality of life.

Relationship between Stress and Negative Affect

The psychology literature has provided enough evidence of the connection between stress and negative affect. Anxiety, despair, and irritation are just a few of the bad feelings that may be brought on by stressors when people find it difficult to handle perceived dangers or difficulties. Negative affect can be made worse by prolonged exposure to stressors, which can lead to a vicious cycle of emotional suffering and unhealthy coping mechanisms..

Stress and affect are closely linked; stress often makes people feel bad about themselves and affects their overall emotional well-being. Positive affect, on the other hand, can function as a buffer against stress's harmful effects and foster resilience. It is crucial to comprehend the dynamic interactions that occur between emotion and stress in order to support psychological health and wellbeing.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A study conducted by Akimbekov and Razzaque (2021) examined the hypothesis that an increase in laughter can mitigate the emotional impact of negative life events. Over the course of three days, community members reported how often they really laughed and completed a stress-inducing life events scale every evening. The authors also measured their current positive and negative mood levels each morning and evening. A series of simple correlation analyses, calculated on a daily basis, revealed little evidence of a direct association between daily laughter

quantity and positive or negative mood. Instead, more complex mediation analyses showed that individuals with higher levels of negative emotion had more stress-inducing life events, but only among those with lower actual laughter frequency.

The purpose of the study by Afzal et al. (2021) was to look into the moderating effects of both positive and negative emotions on the link between teenagers' subjective well-being (SWB) and PsyCap. 616 school-age teenagers from both urban and rural locations made up the sample. The components were measured using the Fatima (2004) version of the Trait Well-being Inventory and PANAS (Watson et al., 1988); the PsyCap scale for teenagers was utilised to measure PsyCap (Afzal, 2013). Low levels of negative emotions were shown to mitigate the association between self-efficacy, hope, and optimism with SWB via moderated hierarchical regression analysis. Additional study findings showed that while positive emotions did not significantly moderate the associations between optimism and self-efficacy, they did improve the relationship between hope and SWB.

Research conducted by Chow et al. (2021) showed a substantial correlation between trait affect (e.g., relatively persistent feelings of social anxiety and depression) and a propensity to withdraw (e.g., spending time at home) and state affect (moment-to-moment sensations of pleasant or negative emotionality). Nevertheless, the majority of previous research relies on self-reported, static descriptions of emotions and behaviour, which restricts its applicability. Although, more advanced research designs and technologies (such as mobile sensing with a global positioning system (GPS) are being used, not much research has combined these seemingly unrelated types of data to enhance our comprehension of the relationship between everyday emotional experiences and time spent at home, as well as whether this relationship is impacted by symptoms of social

anxiety or depression.

According to the research conducted by Çivitci (2020) students may experience stress in a variety of aspects of their lives throughout their college years, which are recognised as a difficult period. These areas may include social, academic, financial, and personal stress. Social support is one of the key tools that students utilise to manage their stress. With the assistance of their teachers, students may manage their stress more effectively. Although social support is thought to operate as a stress-reduction strategy, it can be affected positively or negatively by certain psychological variables. In this situation, the opposing indications of a person's psychological adjustment—positive and negative affects—might behave differently. The current study looked at how college students' perceptions of social support and stress were mediated by positive and negative affect. 479 undergraduate students from a public university's education faculty made up the sample. Data were gathered using the Perceived Stress Scale, the Positive and Negative Affect Scale, and the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support. When analysing data, the moderating model developed by Baron and Kenny (1986) provided the basis for the hierarchical multiple regression analysis that was employed. The results of the study show that while positive affect does not play a similar role in the association between perceived social support and stress, negative affect does. Consequently, the beneficial impact of social support on perceived stress declines as negative affect rises.

Dowd et al. (2020) found that physical activity (PA) has a positive impact on improving mental health, particularly positive affect, during times of stress and uncertainty such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The research involved college students who completed assessments of PA, positive and negative affect, sleep quality, food insecurity, and stressful life events both before and

during the stay-at-home orders. The results showed that the more physically active participants were, the higher their positive affect levels were, both before and during the pandemic. Additionally, the change in physical activity levels was positively associated with the change in positive affect. However, further research is needed to understand the exact mechanisms through which PA influences positive affect and whether these effects can be generalized to other populations and contexts. It is also important to note that PA did not have a significant impact on negative affect during the pandemic.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The study's main objective was to examine the correlation between stress and positive and negative affect young people. The study also concentrated on investigating the potential effects of other outside variables on the health of young adults, such as relationships, exams, and family environments. Although these characteristics have been the subject of several research, little is known about how stress and emotions are related, or about the risk factors associated with poor affective states. The study, therefore, aims to close this gap. It is crucial to do a study on this population since it is important to have awareness about one's emotions as it can act as a sign for early prevention of any kind of disease.

METHODOLOGY

Aim

To study the relationship between stress and positive and negative affect among young adults.

Objective

The study has the following objective

- To examine the relationship between stress and positive affect among young adults.
- To examine the relationship between stress and negative affect among young adults.

Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1: There will be a significant correlation between stress and positive affect (PA) in young adults.

Hypothesis 2: There will be a significant correlation between stress and negative affect (NA) in young adults.

Sample

The sample consisted of young adults (18-25 years old) who were screened using The Perceived Stress Scale developed in 1983 and PANAS-GEN. The sample size was 81 participants. The sample was collected in both online (N=76) and offline (N=5) modes, by circulating a Google form and a questionnaire respectively.

Voluntary participation is a sampling method commonly used in research studies, especially in fields like psychology and social sciences. In this approach, individuals actively choose whether or not to participate in the study. Participants choose themselves at random from a wider group according to their willingness and interests.

Description of the Tools

- **THE PERCEIVED STRESS SCALE (PSS)**

Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) is a widely used psychological measure developed by Cohen et al. (1983) to determine how stressed out a person feels at a given moment in time. In order to ascertain how stressful each individual views specific events in their lives. Survey questions comprise the PSS, which asks respondents to rate their opinions and feelings about situations connected to stress. Most often, these questions focus on the overpowering, erratic, and uncontrolled aspects of stress. The frequency with which respondents have had specific feelings or ideas in the recent month is queried using a Likert-type. The scale typically consists of 10 items, however there may be variations with fewer or more parts based on the specific version being utilised. Many language translations and population validations have improved the PSS's validity and cross-cultural applicability.

- **THE PANAS-GEN SCALE**

The Positive and Negative Affect Schedule-General is a self-report questionnaire developed in 1988 by David Watson it is used to measure the two primary affective states that comprise human emotions: positive and negative. In order to provide a comprehensive assessment of emotional experiences in a range of contexts. The PANAS-GEN is composed of two subscales: the Positive Affect (PA) scale and the Negative Affect (NA) scale. Each subscale consists of an adjective list or a few short lines that describe different emotional states. Usually throughout the course of the last several weeks or months, raters are asked to rate their level of experience with each emotion.

The respondents score each item on a Likert-type scale, where the strength of each feeling is represented by a number between "1" (very minimally or not at all) and "5" (extremely). Greater emotional state levels are indicated by higher scores. The individual scores for positive and negative affect are then obtained by adding the results from each subscale.

Procedure

Following a comprehensive analysis of the literature on relevant subjects, the study purpose, objective, and hypothesis were developed before deciding on the issue. The questionnaire for data collection was created after receiving university clearance for the synopsis, and the supervisor's ethical approval was subsequently obtained. Additionally, a Google form was created for online data gathering. Following that, the form was shared on other social media sites, and 81 answers in all were obtained. A total of 81 data points were gathered using the Perceived Stress Scale and the PANAS-GEN Scale. The random sample approach was used to acquire the offline data.

RESULTS

The present study aimed to assess the correlation between stress and positive affect/negative affect among young adults. As mentioned, the final sample included 81 participants. Participants were between the age group 18-30 years.

RESULT TABLE (CORRELATION BETWEEN STRESS AND NEGATIVE AFFECT)

X (stress)	Y (negative affect)	$(X - M_x)^2$	$(Y - M_y)^2$	$(X - M_x)(Y - M_y)$
25	28	9.299	6.097	7.529
19	22	8.706	12.467	10.418
27	32	25.496	41.850	32.665
...	...	...	...	...

After a thorough examination of the dataset, we discovered some fascinating information on the connection between stress levels and experiencing negative affect. Employing rigorous statistical methods allowed us to delve deeply into the intricate dynamics between these variables. The values signify a positive correlation, indicating that as stress levels increase, there tends to be a corresponding increase in negative affect.

Utilising the coefficient of determination (R^2), more investigation yielded more context. The proportion of the dependent variable's fluctuation (in this case, negative affect) that can be predicted using the independent variable (stress levels) is represented by R^2 . An R^2 value of around 20.49% was found by our investigation. It seems that stress levels can explain around one-fifth of the variation in negative affect that has been reported. This amount is noteworthy, but it also highlights how complex negative affect is, impacted by more than simply stress levels.

Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge the inherent limits of correlational analysis. While stress and bad affect may be associated, correlation does not indicate causation, therefore one does not always cause the other. Moreover, the observed association may possibly be

influenced by other variables that were not taken into consideration during this investigation. In summary, our research shows a statistically significant correlation between stress and negative affect, but it also emphasises how complicated human emotions and mental states may be. A variety of factors, including individual variations, coping mechanisms, stressors in the environment, and underlying psychological processes, are probably involved in the complex relationship between stress and bad affect.

RESULT TABLE (CORRELATION BETWEEN STRESS AND POSITIVE AFFECT)

Variable	X (Stress)	Y (Positive Affect)
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Mean	21.951	32.358
Sum of Squares	2057.802	3548.617
Correlation (r)	-0.0887	
R ²	0.0079	

Two sets of data are shown in the table: the sample group's stress levels and associated positive affect ratings. Specifically, correlation analysis has been used in statistical analysis to understand the relationship between these variables. The strength and direction of the association between two quantitative variables are evaluated using correlation analysis. In this instance, the strength and characteristics of the linear association between stress levels and positive affect scores

were measured using Pearson's correlation coefficient (r).

The stress levels and positive affect scores deviations from means were calculated. The degree to which each particular data point deviates from the variable's mean is shown by these deviations. To comprehend how each data point adds to the overall relationship between the two variables, these deviations are crucial.

The statistical analysis concludes that there is a negative relationship between positive affect scores and stress levels. Although there seems to be some relationship between stress levels and good affect, this relationship only partially explains the variation in positive affect ratings within the sample group.

DISCUSSION

To assess the relationship between stress and positive and negative affect among young adults. The results shows that when the stress levels increase there is a corresponding increase in negative affective experiences such as distress and anxiety. Additionally, the analysis revealed no significant correlation between stress levels and positive affect, indicating that stress levels may not have a direct impact on positive emotional experiences such as joy and enthusiasm.

The table provided contains two sets of data: the negative affect and the corresponding stress scores of a sample group. To understand the relationship between these variables, statistical analysis, particularly correlation analysis, has been employed. Correlation analysis assesses the degree and direction of the relationship between two quantitative variables.

Upon conducting a comprehensive analysis of the dataset provided, we uncovered intriguing insights into the relationship between stress levels and the experience of negative affect.

Employing rigorous statistical methods allowed us to delve deeply into the intricate dynamics between these variables.

The findings suggest that stress and negative affect are significantly correlated. This suggests a positive correlation between stress levels and negative affective experiences like discomfort and anxiety. Stress levels may not directly alter happy emotional experiences like joy and excitement, since the investigation also found no significant association between stress levels and positive affect. The aforementioned observation implies that people could be capable of sustaining favourable emotional states even in the face of elevated stress levels, underscoring the intricate connection between stress and psychological health.

Individuals might experience profound effects from stress and unpleasant emotions in many different areas of their lives. These effects include those on behaviour, mental and physical health, cognitive function, social relationships, work performance, and financial security. Physically, long-term stress and depressive feelings increase the likelihood of a number of health problems, such as heart disease, high blood pressure, decreased immunity, gastrointestinal disorders, and irregular sleep patterns. Chronic exposure to stress hormones such as cortisol can lead to many physiological alterations that are harmful to one's general well-being, including inflammation.

Stress and negative affect can psychologically aggravate the symptoms of mental illnesses including anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Long-term stress can cause emotions of hopelessness, powerlessness, and low self-esteem, which can result in a pessimistic view of the world and a lower level of life satisfaction.

In terms of behaviour, stress and negative feelings frequently show themselves as unhealthy coping strategies including binge eating, abusing drugs, putting things off, and isolating oneself from others. These actions have the potential to exacerbate stress and prolong a vicious cycle of unfavourable emotions and unhealthy coping mechanisms.

A study found a link between cortisol and everyday emotion, which is important for health. According to the research, there was a substantial indirect impact of high negative affect to low positive affect, which linked financial strain to raised cortisol, even if there was no overall direct influence of financial strain on cortisol.

In summary, study results indicate a strong relationship between stress levels and unpleasant emotions. This suggests that negative affective experiences like discomfort and anxiety rise in tandem with elevated stress levels. However, there was no discernible correlation found between stress and positive affect, suggesting that a person may experience less stress when their good affect is strong.

CONCLUSION

The study's main objective was to examine the correlation between stress and positive/negative affect among young adults. It was interesting to know the conditions and life events that can put us in situations of stress and how this stress can impact the emotions of an individual. There are several studies on these factors, but there is a dearth of information that explains the correlation between stress and positive/negative affect among young adults (age range 18-25).

The study aims to focus on the events as well as the strategies that can be used in order to deal with the daily life stressors like examination stress. According to research the findings showed

age-related differential effects: receiving social support was adversely correlated with emotional well-being markers for younger respondents, whereas older respondents showed favourable correlations with these same indicators.

Based on the results, it can be concluded that there is a significant correlation between stress levels and negative affect. This indicates that as stress levels increase, there is a corresponding increase in negative affective experiences such as distress and anxiety. However, it's important to note that this correlation is relatively weak, suggesting that stress alone does not fully account for variations in negative affect. Other factors, such as individual coping mechanisms and external stressors, may also contribute to negative affective states.

Additionally, the analysis revealed no significant correlation between stress levels and positive affect, indicating that stress levels may not have a direct impact on positive emotional experiences such as joy and enthusiasm. This suggests that individuals may be able to maintain positive affective states despite experiencing high levels of stress, highlighting the complexity of the relationship between stress and emotional well-being.

Overall, these findings underscore the importance of understanding the multifaceted nature of stress and its impact on emotional experiences. While stress may influence negative affect to some extent, it does not dictate individuals' overall emotional well-being. Further research exploring the interplay between stress, affective states, and coping mechanisms is warranted to gain a more comprehensive understanding of psychological resilience and well-being.

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