

THE EFFECT OF STRESS ON
THE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT

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An Abstract

Presented to the
Graduate and Research Council of
Austin Peay State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science

by

Valerie McBeath Dickson

March, 1989

ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to determine the self-perceived levels of stress in high school students, and to examine differences between gender and grade classification. A questionnaire was given to 76 high school students, 27 females, 49 males. Students surveyed were in grades 9 through 12 and attending summer school at the time.

The results indicated that significant differences did exist between grades 9, 10, 11, and 12. Similarly, significant differences were noted between males and females.

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To the Graduate and Research Council:

I am submitting herewith a Thesis written by Valerie McBeath Dickson entitled "The Effect of Stress on the High School Student." I have examined the final copy of this paper for form and content, and I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Science, with a major in guidance and counseling.

Jean G. Lewis
Major Professor

We have read this thesis and
recommend its acceptance.

Harold E. Blair
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Third Committee Member

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Dean of the Graduate School

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CHAPTER 1

Literature Review

Stress as a concept was first introduced by Hans Selye in 1936. In his opinion, stress was the "nonspecific response of the body to any demand made upon it" (Humphrey, 1986, p. 6). Furthermore, Selye saw stress as a physiological and medical phenomenon rather than the psychological or sociological implications that could arise (Cooper, 1983).

Since that time, the study of stress has become so widespread that Selye founded an International Institution of Stress in Montreal. This institution allows specialists from around the world to share knowledge about stress with one another (Cooper, 1983). In addition, the Journal of Human Stress is dedicated entirely to studies of stress-related issues. Numerous articles and books have also focused on the specifics of stress. Everly and Sobelman contend that "stress . . . has touched every aspect of American life" (1987, p. 17). They quoted a Presidential Commission on mental health to support their claim which stated:

1. As many as 25 percent of all Americans suffer the ill effects of excessive stress;
2. The majority of Americans die from illnesses that could be stress-related; and,

3. Approximately 50 percent of all general medical practice patients are suffering from stress-related problems. (p. 31)

Definition

Presently, research has concentrated on psychological stress and its implications. Descriptions of psychological stress vary depending on the author. Chandler contends that "psychological stress is a state of emotional tension" (1982, p. 12). Appley and Trumbull view psychological stress as "an inference from either manipulations of the environment (external and/or internal) or from measurements of change in response (internal and/or external)" (1967, p. 4). In addition, David Elkind states, "stress is always an excessive demand for adjustment. Psychological stress affects not only the body but also our quality of life" (1984, p. 159).

A concrete definition of psychological stress has been difficult to establish because each person has his or her own definition of the concept (Cooper, 1983). Humphrey agrees by quoting Dr. Paul J. Rosch, President of the American Institute of Stress, who states, "everyone talks about stress, and presumably everyone knows what it is--but in point of fact, no one knows what stress is. It not only means different things to different people, it is different things to different people" (1986, p. 1).

Since stress varies from person to person, it should

also vary depending on the age and maturity of that person. Lazarus (1966) contends that psychological structure is not the same in the infant, young child, and mature adult and, therefore, one should not expect psychological stress production and reduction to be the same at these various developmental levels.

Research

Much of the available material on stress has focused on the adult population. Based on this sizeable body of literature, stress is reported to have many harmful effects. However, much less is known about the effects of stress on children and adolescents than adults (Price, 1985).

Until recently, few studies have examined stress and children. Omizo, Omizo, and Suzuki explain, "many adults believe that children do not experience much stress because they are not expected to be responsible for many things in their lives, they have others to depend on, and they can do a variety of acceptable things to relieve stress" (1988, p. 267). They add that this adult assumption is false because most children do not understand what is happening to them and they do not know how to deal with it. Chandler (1982) agrees by suggesting that children are limited in their resources for coping with stress. Furthermore, their tolerance for stress is low because they lack maturity and adult reasoning powers.

With the interest in elementary guidance, children and

stress are becoming the topic of studies and books. Some studies have presented data on children and stress management, whereas, other studies have concentrated on stressors to children (Omizo et al., 1988).

Adolescents or teenagers represent another group in the developmental life span and should not be treated as though they were psychologically the same as children or adults. However, researchers use the term child to cover developmental years from birth to the early twenties--early adulthood (Chandler, 1982; Cooper, 1983; Omizo et al., 1988). Elkind explains:

In today's society we seem unable to accept the fact of adolescence, that there are young people in transition from childhood to adulthood who need adult guidance and direction they are not adults capable of carrying the adult responsibilities we confer upon them. And they are not children whose subservience to adults can be taken for granted. (1984, p. 4)

Chandler (1982) suggests that teenagers are caught between the two worlds of childhood and adulthood.

Price (1985) points out that educators searching for literature on stress in adolescents will find a scarcity of empirical studies. Furthermore, Omizo et al. (1988) report that no study exists of the school age population which provides data on stressors and their symptoms.

Much of the research reviewing stress in adolescents

focuses on a particular time period in the adolescent's life. Studies of this nature examine stress faced by adolescents during the time their family moves (Donahue & Gullatta, 1983), the stress levels adolescent girls face during pregnancy (Ross-Reynolds & Hardy, 1985), or adolescent's stress prior to taking a test (Leal & Others, 1981).

Additional research concentrates on special segments of the adolescent population. Examples of studies with special segments vary. Krysiak (1987) conceded that homosexual teenagers were leading stressful lives due to their sexual preference. In 1983, Yadusky-Holahan and Holahan reviewed the stress levels of gifted adolescents. They reported a "clear link" between academic stress and depression within this segment. Strother and Jacobs (1984) examined adolescent stress as it related to stepfamily living. They proposed that perhaps the stress detected was related more to the period of adolescence than to stepfamily living.

It is commonly assumed, due to the work of Erik Erikson, that the period of adolescence is a difficult and complex one (Elkind, 1984). He suggested that during this time teenagers are trying to develop a personal identity. In addition, Elkind contends:

It (society) has rendered them (teenagers) more vulnerable to stress while at the same time exposing them to new and more powerful stresses than were ever

faced by previous generations of adolescents. It is not surprising, then, to find that the number of stress-related problems among teenagers has more than trebled in the last decade and a half. (p. 6)

Assessing these stress-related problems becomes difficult since an appropriate inventory has not been developed. Researchers have called for the creation of a valid, reliable, and sensitive instrument designed especially for adolescents (Baran, 1983; Price, 1985). Instead, researchers have used other instruments and drawn conclusions about stress levels based on these scores. For example, Fontana and Dovidio (1984) assessed the relationship between stress and school-related performances by using the Coddington Senior High School Age Group Form. This instrument measures the amount of readjustment an adolescent needs due to life events of the past twelve months. In another study by Yadusky-Holahan and Holahan (1983), several combined instruments were used to determine the effect of academic stress on depression and anxiety levels. These instruments, the Depression Adjective Check List, IPAT Anxiety Scale, and the Mooney Problem Check List, were administered to determine the link between academic stress and depression.

Additional research is needed if conclusions are to be made and coping strategies are to be taught. As Price states, "considering the apparent importance of stress to

subsequent health, it would seem that continued research into adolescent stress is clearly important" (1985, p. 40). Many of the available studies assessing stress have developed inventories specifically suited for the problem under investigation. Consequently, these unique inventories cannot be generalized from study to study. In addition, by looking at only one stress variable, a comprehensive evaluation of adolescent stress is not gained. Otherwise, factors of stress are seen in isolation and this does not provide a total picture of what today's adolescent is facing. Studies of this nature must cover various aspects of life and take into consideration significant variables.

An example of a comprehensive study was conducted by Baran (1983) who examined stress in high school students. He reported stress perceptions from students and teachers gained through his own Stress Assessment Inventory. The instrument was administered to 913 students and 478 teachers in the largest public high school district in Illinois outside of the city of Chicago. Participants were asked to rate their perceived levels of stress.

The Stress Assessment Inventory was divided into four separate subscales: peers, family, teachers, and school. Results varied depending on gender, school classification, and the group completing the instrument. For example, females exhibited greater stress levels on the peer subscale than males; whereas, males exhibited greater stress than

females on the family subscale. In relation to a student's year in school and level of stress, seniors showed higher perceptions of the sources of stress than the other classes on all four subscales; juniors showed significance on the school subscale at the .05 confidence level; sophomores showed significance on the family subscale at the .05 confidence level; and freshmen showed no significant differences. Finally, teachers, males more than females, perceived levels of stress in their students to be greater than students reported in themselves.

Another comprehensive study involving stress and adolescents was conducted by Smith in 1984. Her study, similar to Baran's, investigated stressors perceived by high school students. However, Smith went beyond gender and grade level differences to see if other variables affected stress. By using her own instrument, the Worst School-life/Best School-life Events Questionnaire, Smith assesses differences in students due to environment (urban or rural); race (black or white); participation or non-participation in extracurricular activities; socioeconomic status of parents; number of parents in household; grade average (A, B, C, D, or F); grade level (10th, 11th, or 12th); and sex (male or female).

The inventory was given to 201 rural and 193 urban students in West Tennessee. Results obtained showed significant differences for each of the variables listed

above. Based on these findings, Smith drew the following conclusions: (a) urban students are more concerned about aversive school-related events than rural students; (b) black students show a greater interest in school programs than white students; (c) students who participate in extracurricular activities were more concerned about sustaining good grades than those students who are non-participants; (d) students who have college educated parents display more concern and pleasure over events that affect them individually; (e) "A" or "B" average students were more interested about events that express poor academic achievement than students with lesser grades; (f) one-parent families have students that show more concern over academic success and good conduct than students living in two-parent families; (g) seniors exhibit more pleasure than sophomores or juniors over school events that relate to academic and good behavior; and (h) females express more concern than males about aversive school events but also express more pleasure over positive school events than males.

More research is needed in relation to teenagers and the stressors that affect their lives. This is especially true for the "normal" adolescent, who is not a "problem" student nor a member of a special segment of the population (Baran, 1983).

Stressors faced by adolescents are numerous and diverse. They range from major life events such as death or

pregnancy to minor life events such as trouble sleeping or losing things. All variables are needed to assemble a complete profile of adolescents' stress before attempting to manage it. As Omizo et al. propose, "in order for school counselors, teachers, and parents to assist children in coping with stress, we believe it is important to have a better understanding of what events are stressful to them and what the indicators are that they are under stress" (1988, p. 268).

The purpose of this study is to examine self-perceived stress in high school students through the use of a questionnaire. Stressors dealing with various aspects of life will be examined. It is hypothesized that high school students will not encounter significant stress levels in their lives. In addition, there will be no significant differences in stress levels when responses are grouped according to school classification and gender.

CHAPTER 2

Methodology

In an attempt to examine the various stressors facing high school students, a questionnaire was administered to the summer school student body of Montgomery County. The population included students from the 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grade.

Before the questionnaire was administered, the Assistant Director of Schools reviewed the questionnaire and approved it for use. Permission slips (see Appendix A) were sent to all parents explaining the purpose of the survey and requesting authorization for their son or daughter to participate. Permission from the students was also requested.

Each class was visited to distribute the permission slips and to explain the importance of the survey. Students were informed that if they do not return the permission slips with their parents' approval, they would not be allowed to participate.

The questionnaire (see Appendix B), called "What Stresses You," was developed by the author. The inventory includes stressors noted in the literature and from problems expressed by high school students in counseling sessions. Three demographic questions are included for information on grade, sex, and birthdate. The next 119 questions are for

the purpose of assessing various stressors. The questions are divided into six categories including parents, brothers and sisters, home environment, personal, school, and social life. The respondents were asked to rank how stressful each situation is based on the following scale: very stressful, moderately stressful, slightly stressful, not stressful, and I have never experienced this. After each section, an "other" category is placed in order for students to list stressors not covered by the inventory.

Only those students who returned their permission slips were excused from class to take the survey. All participants met in a centralized location where a standardized set of instructions were read to all (see Appendix C).

Completed surveys were placed in a pile to insure confidentiality. The entire administration took approximately 20 minutes.

Following computation of the results, copies were made available to the Director of Schools and his Assistant for review. Sharing the findings with other schools or administrations will be up to the discretion of the Director of Schools.

CHAPTER 3

Results

The high school population (N=76) taking the stress inventory consisted of 64% males and 36% females; consequently, the results from this questionnaire may be skewed toward the male point of view. Seniors were the smallest group (14%) participating in the study; whereas, juniors made up the largest group with 37% participating. The remainder of the sample consisted of 26% sophomores and 22% freshmen. Respondents ranged in age from 14 years, 6 months to 19 years, 2 months.

Subjects were asked to choose from the following responses: very stressful, moderately stressful, slightly stressful, not stressful, and I have not experienced this. Results were then computed using two separate cross tallies. The first cross tally examined differences between grade classification, while the second examined differences between gender.

Tables 1 through 6 report chi-square and probabilities for each variable comparing grade classification and sex. The tables are separated based on the subscale of the Inventory. Only those variables that reached significance and approached significance will be discussed.

The null hypothesis that there would be no significant differences in stress levels when responses were compared by

grade classification was rejected for 11 separate variables. Likewise, the null hypothesis that there would be no significant differences in stress levels when comparisons are made according to gender also was rejected. Fourteen variables showed levels of significance at the .05 level.

Parent Stressors

When responses of students in the 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grade were analyzed on the parent subscale, three variables showed significant differences (see Table 1). Seniors perceived "my parents don't pay attention to me" as less stressful than the other grades. Again, seniors along with freshmen, perceived "my parents don't like my friends" and "my parents like my brother/sister better than me" as less stressful than sophomores and juniors.

Variables that were approaching significance on the parent subscale but were not significant included: "act old-fashioned," "demand too much from me," "physically hurt me," and "take privileges away to punish me." These variables might be interesting to note for future study.

When differences between the genders were analyzed, only one variable was significant. It appears that males were less stressed by the variable "parents don't understand me," than females.

My parents "physically hurt me" and "like my brother/sister better than me" approached significance. These two variables are repeating differences noted on the

chi-square results between grades.

Sibling Stressors

On the brother(s)/sister(s) subscales when differences between the grades were analyzed, two variables reached significance at the .05 level (see Table 2). Seniors and freshmen perceived siblings "doing better in school than I do" and "are compared to me" less stressful than juniors and sophomores.

No significant differences were evident between the sexes. However, two variables approached significance. They included, "pick on and tease me," and "tattle on me."

Also interesting to note on this subscale is the fact that sixteen out of the seventy-six respondents reported they were only children. Consequently, frequencies for this sibling category were low.

Home Environment Stressors

In Table 3, only one variable reached significance when student responses between grades 9, 10, 11, and 12 were analyzed. Juniors and sophomores reported their home environment "makes me want to live on my own" as being more stressful to them than seniors or freshmen. No items approached significance.

Differences between the genders were significant for "makes me want to run away" at the .05 level. Females perceived this variable as more stressful than males. Similar to this variable was "makes me want to live on my

own" which only approached significance.

Personal Stressors

On the personal subscale (see Table 4), no variables were significantly different when responses between grades were compared. Three variables approaching significance included, "not feeling good emotionally," "all the expectations people put on me," and "not having control on your life."

When differences between the genders were analyzed, six variables reached significance at the .05 confidence level. Females perceived the following variables as more stressful than males, "not liking yourself," "not liking the way you look," "having too much responsibility," "no one understands me," "having bad dreams," and "losing a pet." Only one variable approached significance, "feeling that you're not smart enough."

School Stressors

In Table 5, when responses of students in the 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grade were analyzed, four variables reached significance. Juniors and sophomores perceived "leaving home after graduation" as being more stressful than seniors and freshmen. However, only juniors perceived "can't make team or squad in extracurricular activities," "being suspended," and "catching up on work that I have missed" as more stressful than all other grade levels. "Deciding between going to college or getting a job" and

"getting credits to graduate" approached significance.

On the school subscale, differences between the genders were analyzed and two variables reached significance at .05. Females perceived "not getting along with teacher(s)" as being more stressful than males; whereas, males perceived "meeting with the guidance counselor" more stressful.

Social Life Stressors

The variable "trying to be a part of a group" was the only stressor exhibiting a significant difference between grades (see Table 6). Sophomores perceived this variable as more moderately stressful than the other grades. Two variables approaching significance included, "pressure from friends to do things" and "knowing my friends are doing things I don't approve of."

When differences between males and females were analyzed, three variables reached significance at the .05 level. On the variable "getting other social diseases (such as herpes, VD, etc.)," equal numbers of males and females perceived this as very stressful, but five times as many males than females reported they had never experienced this. Females perceived "missing old friends that I can't see anymore" more stressful than males with one half reporting in the very stressful range. On the other hand, only one third of the males compared with two thirds of the females perceived "hearing about the suicide of someone my age" as very stressful.

CHAPTER 4

Discussion

This study attempted to show that high school students would exhibit no significant differences in stress levels in relation to grade classification and gender. This null hypothesis was rejected because the results did not support it.

One of the major considerations that must be noted when reviewing these results is the nature of the sample population. The participants in this study were students enrolled in summer school. Although students go to summer school for a variety of reasons, it would seem that the majority of respondents were attending due to a lack of success during the regular school year. However, since subjects were not asked why they were in summer school, conclusions cannot be drawn as to the type of group tested.

The majority of variables did not indicate differences between grade classification or sex. This might suggest that students attending summer school experience equal levels of stress. On the other hand, this could be due to students in the various grades taking the same classes. As a result, differentiating between the grades might not be as evident during summer school.

Although significant differences were noted between males and females, generalizations should be viewed with

caution. Recent research on sex differences varies. Statements such as females experience more stress than males could be erroneous if the study has not been examined properly. Stress reactions can vary depending upon the variable under observation, data analysis, or the way the variables are presented to the subject (Goldberger & Breznitz, 1982).

Further significant differences were noted in the parents, brother(s)/sister(s), and home environment subscale. Together these sections may be viewed as an examination of the family. However, again, statements of a general nature in regard to stress and the family are very complex. Family constellations find adolescents living with one parent, stepparents, relatives, or guardians. Levine and Scotch (1970) contends that this lack of a common family form makes empirical research difficult. In addition, stressors that seem to be centered in the family may actually be displaced and arising from situations outside of the family.

Observations made on the social life subscale and the personal subscale support findings noted by the National Institute of Mental Health (1981). Based on frequency counts, several variables were high ranking consistently on both inventories. Examples of variables that students were most concerned about included troublesome thoughts about the future, thoughts about death, too many responsibilities, and

social obligations. These similarities support their conclusion that "the influence of peers, preoccupation with the physical and social self, and concern about the future are strong during the adolescent years" (p. 109).

In addition to assessing the variables listed, many subjects offered stressors of their own in the "other" section. The "other" section was supplied in each subscale in order for participants to add items of stress that were overlooked. A few respondents used the "other" section to make comments.

On the parent subscale, respondents identified a variety of stressors not listed on the inventory. Parental acceptance of their subjects' peers was mentioned by three of the participants. Responses such as "are too quick to judge my friends," "don't like any of my boyfriends," and "don't give enough time with my friends" displayed negative feelings.

Concerns over parents' finances were expressed by three participants. Their stress stemmed from "lack of money" and "financial problems." Consequently, this led to further concerns about bills and not having the money to buy material things.

Other stressors were the result of rules parents had set down. For example, regulations that monitored special privileges, curfews, and behavior at home were viewed as being very stressful. One respondent sums it up by saying,

"they want to run my life after school when I am on my own."

Personal findings about how parents treated and viewed their children made up another category of stressful situations. Respondents reported that they were "not being trusted," "treated like a child," "used as a pawn," and "ignored." Furthermore, one female stated her parents "call me names that I wouldn't call my worst enemy." Still another female went so far as to say, "they make me want to hate them."

In addition to the stressors mentioned, comments were made. One student revealed that "mine (parents) are never at home with me and when they are they are asleep." Another student made this comment, "parents just need to understand that some of us care and we know what's not right and don't do drugs and other crap. But no--if we look like we do, I guess we do in parents' eyes?"

Frustrations over conflicts with brother(s) and/or sister(s) were the subject of additional stressors. Three respondents commented on how their siblings used their personal belongings without asking. As one student put it, "they think they own the house and everything in it."

Other differences with siblings occurred when someone other than the parents were in charge. One female claimed her "brothers and sisters try to be the parents." On the other hand, one male complained, "they don't obey me when I'm in charge." Still another student added, "my older

brother has moved out--I feel the need to set a good example for my little brother and sister now that I'm the oldest."

Perceiving themselves as different from other siblings constituted another group of stressors. Respondents reported their siblings "constantly getting pampered," "being liked better," and "doing no wrong in parents' eyes." One male felt his siblings were not as popular as himself; whereas, one female felt her siblings thought they were better than her.

Home environment stressors were very diverse. They ranged from "too religious and closed in" to "too vacant and boring." Similarly, other respondents complained their homes were "too shabby and poor looking" and "about to fall apart." One content student remarked, "my home isn't noisy or quiet--it's just right."

Additional stressors at home were noted when parents were upset or not at home. One student listed that a move was very stressful because her parents had "not asked the kids first." Finally, one respondent commented, "I would just rather be at work or school."

One of the major stressors for students on the school subscale was not being allowed to smoke. The respondents felt that after a test or eating lunch, being allowed to smoke could relieve some stress.

Consequences due to failing or misconduct in school was another common theme. Students expressed concerns about

"being kicked out of school" and "being sent to alternative school." Two respondents found it very stressful to "stay out of trouble" and "resist the temptation to skip school."

Only one participant noted any stress regarding teachers and that was with unfair teachers. However, general complaints about school were as follows: "too many rules," "having to quit sports because of grades," "takes too much time," and "getting up at 6:30."

One senior reported he was stressed because he had to attend summer school for just one credit in order to get his diploma. In addition, a junior reported, "I have made only one bad grade in my life--that's why I'm here (I made a C in Algebra I). I have a 4.0 GPA besides that." This supports the point that generalizations in regard to the type of student found in summer school cannot be made.

Under the last subscale, social life, another area was supplied for respondents to report any stressors the inventory may have neglected. This section was included in order to get ideas for future inventories. The answers did provide additional stressors.

Several respondents listed stressors that dealt with their social life with regard to the opposite sex. Three females reported that decisions concerning boyfriends were stressful. Similarly, two males noted decisions about having sex and finding companions caused stress.

Parents, again, were listed as a source of stress.

Mothers, in particular, were mentioned by three female students. One sophomore stated it was stressful to "watch your mom hit your little sisters." A junior stated that "not telling my mother I'm on the pill" is stressful. Whereas, another junior reported, "my mother was a teenager a long time ago and doesn't understand my age group." Additional responses mentioned the lack of trust their parents exhibited and not being permitted to do things.

Financial concerns appeared on three questionnaires. Stressors listed were "trying to buy a car," "job stress," and "not making enough money."

Some of the most serious stressors mentioned were drugs and smoking pot. In addition, one student identified stress in "thinking you tried to kill yourself and it didn't work!"

It is important to note that many of the responses students provided are very normal. Erikson concedes that the period of adolescence finds teenagers struggling through an identity crisis. Consequently, many of the responses signal an attempt to gain independence and therefore, conflict arises (Corsini, 1973).

Further study into the validation of a comprehensive stress inventory is recommended. The items that students provided should be considered as additional stressors. An increased awareness of what is stressful could help students cope with stress.

A second recommendation would be to replicate the study

with a larger and more diverse population. Although the summer school sample might be a good target group for future studies, one cannot be sure how heterogeneous a sample it is. The students enrolled in summer school cannot clearly be labeled "average" or "normal." By using the terms "average" or "normal" to describe a group, it is meant that this is not a special or problem segment of the population as a whole. Perhaps conducting a survey during the regular school year would supply a more random sampling.

In addition, it is recommended that a study of this nature include additional independent variables such as race, parents' marital status, academic progress, and others. Another suggestion would be to examine perceptions of stress at the junior high level.

Finally, findings of this study and others should be shared with the appropriate administrators, counselors, teachers, and possibly parents. In-service days or workshops could provide adults with knowledge about recognizing these stressors in adolescents. Furthermore, stress management classes or seminars could be constructed to teach coping skills.

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TABLES

Table 1

Parent Subscale

Variables	Grade		Sex	
	Chi-Square	Probability	Chi-Square	Probability
My parents . . .				
1. are not getting along with each other	12.826	.382	5.171	.270
2. act old-fashioned	19.772	.072**	4.644	.326
3. demand too much of me	19.184	.084**	2.419	.659
4. are too strict	11.730	.468	1.574	.813
5. are not home very much	7.696	.808	3.065	.547
6. are not in good health	18.177	.110	4.393	.355
7. nag me	9.307	.677	2.614	.624
8. don't pay attention to me	23.046	.027*	3.312	.507
9. pressure me to go to church	17.112	.145	3.164	.531
10. don't like my friends	25.080	.014*	3.603	.462
11. can't afford to buy me things I want	5.356	.945	2.572	.632
12. treat me unfairly	11.997	.446	3.736	.436
13. physically hurt me	19.645	.074**	8.876	.064**
14. don't understand me	10.475	.574	9.596	.048*
15. are separated	7.453	.826	3.139	.535
16. won't allow my friends over to my house	11.857	.457	2.898	.575

Variables	Grade		Sex	
	Chi-Square	Prob-ability	Chi-Square	Prob-ability
17. don't like their job(s)	12.311	.421	1.702	.790
18. argue with me	8.817	.719	3.921	.417
19. like my brother/sister better than me	20.899	.052*	8.310	.081**
20. don't go to church	16.432	.172	3.236	.519
21. are considering retirement	10.516	.571	3.924	.416
22. are getting a divorce	13.036	.366	.896	.925
23. aren't getting along with the neighbors	3.837	.922	1.971	.579
24. take privileges away to punish me	19.641	.074**	1.446	.836
25. don't give me any or enough allowance	14.856	.249	2.744	.602
26. could possibly die	14.571	.266	3.934	.415
27. have remarried	2.865	.996	.405	.982
28. put too many chores on me	9.551	.665	4.552	.340
29. drink too much	8.940	.708	6.300	.178

*Significant

**Approaching Significance

Table 2

Sibling Subscale

Variables	Grade		Sex	
	Chi-Square	Prob-ability	Chi-Square	Prob-ability
My brother(s) and/or sister(s) . . .				
1. pick on and tease me	8.082	.779	8.349	.080**
2. have to go everywhere with me	9.074	.697	3.600	.463
3. tatttle on me	13.658	.323	8.337	.080**
4. argue with me	8.857	.715	4.111	.391
5. need me to babysit them	15.510	.215	3.773	.438
6. are not living with our family anymore	11.497	.487	5.649	.227
7. need me to set an example for them	16.000	.191	3.282	.512
8. use things that belong to me	16.683	.162	5.758	.218
9. share a room with me	17.521	.131	1.815	.770
10. do better in school than I do	20.782	.054*	6.820	.146
11. don't have as many chores as I do	13.258	.351	6.965	.138
12. get into trouble	15.589	.211	6.564	.161
13. are compared to me	20.853	.053*	5.683	.224

*Significant

**Approaching Significance

Table 3

Home Environment Subscale

Variables	Grade		Sex	
	Chi-Square	Prob-ability	Chi-Square	Prob-ability
My home environment . . .				
1. is too noisy	16.770	.158	5.079	.279
2. doesn't give me any privacy	15.711	.205	3.196	.526
3. makes me want to run away	14.336	.280	10.671	.031*
4. allows me no free time	14.582	.265	3.919	.417
5. is too quiet	13.921	.306	1.976	.740
6. is new--because of a recent move	9.730	.640	2.732	.604
7. makes me want to live on my own	23.767	.022*	8.863	.065**
8. is too far away from relatives	10.377	.583	5.657	.226
9. is too far away from old friends	12.510	.406	2.103	.717

*Significant

**Approaching Significance

Personal Subscale

Variables	Grade		Sex	
	Chi-Square	Probability	Chi-Square	Probability
Personal . . .				
1. not liking yourself	12.891	.377	12.175	.016*
2. feeling that you're not smart enough	11.523	.485	8.090	.088**
3. not liking the way you look	10.897	.538	9.926	.042*
4. having too much responsibility	8.910	.711	10.693	.030*
5. the pressure to set an example	14.578	.265	2.303	.680
6. not feeling good physically	15.879	.197	4.071	.396
7. not feeling good emotionally	18.561	.100**	3.592	.464
8. no one understands me	15.676	.207	14.070	.007*
9. not being popular enough	13.205	.354	1.455	.835
10. all the expectations people put on me	18.655	.097**	.662	.956
11. not liking the way I act	11.228	.509	4.967	.291
12. feeling lonely	10.784	.548	2.527	.640
13. feeling depressed	6.618	.882	3.836	.429
14. not having control on your life	19.941	.068**	3.973	.410
15. having bad dreams	13.819	.312	13.461	.009*
16. the death of a relative	16.279	.179	1.908	.753

Table 4 (continued)

Variables	Grade		Sex	
	Chi-Square	Prob-ability	Chi-Square	Prob-ability
17. losing a pet	10.673	.557	10.359	.035*
18. wanting to hurt yourself	16.335	.176	5.004	.287

*Significant

**Approaching Significance

School Subscale

Variables	Grade		Sex	
	Chi-Square	Prob-ability	Chi-Square	Prob-ability
School . . .				
1. making bad grades	11.606	.478	2.578	.631
2. too much homework	10.870	.540	3.213	.523
3. trouble taking tests	10.118	.606	3.244	.518
4. trying to make good grades	14.435	.274	6.919	.140
5. getting credits to graduate	20.142	.064**	3.409	.492
6. getting sent to the office	15.430	.219	7.280	.122
7. not getting along with teacher(s)	11.456	.490	9.723	.045*
8. adjusting to a new school	7.757	.804	7.685	.104**
9. no interest in school subjects	17.284	.139	5.312	.257
10. do not have study skills	12.752	.387	1.257	.869
11. not getting along with fellow classmates	12.515	.405	3.901	.420
12. no time to do homework	10.398	.581	.972	.914
13. deciding whether to quit school	18.121	.112	6.665	.115
14. do not like to speak aloud in class	9.687	.643	2.236	.692
15. leaving home after high school graduation	21.003	.050*	3.429	.489
16. going to summer school	16.728	.160	5.066	.281

Variables	Grade		Sex	
	Chi-Square	Prob-ability	Chi-Square	Prob-ability
17. pressure to go to college	16.833	.156	1.005	.909
18. deciding between going to college or getting a job	18.671	.097**	_.044	.400
19. being accepted to a college	10.882	.539	1.549	.818
20. school work is too hard	10.957	.533	5.875	.209
21. do not understand class assignments	11.325	.501	3.707	.447
22. can't make team or squad in extracurricular activities	26.641	.009*	.678	.954
23. parents won't allow me to participate in extra.	16.214	.182	8.356	.079**
24. being suspended	27.045	.008*	3.620	.460
25. catching up on work that I have missed	23.462	.024*	2.819	.588
26. parent-teacher conferences	18.222	.112	5.407	.248
27. meeting with the guidance counselor	15.476	.203	10.784	.029*

*Significant

**Approaching Significance

Social Life Subscale

Variables	Grade		Sex	
	Chi-Square	Prob-ability	Chi-Square	Prob-ability
Social Life . . .				
1. trying to make friends	11.170	.514	1.633	.803
2. trying to be part of a group	21.769	.040*	4.024	.403
3. pressure from friends to do things	20.300	.062**	.852	.931
4. getting teased by others	5.105	.954	2.576	.631
5. liking someone and they don't like you back	12.436	.411	3.480	.481
6. not getting along with friends	11.720	.468	4.716	.318
7. people spreading rumors about me	12.676	.393	5.348	.253
8. trying to decide what is right and wrong	11.032	.526	.426	.980
9. (as a female) I feel like boys don't like me	5.615	.934	17.327	.002*
10. (as a male) I feel like girls don't like me	17.029	.149	5.240	.264
11. others try to break me and my boyfriend/girlfriend up	13.228	.353	6.611	.158
12. trying to find a boyfriend or girlfriend	15.165	.233	4.919	.296

Variables	Grade		Sex	
	Chi-Square	Prob-ability	Chi-Square	Prob-ability
13. trying to decide whether to have sex or wait	10.491	.573	6.048	.196
14. becoming pregnant or getting someone pregnant	18.172	.111	1.244	.871
15. getting AIDS	8.554	.740	7.747	.101**
16. getting other social diseases (such as herpes, VD, etc.)	16.381	.174	10.632	.031*
17. trying to decide on my sexual preference	5.789	.926	3.175	.529
18. missing old friends that I can't see anymore	6.710	.876	13.309	.010*
19. hearing about the suicide of someone my age	9.802	.633	14.847	.005*
20. knowing my friends are doing things I don't approve of	18.537	.100**	2.451	.653
21. trying to get a date	12.824	.382	6.229	.183
22. getting caught doing something that is wrong	12.102	.437	4.964	.291

*Significant

**Approaching Significance

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT FOR STRESS SURVEY

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY--AUSTIN PEAY STATE UNIVERSITY

Dear Parents: I am a graduate student at Austin Peay State University. I would like to do a study to find out what causes stress in high school students. In order to do this, I would like to give your son/daughter a questionnaire called "What Stresses You?" that will take only 15 minutes to fill out.

Names are not required so individual student responses cannot be identified. Participation is voluntary and no risk is involved for the students. Students are free to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. If you have any questions or are interested in obtaining a copy of the results, please call me, Valerie Dickson, at 647-7958 or my supervisor from Austin Peay, Dr. Jean Lewis, at 648-7233.

Please have your son/daughter return this permission slip by Monday, July 11th. Your son or daughter's responses may give us important information on how we can help teenagers deal with stress. Thank you for caring.

I agree to have my son/daughter take part in this project.

PARENT'S NAME _____

PARENT'S SIGNATURE _____

STUDENT'S NAME _____

STUDENT'S SIGNATURE _____

APPENDIX B

Everyone faces some type of stress. This stress can come from many different places, including the home, school, friends, or yourself. In order to help young people deal with their stress, we need to know from you what causes stress in your life. No names are required, so please answer honestly. With this information, hopefully, we will have a better understanding of stress and develop ways to work with it.

General Information

GRADE: _____

SEX: _____

DATE OF BIRTH: _____

Directions

Please read each of the following statements and decide how stressful they are to you based on this scale by placing a check mark in the appropriate column. You will have five (5) categories to choose from:

- *Very Stressful
- *Moderately Stressful
- *Slightly Stressful
- *Not Stressful
- *I Have Never Experienced This Situation

Please check how stressful the following situations are when:

VERY STRESSFUL	MODERATELY STRESSFUL	SLIGHTLY STRESSFUL	NOT STRESSFUL	I HAVE NEVER EXPERIENCED THIS
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MY PARENTS.....

1. are not getting along with each other
2. act old-fashioned
3. demand too much of me
4. are too strict
5. are not home very much
6. are not in good health
7. nag me
8. don't pay attention to me
9. pressure me to go to church
10. don't like my friends
11. can't afford to buy me things I want
12. treat me unfairly
13. physically hurt me
14. don't understand me
15. are separated
16. won't allow my friends over to my house
17. don't like their jobs
18. argue with me
19. like my brother/sister better than me
20. don't go to church
21. are considering retirement
22. are getting a divorce
23. aren't getting along with the neighbors
24. take privileges away to punish me
25. don't give me any or enough allowance
26. could possibly die
27. have remarried
28. put too many chores on me
29. drink too much

OTHER - Please add your own and check the appropriate column.

Please check how stressful the following situations

SCHOOL.....

	VERY STRESSFUL	MODERATELY STRESSFUL	SLIGHTLY STRESSFUL	NOT STRESSFUL	I HAVE NEVER EXPERIENCED THIS
1. making bad grades					
2. too much homework					
3. trouble taking tests					
4. trying to make good grades					
5. getting ready to graduate					
6. getting sent to the office					
7. not getting along with teachers					
8. adjusting to a new school					
9. no interest in school subjects					
10. do not have study skills					
11. not getting along with classmates					
12. no time to do homework					
13. deciding whether to quit school					
14. do not care to speak aloud in class					
15. coming home after being absent					
16. going to summer school					
17. pressure to go to college					
18. deciding between college or getting a job					
19. being accepted by a college					
20. schedule is too full					
21. do not understand class assignments					
22. can't make team sports or extracurricular activities					
23. parents won't let me join extracurricular activities					
24. being suspended					
25. catching up on work that I have missed					
26. parent-teacher conferences					
27. meeting with the guidance counselor					

OTHER - Please add your own and check the appropriate column.

Please check how stressful the following situations are concerning you:

SOCIAL LIFE.....

	VERY STRESSFUL	MODERATELY STRESSFUL	SLIGHTLY STRESSFUL	NOT STRESSFUL	I HAVE NEVER EXPERIENCED THIS
1. trying to make friends					
2. trying to be part of a group					
3. pressure from friends to do things					
4. getting teased by others					
5. liking someone and they don't like me back					
6. not getting along with friends					
7. people spreading rumors about me					
8. trying to decide what is right and wrong					
9. as a female, I feel like boys don't like me					
10. as a male, I feel like girls don't like me					
11. others try to break me and my relationship with friends					
12. trying to find a boyfriend or girlfriend					
13. trying to decide whether to have sex or not					
14. becoming pregnant or getting someone pregnant					
15. getting AIDS					
16. getting other sexual diseases (such as herpes, VD, etc)					
17. trying to decide on my sexual preference					
18. missing old friends that I can't see anymore					
19. worrying about the success of someone I like					
20. knowing my friends are doing things that I disapprove					
21. trying to get a date					
22. getting involved in something that is wrong					

In order to help young people further, we want you to tell us what stressful life situations we have missed. Please write them below and check the appropriate column so that we may include them on our next survey. Thank you for your help.

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study. Your help is important for us to find out what causes stress in people of your age. Please be honest in your answers. You do not have to give your name, so no one but you will know how you have answered. Do not spend a lot of time on any one question. The entire questionnaire should take you no longer than 20 minutes. Feel free to add items that we have missed. If you have any questions about an item, please raise your hand. Let's begin by reading the introductory paragraph on the first page under "What stresses You?" (READ PARAGRAPH ALOUD). Under General Information, please list the grade you were in as of May 1st of this year. Do not put the grade you are going into. (REPEAT!) Answer the sex information as either male or female. Finally, write the date you were born. Please write the name of the month rather than a number and include the year. (REPEAT!) Please follow along with me as I read the directions paragraph. (READ PARAGRAPH ALOUD) Are there any questions? Again, thank you.