

## Psychological Stress And Anxiety In Urban And Rural Adolescents: A Gender-Based Comparison

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigates the levels of psychological stress and anxiety among urban and rural adolescents, with a focus on gender-based differences. Adolescence is a critical developmental phase, and mental health issues such as stress and anxiety are increasingly prevalent. The research aims to compare the psychological stress and anxiety levels between urban and rural adolescents and examine gender differences within these groups. A total of 60 adolescents (30 males and 30 females) were selected from both urban and rural areas using convenient sampling. Data was collected using standardized psychological stress and anxiety scales. The findings indicate that psychological stress and anxiety are common among adolescents, with a greater prevalence of moderate levels of stress and anxiety across both genders. A significant proportion of adolescents experience high stress (30%) and high anxiety (30%). Furthermore, gender-based differences were observed, with female adolescents reporting higher levels of anxiety and stress than their male counterparts. The study highlights the impact of geographical location and gender on adolescent mental health, suggesting that urban adolescents face stressors related to fast-paced lifestyles, while rural adolescents experience stress due to limited resources. This research underscores the need for targeted mental health interventions for adolescents, considering both geographical and gender-specific factors.

**Keywords:** Psychological stress, anxiety, adolescents, urban, rural, gender differences, mental health

### 1. INTRODUCTION

A person's psychological health is greatly impacted by the fast physical, emotional, cognitive, and social changes that occur during adolescence. During this time, teenagers are especially susceptible to mental health problems including stress and anxiety, which can negatively affect their general quality of life, social interactions, and academic achievement for a long time. Concern has grown in recent years concerning the rising incidence of psychological stress and anxiety among teenagers, which is fuelled by peer pressure, family problems, scholastic pressures, and sociocultural influences. Teenagers' experiences and coping strategies are greatly influenced by the place in which they are nurtured, whether it be urban or rural. Urban teenagers frequently face obstacles like fierce competition, digital media exposure, hectic schedules, and fewer family connections. Conversely, teenagers in rural areas could experience pressures associated with a lack of educational resources, socioeconomic limitations, and limited access to mental health treatments. Urban and rural teenagers may suffer different types and amounts of psychological stress and anxiety due to these disparate environmental influences.

Gender also plays a major role in determining how psychological stress and anxiety are experienced and expressed. Due to a combination of biological, psychological, and sociocultural reasons, research repeatedly demonstrates that high levels of stress and anxiety are more likely to be reported by female adolescents than by their male counterparts. In order to comprehend teenage mental health, gender-based analysis is crucial because gender-specific expectations, emotional sensitivity, and coping mechanisms all play a role in these variations.

Despite the growing awareness of teenage mental health problems, there aren't many thorough research that look at how gender and geography (rural vs. urban) disparities affect adolescents' psychological stress and anxiety at the same time. This study attempts to close this gap by comparing the psychological stress and anxiety levels of teenagers in urban and rural areas based on gender. The study's conclusions will offer important information for creating focused treatments and regulations to promote teenage mental health in various socio-geographical settings.

### 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Kumar et al., (2021) investigated the anxiety levels of young adults in rural and urban regions using a gender-based comparison research. Their study sought to determine how gender and geographic location affect the frequency and intensity of anxiety. According to the study, urban young adults had higher anxiety levels than their rural counterparts, primarily as a result of fast-paced metropolitan living, career competition, and academic stress. In addition, the study found that in both rural and urban environments, female individuals had noticeably higher anxiety levels than male ones. The authors came to the conclusion that gender-related social expectations and environmental stressors have a significant

role in young adults' anxiety, highlighting the necessity for targeted mental health interventions that take gender and geographic disparities into account.

**Wang et al. (2021)** investigated gender disparities in adolescents' psychological status during the COVID-19 pandemic using a cross-sectional survey conducted in six Asia-Pacific nations. With an emphasis on stress, anxiety, and emotional well-being, the study sought to evaluate the effects of the pandemic on the mental health of teenagers. The results showed that, in comparison to their male peers, female adolescents reported noticeably higher levels of psychological discomfort, including higher levels of anxiety, despair, and perceived stress. These disparities were ascribed by the authors to gender-specific vulnerabilities, including coping strategies, social expectations, and increased emotional sensitivity. The study also shown how pandemic-related elements, including as social isolation, disruption of daily schedules, and academic uncertainty, made teenage mental health issues worse. Wang et al. came to the conclusion that in order to alleviate the disproportionate impact of psychological stressors on teenage girls during public health crises, gender-responsive mental health interventions are necessary.

**Friedberg et al. (2023)** investigated, using an empowerment intervention program, the connection between gender-based violence and mental health among teenagers residing in Kenyan informal settlements. The study's main objective was to evaluate the anxiety, PTSD, and depression levels of teenage volunteers who had been exposed to high levels of gender-based violence. According to the findings, mental health problems were significantly more common among female adolescents than male adolescents, with the former exhibiting greater rates of anxiety, sadness, and PTSD symptoms. The study underlined that socioeconomic challenges and exposure to gender-based violence were important factors influencing poor mental health outcomes. The scientists also discovered that, especially for female teenagers, taking part in empowerment interventions improved anxiety and depressive symptoms. Friedberg et al. came to the conclusion that enhancing adolescent well-being in marginalised groups requires focused mental health interventions that address trauma and vulnerabilities unique to gender.

**Ozer, Fernald, and Roberts (2008)** investigated anxiety symptoms in adolescents living in rural Mexico using a social-ecological approach. Their study sought to investigate the ways in which a range of social and environmental elements, including peer interactions, family dynamics, and community setting, affected the anxiety feelings of teenagers. The results showed that adolescents with anxiety symptoms were more likely to be exposed to family conflict, low parental support, and a lack of community resources. The importance of peer interactions was also emphasised by the study, which found a clear correlation between elevated anxiety levels and social isolation and peer victimisation. The authors also stressed that rural teenagers were more susceptible to anxiety due to the combined impact of several risk factors in the social-ecological milieu. Ozer et al. came to the conclusion that multi-level interventions that take into account impacts at the individual, family, and community levels are necessary to manage anxiety in rural adolescent populations.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1. Research Design

In order to evaluate and compare the psychological stress and anxiety levels of teenagers according to gender and place of residence (rural versus urban), the current study used a descriptive comparative research design. Without changing any of the factors, the design aids in comprehending the current variations and trends.

#### 3.2. Population and Sample

The study's participants include teenagers from both urban and rural regions. Using the simple sampling technique, a sample of 60 teenagers was chosen, guaranteeing equal representation of both sexes. Twenty adolescents (33.3%) from urban regions and forty adolescents (66.6%) from rural areas make up the sample, which consists of thirty boys (50%) and thirty females (50%).

#### 3.3. Data Collection Method

Standardised psychological measures intended to gauge teenagers' levels of stress and anxiety were used to gather data. Based on their answers, each participant's psychological stress and anxiety levels were evaluated and divided into low, moderate, and high categories. Throughout the data gathering process, ethical principles including informed consent and confidentiality were upheld.

#### 3.4. Tools for Data Collection

Two main instruments were used in the collection of the data for this investigation. The Psychological Stress Scale, a validated tool created especially to gauge stress levels in teenagers, was used first. Second, an Anxiety Scale was used to measure the adolescents' anxiety levels. These two instruments are well known in the field of mental health research for their validity and reliability, which guarantee precise and consistent assessment of the psychological stress and anxiety constructs under investigation.

### 3.5. Statistical Techniques Used

In order to classify the levels of psychological stress and anxiety and to summarise demographic factors (gender and area), the data was analysed using descriptive statistics, specifically frequency and percentage distributions. These statistics enabled insightful comparisons across the groups and gave a clear picture of the distribution patterns.

### 3.6. Scope and Limitations

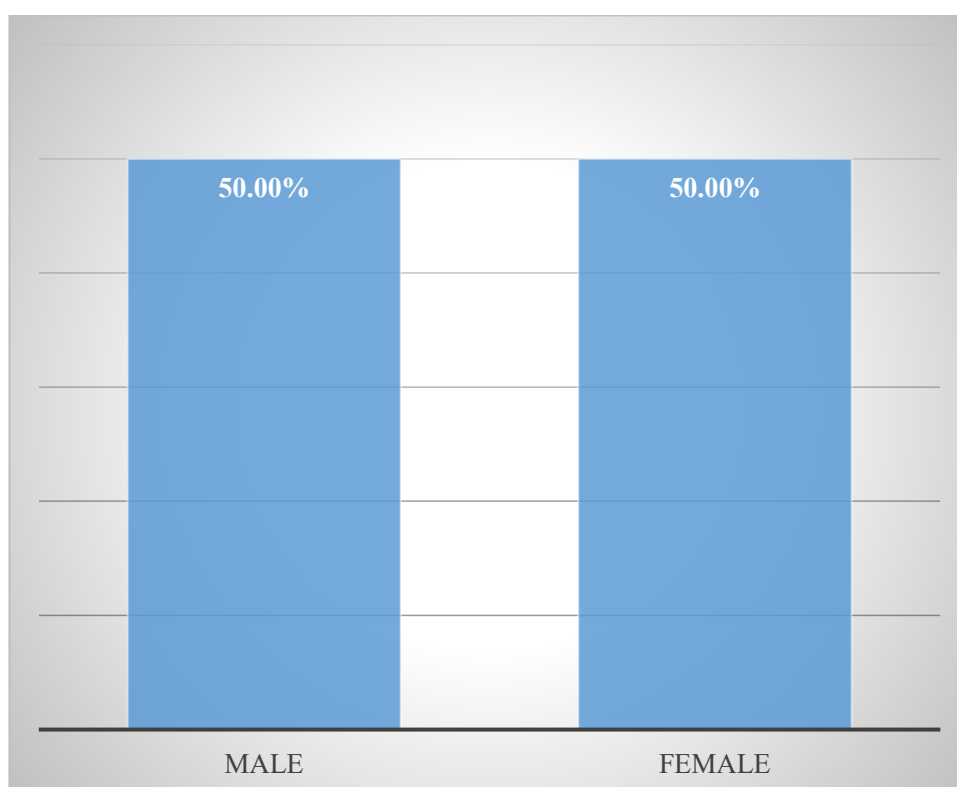
The study's concentration on teenagers from certain urban and rural locations restricts how broadly the results may be applied. Furthermore, while the 60-respondent sample size offers preliminary findings, it might not accurately reflect broader teenage groups. Additionally, at this stage of the study, no inferential tests are used, and the analysis is restricted to descriptive statistics.

## 4. DATA ANALYSIS

Table 1 displays the distribution of adolescents by gender in terms of frequency and percentage. 30 (50%) of the 60 teenagers in the sample are male, and 30 (50%) are female.

**Table 1: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Adolescents by Gender**

Gender	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Male	30	50.0%
Female	30	50.0%
<b>Total</b>	60	100.0%

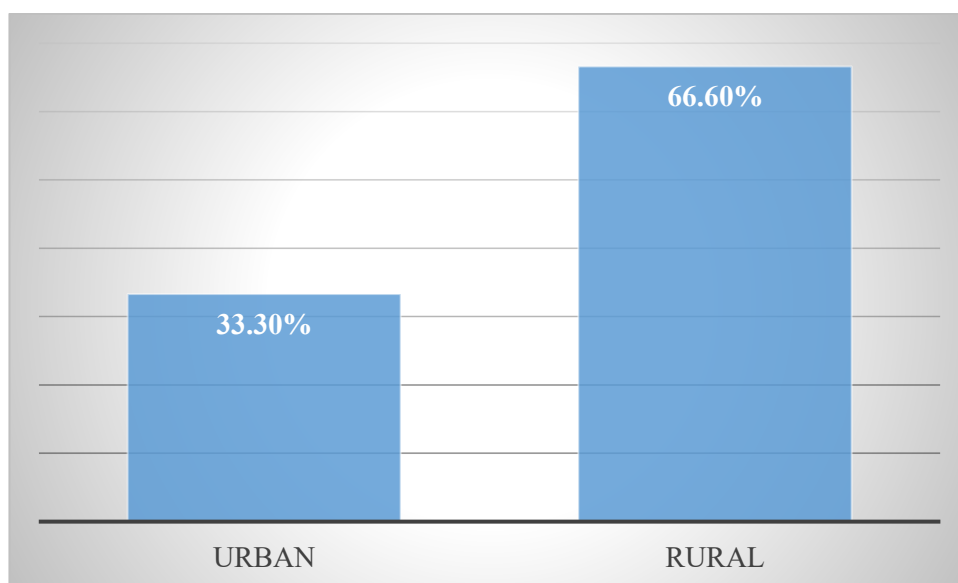


**Figure 1: Graphical Representation on Adolescents by Gender**

This suggests that both sexes are equally represented in the study, guaranteeing a fair comparison of teenage males and females when examining psychological stress and anxiety levels.

**Table 2: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Adolescents by Area**

Area	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Urban	20	33.3%
Rural	40	66.6%
<b>Total</b>	60	100.0%

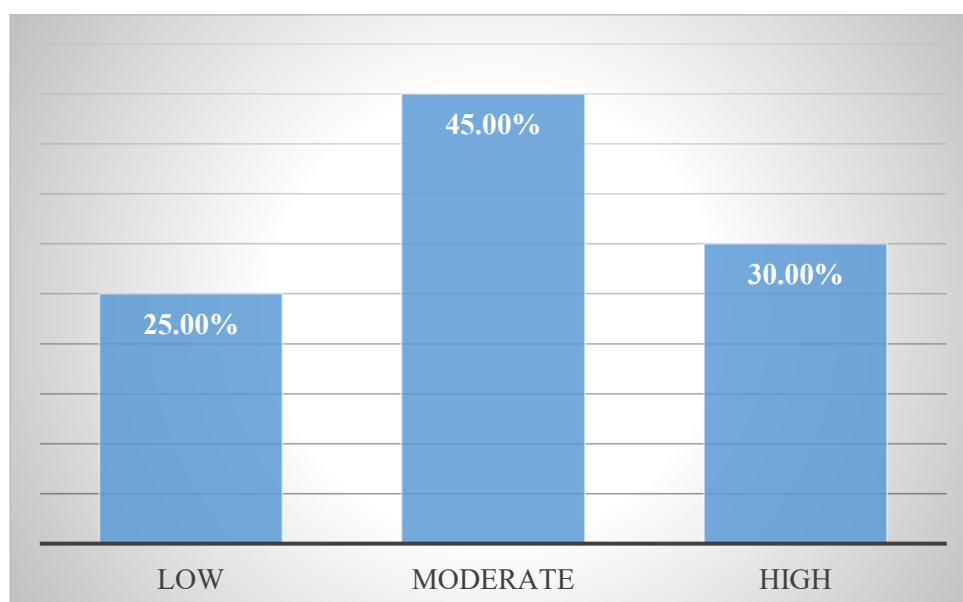


**Figure 2:** Graphical Representation on the percentage of Adolescents by Area

Table 2 shows the distribution of teenagers by area in terms of frequency and proportion. Of the 60 teenagers in the sample, 40 (66.6%) are from rural areas and 20 (33.3%) are from urban areas. This suggests that most of the study's participants come from rural areas, giving researchers a better picture of teenagers in rural areas when comparing their psychological stress and anxiety levels to those in urban areas.

**Table 3: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Adolescents by Level of Psychological Stress**

Stress Level	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Low	15	25.0%
Moderate	27	45.0%
High	18	30.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

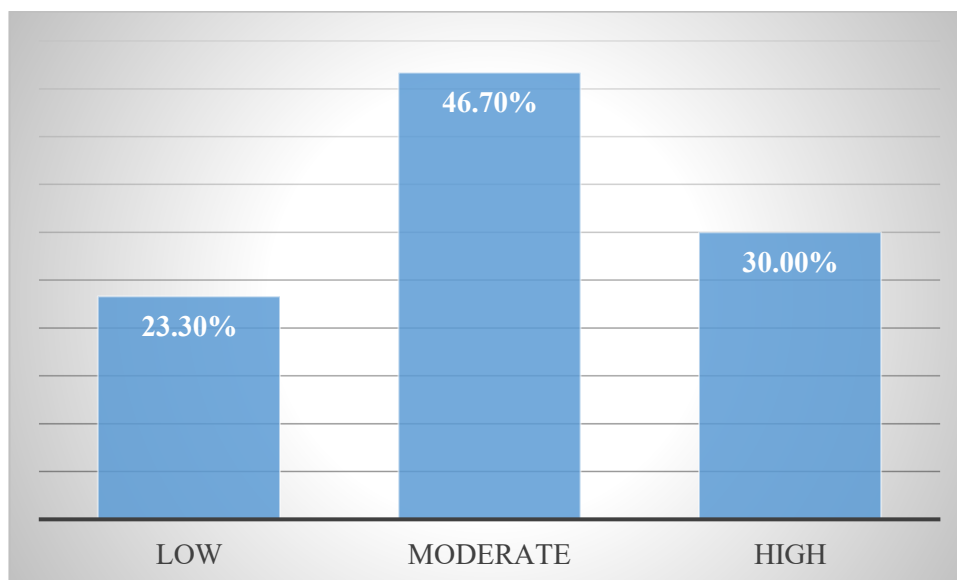


**Figure 3:** Graphical Representation on the percentage of Adolescents by Level of Psychological Stress

Table 3 demonstrates the distribution of adolescents' frequency and percentages according to their psychological stress levels. Of the sixty teenagers, fifteen (25.0%) report low stress, twenty-seven (45.0%) report moderate stress, and eighteen (30.0%) report high stress. This suggests that the majority of teenagers are classified as having moderate stress, underscoring the fact that psychological stress is a prevalent issue among teenagers, with a sizable fraction also reporting high levels of stress.

**Table 4: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Adolescents by Level of Anxiety**

Anxiety Level	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Low	14	23.3%
Moderate	28	46.7%
High	18	30.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



**Figure 4: Graphical Representation on the percentage of Adolescents by Level of Anxiety**

Table 4 displays the prevalence and percentage distribution of teenagers with varying levels of anxiety. 14 (23.3%), 28 (46.7%), and 18 (30.0%) of the 60 teenagers have mild anxiety, moderate anxiety, and high anxiety, respectively. According to this, almost half of the teenagers experience moderate anxiety, and a sizeable percentage experience extreme anxiety. This shows how common anxiety-related problems are becoming among teenagers

## 5. CONCLUSION

The results of this study provide important new information about the psychological stress and anxiety levels of teenagers according to their gender and place of residence. Teenagers in both urban and rural areas report high levels of psychological stress and anxiety, with moderate stress and anxiety being particularly common. In line with other studies on gender-based vulnerabilities in mental health, there are clear gender inequalities, with female adolescents displaying higher levels of psychological distress than their male counterparts. Adolescents' psychological health is also impacted by environmental elements related to urban and rural environments, such as the fast-paced, competitive nature of metropolitan life and the scarcity of resources in rural places. This study emphasises how crucial it is to take gender and geographic location into account when creating mental health interventions for teenagers. Improving mental health outcomes requires gender-sensitive tactics and customised approaches that address the unique pressures experienced by adolescents in urban and rural areas. Future studies should examine the root reasons of these regional and gender-based variations in stress and anxiety as well as assess how well tailored therapies work for various teenage populations.

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