

## Effect of Perceived Stress on Type A Behaviour Among Adolescents

*Rajesh Kumar\**, *Roshan Lal\*\** & *Beenu Varma\*\*\**

### ABSTRACT

*Stress is a response to a stimulus that disturbs person's physical and mental equilibrium. It is a feeling of strain and pressure. Perceived stress means the degree of stress in which individual appraises one self. The degree of perceiving stress will directly affect person's behaviour. There are two types of behaviour: Type A behaviour and Type B behavior. Type A behaviour personality tends to be very competitive, time urgent, hostile and aggressive. Type B behaviour includes relaxed personality. In the present research the aim is to study the effect of perceived stress on type A Behaviour among adolescents. Sample consists of 80 university students selected randomly from Panjab University Chandigarh. Participants responded on Perceived Stress Scale by Cohen (1994) and Type A Behaviour Pattern- TABP by Bortner (1969). The results that were found do not support the hypothesis.*

**Key words:** *Perceived stress, Personality, Type A behaviour, Aggression.*

### Introduction

Modern life is full of stress. Every person feels stress in one way or other. It influences physical and mental health of the person, it affect the person's health system (Mayberry & Graham 2001). There are many types of stress that human beings perceive. Eustress and distress are among them. Eustress is the positive stress and Distress is the negative stress that leads the person towards stronger stress and anxiety. There are many other types of stress like chronic stress, long term stress, short term stress, episodic stress etc. Distress causes serious damage to a person's physical as well as mental health condition (Selye, 1974). The way one handles the difficult situation influences physical and mental health. Perceiving stress means how much the person measure or appraises the situation as stressful. The degree to feel stress in one's life is the perceived stress. The more one sees the negative perspective of the circumstances the more the person feels or measures the situation as full of stress. It is the extent to which a person perceive or appraise that their demands exceed their ability to cope. When a person is not able to

---

\* Assistant Professor, Post Graduate Government College-46, Chandigarh

\*\* Assistant Professor, Panjab University, Chandigarh

\*\*\* Resource Person, Post Graduate Government College-46, Chandigarh

cope with the difficult situation only then the person perceives stress.

There are individual differences in handling the same circumstances. Two different individuals perceive the same situation in two different perspectives. Their Personality as individuals are unique. Psychologists regard personality as a person's unique long-term pattern of thinking, emotions, and behavior (Burger, 2011; Ewen, 2009). There are various types of personality. Two contrasting personality types i.e. Type A and Type B describe the theories. Type A person is the time pressured, competitive, hostile personality types who suffer an elevated risk of heart disease (Friedman & Rosenman, 1974; Jenkins, Rosenman & Zyzanski, 1974) corresponds to Horney's expansive personality type. Type B is the relaxed and calm personality.

Type A personality generally lives at a higher stress level. They set very high and difficult goals and to achieve that goal, they do everything and cross their upper limit of strength. They even feel pressure of time, but working constantly with full dedication and hard work. They hate failure and will work hard to avoid that failure. They enjoy but after achieving the goals i.e. the difficult goals. The positive part is that Type A persons are more associated with their performance and output (Barling & Charbonneau, 1992)

Type A/B behaviour pattern is the behavioral trait. Characteristics of type A personality are like aggression, hostile, hard driving, fast paced i.e. in talking, walking etc., irritated, time pressured. They tend to be tense and agitated when it comes to work and are very competitive. They have poor impulse control (Rosenman & Chesney, 1985). Type A behaviour have been linked to the stress related illnesses. Researchers found that impatience is positively correlated with somatic self complaints.

### **Review of Literature**

Study conducted by Thuesen et al. (2014) found that those who perceived stress were having personality traits like aggressive, hostile and neurotic.

A study done by Rhodewalt et al (1984) on fifty one university administrators (categorized as type A & type B) revealed that work stress interacted with Type A behaviour pattern. Type A personality reported more psychological impairment and cardiovascular related health problems than type B.

Another study done by Sinha (1973) on a sample of 762 male members examined the relationship between stress and type A behavior pattern. It was found that there is significant relationship between role stress and type A behaviour pattern.

Study done by Keenan & McBain (1974) revealed that participants having type A personality showed stronger relationship with psychological strain. Study conducted by Caplan et al (1975) showed that perceived stress and type A personality are intercorrelated and have significant relation. The relationship between work load and anxiety was greatest for type A persons.

Russek (1965) in a study compared 100 young people and found that prolonged emotional strains associated with job responsibility provided the development of type A behavior in 91% people.

From the above review of literature it is evident that those who feel or perceive the situation as stressful are having the personality pattern type A.

### Objectives

- To study the relationship between perceived stress and type A behaviour among adolescents.
- To study the effect of perceived stress on Type A behaviour among adolescents.

### Hypotheses

- It is hypothesized that there is significant relationship between perceived stress and type A behaviour.
- It is assumed that adolescents high on perceived stress have Type A behaviour personality.

### Sample

The aim of the present study is to examine the effect of perceived stress on type A behaviour. For this purpose data was collected from 80 undergraduate students of different streams selected randomly from Panjab University Chandigarh ranging in the age of 18 to 22. Subjects were told that confidentiality about their scores will be maintained and data will be used for the research purpose only.

### Tools Used

**Perceived Stress Scale by Cohen (1994)** was used to measure the degree to which participants view situations in their life as stressful. The questions in this scale ask about one's feelings and thoughts during the last month. Items were designed to tap how unpredictable, uncontrollable and overloaded respondents find their lives. Perceived stress scale consists of 10 items. Each item measured on 5 alternatives i.e. 0 to 4. 0 means "never", 1 means "almost never", 2 means "sometimes", 3 means "fairly often", and 4 means "very often". PSS scores are obtained by reversing responses to the four positively stated items and then summing across all scale items. Perceived stress scale has a reliability of 0.81 which shows high reliability.

**Type A Behaviour Pattern- TABP by Bortner (1969):** Type A behaviour was used to measure the behaviour pattern of the individual. It consists of 14 items. Subject have to respond by circling one number for each of the fourteen questions given which reflects the way one behaves in everyday life. Number ranges from 1 to 11. Extreme number shows the lower of higher side of the Type A behaviour. The range of possible scores is from 14 to 154, with the average score of 84. The higher the score, the higher one's type A behavior. The scale has a good reliability and validity.

### Procedure

Keeping in view the objectives of the study, proper rapport was built up with the subjects and then the tools were administered. After this raw scores for both the variables were calculated and median was calculated in perceived stress scores and then on the basis of that type A behaviour scores were divide into high and low. Finally descriptive statistics and t test were used to analyse the scores. Also the correlation was calculated to check the relationship between variables.

## Results and Discussion

**Table I**  
Showing correlation between perceived stress and type A behaviour pattern.

Variables	Correlation (r)
Perceived stress	0.109
Type A behavior	

Table I shows the relationship between perceived stress and type A behavior pattern. The correlation comes out to be 0.109 which shows very weak relationship between perceived stress and type A behavior pattern. There is no significant relationship between perceived stress and type A behavior. It means those who perceive stress does not necessarily mean that they are having personality type A. They are competitive, time pressured and hostile. There is no association between these two variables. The results do not support the hypothesis. One who feels the situation as stressful or deals with the situation in a more time pressured manner is not having type A personality. But sometimes it is like that person is not type A personality, but the work load or the usual difficult circumstances makes the person behaviour hostile and active.

**Table II**  
Showing Mean, SD and t-ratio of type A behaviour with respect to high low scores of Perceived stress.

Variable (N=60)		MEAN	SD	t-ratio
Type A behavior	High	96.740	14.37	0.837
	Low	97.81	22.10	

Table II shows the mean, SD and t ratio of Type A behaviour with respect to the scores of perceived stress which were divided into high and low. Results revealed that there is no significant difference between perceived stress and type A behaviour. The mean of high and low group of type A behavior comes out to be 96.74 and 97.81 respectively. The corresponding SD value found to be 14.37 for the high group and 22.10 for the low group. The t ratio of type A behavior (high-low) on the basis of perceived stress (high-low) was found to be 0.837 and it is not significant at 0.05 level. Again the results do not support the hypothesis. It means that those who perceives stress and distress about particular situation or view the events as stressful do not necessarily have type A personality or behavior. By taking the things with positive affection or good feelings the person feels calm and relaxed and can handle most difficult situation easily. On the other hand taking the things in an aggressive manner and watching the stimulus with bad feelings and by feeling depressed, the person is not adjusted well. No doubt type A behaviour pattern is active and always eager to do something new but side by side persons should remain calm and relaxed to create something which is new and have a different perspective. Study done by Vida (2007) also found that Type A behavioral pattern (TABP) was not related to any of the work stress variables. The question on whether TABP is correlated with perceived stress is still debatable. Sometimes the person is not type A personality but the situation or circumstances or time pressures

makes the person aggressive and hostile. Every person has his own unique way to deal with the hard time.

### References

- Barling, J., & Charbonneau, D. (1992). Disentangling the relationship between the achievement striving and impatience irritability dimensions of Type A behavior, performance and health. *Journal of organizational Behavior*, 13, 369-377.
- Burger, J. M. (2011). *Personality* (8th ed.). Belmont, CA: Cengage Learning/Wadsworth.
- Caplan, R. D., & Jones, K. W. (1975). Effects of work load, role ambiguity, and type A personality on anxiety, depression, and heart rate. *Journal of applied psychology*, 60(6), 713.
- Ewen, R. B. (2009). *An introduction to theories of personality* (7th ed.). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Friedman, M., & Rosenman, R.H. (1974). *Type A behavior and your heart*. Greenwich, CT: Fawcett Crest.
- Jenkins, C.D., Rosenman, R.H., & Zyzanski, S.J. (1974). Prediction of clinical coronary heart disease by a test for the coronary prone behavior pattern. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 290, 1271-1275.
- Keenan, A., & McBain, G. D. M. (1979). Effects of Type A behaviour, intolerance of ambiguity, and locus of control on the relationship between role stress and work related outcomes. *Journal of Occupational Psychology*, 52(4), 277-285.
- Mayberry, D. J., & Graham, D. (2001). Hassles and uplifts: Including interpersonal events. *Stress and Health*, 17, 91–104.
- Rhodewalt, F., Hays, R. B., Chemers, M. M., & Wysocki, J. (1984). Type A Behavior, Perceived Stress, and Illness A Person-Situation Analysis. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 10(1), 149-159.
- Rosenman, R. H. & Chesney, M. A. (1985). *Type A behavior and coronary heart disease: Review of theory and findings*. In C. D. Spielberger & I. G. Sarason (Eds.), *Stress and anxiety*. Washington, DC: Hemisphere.
- Russek (1961). *Management of lower extremity amputees*. *Arch Phys Med Rehabil* 42, 687-703.
- Selye, H. (1974). *Stress without distress*. Philadelphia, PA: J. B. Lippincott.
- Sinha, J.B.P. (1973). *Some problems of public sector organization*. New Delhi National publishing House.
- Thuesen, B. H., Cerqueira, C., Aadahl, M., Ebstrup, J. F., Toft, U., Thyssen, J. P. & Linneberg, A. (2014). Cohort profile: the health2006 cohort, research centre for prevention and health. *International journal of epidemiology*, 43(2), 568-575.
- Vida Nim Yan, Ho (2007). Effect of personality and coping on perceived work stress among the white collar work force in Hong Kong.