

ABSTRACT

CORRELATES OF STRESS EXPERIENCED BY COMMON ENTRANCE CANDIDATES

This study sought to examine the correlates of stress perceived by Grade 6 students in Primary, All-Age and Preparatory Schools as they prepared for the Common Entrance Examination.

The variables explored were: Locus of Control, Age, Expectations of Success, Socio-economic Status, Stress, Parental Pressure, School Climate, Mental Ability, Sex and Available Alternatives.

The sample was taken from four Primary/All Age Schools (N=107) and three Preparatory Schools (N=84). Although the main investigation focussed on the identification of the correlates of Stress by these students, useful comparisons were also made by partitioning the sample by school type and sex.

The data were analysed using various statistical methods. These included Student's 't' test correlational matrices, stepwise multiple regression analyses and frequency tables.

Results

Although no significant differences were revealed between the sexes, many of the variables explored proved to be highly significant correlates of Stress in the overall sample, and the school type and sex sub-samples.

Parental Pressure significantly correlated with Stress at the .01 level for the total sample and primary school and male sub-samples, and at the .05 level for females.

A School Climate which stressed academic achievement was significantly associated with Stress for all groups.

Age was a highly significant correlate at the .01 level for the total sample, and also for males, females and primary schools. Older students experienced greater stress.

Except for the male sub-group, low Mental Ability proved to be a highly significant correlate of Stress.

The implications resulting from these results led to the formulation of recommendations which deplored the necessity for the Common Entrance Examination and sought help for students and their parents in coping with the stress generated by this assessment.