

# **Analysis of Psychological Stress Sources of High School Students and Relevant Countermeasures**

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**Abstract.** Based on referring to the literature related to the psychological stress sources of high school students and its relevant countermeasures, and taking W school as an example, this paper investigates and analyzes the stress sources of the students from four classes in the second grade, aiming at putting forward diplomatic suggestions with respect to the psychological stress of high school students so as to help them study and develop in a better way. The research object of this paper is high school students in a key senior high school. It is found from questionnaires and interviews that the factors that lead to high school students' stress in their mind include stresses from study, school, teachers, family and the society. In terms of the stress source, this paper will analyze the following aspects including the students themselves, the school, the teachers, the family and the society.

**Keywords:** high school students; psychological stress; study stress; countermeasure.

## **1. Introduction**

High school life is the most important and special development stage in everyone's life. On the one hand, facing the decisive and important college entrance examination, high school students are suffering from both physical and mental stress. On the other hand, high school students are in an important period with physiological and psychological changes, which surely lead to their stress objectively. High school students tend to have mental confusion and upset easily caused by the following factors including high school courses, study competition, entrance to a higher school, as well as high expectations of parents and teachers and interpersonal communication. For high school students, there is no doubt that this stage plays an important role in the whole life stage, therefore, it has become a major factor affecting the physical and mental health development of high school students to deal with and relieve more and more stress by themselves or with the help of others.

## **2. Literature Review**

Since study is the most important thing for high school students and study stress is caused by the interaction of internal and external factors, this study defines study stress as the stress caused by internal and external factors that make individuals feel nervous in learning activities.

### **2.1 Research on Study Stress**

Based on referring to the literature, it is found that most of the literature focused on the analysis of the sources of study stress. Guo Xiaohui divided the sources of study stress into internal and external causes [1]. Some scholars believe that the study stress of high school students mainly comes from the outside world, namely teachers and parents. Through investigation and research, Zhang Xiaoling and Du Xueyuan divided study stress into interpersonal communication in society, school, family, teachers and classes [2]. According to Lou Weiqun and Qi Yi, the stress of high school students is caused by their poor performance in exams, falling behind other students in study, whether they can be admitted to university or not, striving for good ranking in exams and their parents' expectation [3]. According to the stress source, in 2004, Chen Xu divided the study stress of high school students into task and requirement stress, the stress of competition, setbacks, expectation stress and development stress [4]. According to a lot of statistical analysis, study stress has significantly affected the mental health of primary and middle school students. The author analyzes the literature and found that the study of high school students' psychological stress in China has been studied in many aspects, including the relationship between study stress and mental health, the relationship between study

stress and learning efficiency, and the strategies to deal with psychological study pressure. Different research focuses on different points. Learning from the previous research results, this study tries to comprehensively analyze the sources and causes of psychological study stress of high school students by means of questionnaires and interviews, especially pay attention to the development of high school students, so as to fundamentally alleviate the excessive psychological study stress of high school students.

## **2.2 Research on the Psychological Stress Sources**

The influencing factors of study stress in *An Investigation on Middle School Students Academic Stress* written by Zhao Lixia and Yuan Lin [5] and Cao Shu's *Study Stress of Middle school Students and Adjustment Methods* divide the stress sources of middle school students into seven dimensions: study, teacher, family environment, parenting style, relationship between classmates and friends, social and cultural issues, and physical and psychological problems [6]. According to Lou Weiqun and Qi Yi, the stress of high school students is caused by their poor performance in exams, falling behind other students in study, whether they can be admitted to university or not, striving for good ranking in exams and their parents' expectation [3]. Zheng Quanquan et al proposed that it requires the joint efforts of schools, society and families to improve the comprehensive quality of students under the new situation, to look at the problem from the perspective of connection, and to adopt a multi-pronged approach to effectively reduce the psychological stress of students so as to promote the all-round development of students. [7] Lv Xing proposed countermeasures to alleviate the stress of primary and secondary school students, analyzed the current situation and causes of study stress in primary and secondary schools, and provided some basis for building a "benign stress state" of school life [8] Jing Shijie and Le Guoan studied the relationship between stress, coping strategies and health with the stress coping strategy as an intermediate variable between stress experience and health [9]

## **2.3 Research on Psychological Stress and Mental Health**

Zheng Linke, Wan Liping and Li Zhiqiang conducted a sample survey of 280 primary and secondary school students with the Student Health Investigation Questionnaire (SHIQ). SPSS statistical package was used to compare girl and boy students, and to conduct linear regression analysis of study stress and multiple mental and physical health. In modern social life, people feel more and more unprecedented tension and stress, which do harm to people's physical and mental health. Therefore, Lin Chunmei believes that the relationship between psychological stress and health deserves widespread attention and attention [11].

## **3. Stress Source Analysis**

This study investigated the sources of psychological stress in a key high school in Chongqing, w high school, and selected two ordinary classes and two key classes in the second grade, a total of 208 people, to understand the current situation of psychological stress in the second-year students. There are \_\_\_ questionnaires delivered, \_\_\_ questionnaires returned with \_\_\_ valid questionnaires. Secondly, interviews were conducted with some students from four classes in the second grade, which mainly aims to understand the stress of the second-year students and how they expected to alleviate these stresses.

### **3.1 Status of Psychological Stress of High School Students**

#### **3.1.1 Study Stress**

According to the questionnaire analysis, among the four classes, 65% are girl students, 35% are boy students, 46% are only children, 54% are non-only children, 70% currently live in urban areas, 30% in suburban areas, 89% live in schools, and 11% don't live in schools. It can be found from the analysis of the study stress, 31% of high school students think that their relative study stress is relatively small. Trough the interview, it is found that such students have certain confidence in their performance and learning ability. The reason is that students think they suffer from great stress,

however, they think it's good for their future and don't regard stress as a drag on study or life. Specific data show that for high school students, mathematics causes students the most stress, accounting for 41%, and stress from Chinese, English, Literature Arts Comprehensive, Science Comprehensive is more balanced. According to interview, it is found that students generally attach importance to mathematics, so the stress of this single subject is mainly from the fierce competition of students around.

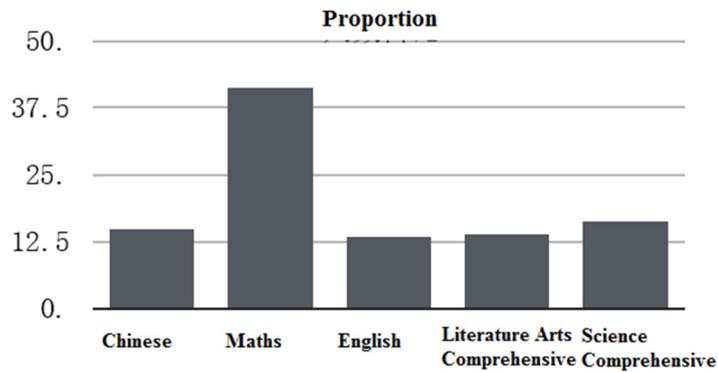


Fig 1. Mathematics is most valued by students

In terms of learning attitude, 33% of high school students said they would just do their best, 20% of high school students thought they had to study hard and achieve something, and 16% of them held an indifferent attitude. On the one hand, they think that learning well does not mean that they will develop well in the future, on the other hand, the superiority of the family environment makes them feel that whether they study well or not has nothing to do with the quality of life and the future of development. 30% of the students held other views. According to the data, 46% of the students do not think study is their only way out. According to the interview, these students generally have good second language ability or excel in art, therefore, studying abroad or taking art exams have become their other way out in addition to the college entrance examination. After failing the exams, 33% of the students will continue to study, and 30% think they should work harder, and 21% will lose confidence. It is obvious that the exams will have a relatively huge effect on the students. When it is difficult to raise scores in a short time, 31% have extreme stress, 23% have great stress, 20% have general stress, and 24% have less stress. The data here is not consistent with the data of 10 questions in the questionnaire, students reported low levels of stress in 10 questions, and the data here show that they do have high levels of stress. The reason is that students think they have great stress, but they think this stress is good for their future, so they do not regard stress as a drag on study or life.

### 3.1.2 Stress from School

According to the questionnaire analysis, 41% of students think the school's external environment is relative good, but 32% of students think it is poor, 27% of students are neutral. 36% of students thought the school had a relatively good learning environment, while 31% thought it was bad. In terms of food and accomandation, 31% of students think it is good, but 47% of students think it is bad. 40% of students think the school's food and accomandation conditions have a big impact on students, and 33 % of students think it will have little impact. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the demand for low-level demand, such as eating and drinking, is not met, so there is no way to satisfy the higher-level needs. Therefore, the dormitory and canteen environment of the school does have a great impact on students. 94% of students know that the school has a counseling room, but 6% of students do not know. Acocording to interviews, it is known that some students do not care whether the school has set up a psychological counseling room, because they may not seek the help of teachers to alleviate all aspects of the stress. It is known that W High School attaches great importance to the mental health of high school students in school, and will actively carry out various

extracurricular activities to enrich students'extracurricular life, so as to alleviate students' academic stress.

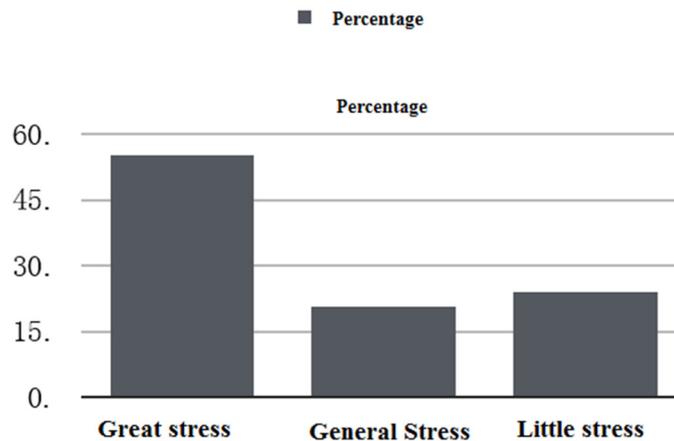


Fig 2. Stress from school

### 3.1.3 Stress from Teachers

According to the questionnaire survey, 36% of the students think that the teacher cares about them, but 42% of the students think that the teacher doesn't care about them. The reason for this situation is that students think that the teachers like those who have good performance, and don't care about those with poor performance. Moreover, 55% of the students don't want to get the attention of the teacher because they are more accustomed to self-learning. If they get too much attention from the teacher, their study efficiency will decrease instead. Through the investigation on the students' favorite teacher and the subject he teaches, it is found that there is no relation between the teacher's love and his teaching subject. Interviews show that students prefer teachers who are closer to them and have conversations with them, and that such approachable teachers generally teach students with good performance. 38% of the students like the teacher to be gentler, followed by a preference for a teacher who is a gentle and friendly. Through the investigation, it is found that the teacher has the comprehensive quality request to the student, but the school only has the achievement to the student request.

### 3.1.4 Stress from Family

44% of students thought their families were bad, and 63 % of parents had high expectations of them, so stress from family had a big impact on students. 51% of students do not communicate with their parents very often, 30% is about physical condition, and 24% is the school anecdote. Students and parents have not established a good way of communication, so students lose an emotional way, so that students' stress can not be relieved. On the other hand, parents are aware of some of the stress of their students, but they are more worried about whether stress will cause health problems.

### 3.1.5 Stress from the Society

According to the investigation and survey, 28% of students believe that they can adapt to society, 34% of students cannot make sure, and 38% of students don't think that they can adapt well to society. It indicates that they are very sensitive to the stress from society. Compared with education, experience, comprehensive quality and so on, 58% of students think that interpersonal relationship will have a greater impact on their future development..

In conclusion, study stress is still what gives students more trouble, followed by teachers and families. Students can realize that they are facing tremendous stress, but they think that this stress is acceptable. Although they try to deal with stress, their effective ways are almost limited to students and networks. Therefore, if there is more help from school and family, students'stress will be relieved more quickly and effectively.

## **4. Coping Strategies of Psychological Stress for High School Students**

To solve the psychological stress of high school students, the author believes that first of all, it is necessary to adjust one's own state and learn the correct attribution, so as to alleviate the psychological stress in study; secondly, schools, teachers and parents should give sufficient support and understanding to students; social culture should establish a positive side and guide students correctly.

### **4.1 Adjust One's State of Mind to Relieve the Stress of Study.**

The most important thing for high school students is study, therefore, the academic performance is of importance for students. In the face of changes in performance, it is important for students to learn correct attribution. Attribution is people's evaluation of their own or other people's activities and the reasons for their results. In study, each of us will experience success and failure, and will also look for the reasons for failure, which is the attribution of achievement behavior. American psychologist Wiener explored the attribution of behavioral outcome and divided the attribution into three dimensions: internal attribution and external attribution, stable attribution and unstable attribution, controllable attribution and uncontrollable attribution. He also attributed the success or failure of human activities to six factors: the level of ability, the degree of effort, the difficulty of the task, good or bad luck, physical and mental state and the external environment [12]. When an individual attribute his success to internal factors such as ability and effort, he will feel proud, satisfied and confident [13]. Individuals tend to be less satisfied when they attribute success to external factors such as ease of task and good luck.

Different attributions play different roles in students' motivation and enthusiasm. Correct attribution is beneficial to stimulating students' motivation and improving their enthusiasm for learning. At the same time, it can maintain students' psychological balance. When students make positive attributions, it is necessary to give timely positive response and positive reinforcement. When students make negative attributions, it is necessary to help student correct it, so as to make students form correct attribution tendencies. Therefore, it is very important for high school students to learn comprehensive attribution. First, teachers should guide students to make a comprehensive analysis of their own situation, guide them to make a comprehensive analysis of unstable factors that are easier to control, such as personal efforts and other factors, then arrange students to fill in attribution scale, and evaluate the degree of the role played by several major factors. Finally, statistical analysis should be conducted to find out the main reasons, and measures should be taken to actively attribute the causes. When success is achieved in study, it can be attributed to own efforts in order to inspire oneself to continue to work hard to achieve further success; it can also be attributed to one's own ability so as to generate a certain sense of satisfaction and enhance confidence of successful study, however, it should be noted that this point cannot be over-emphasized.

### **4.2 Psychological Support for Students from Schools and Teachers**

Schools are required to pay attention to the mental health education of high school students, so as to prevent the discomfort caused by students' psychological stress by consciously popularizing mental health knowledge through formal mental health education courses. It is very necessary to provide regular psychological training for parents and teachers. Since the head teacher and teachers of various subjects have the most direct contact with students, students are very sensitive to teachers' words, deeds and attitudes. It is found in many researches that teachers' mental health has a very important impact on high school students. Therefore, teachers' psychological activity training should be strengthened in order to reduce the occurrence of teacher-induced psychological problems. Two phenomena are found in the study through interview with high school teachers. One is that when teachers help students analyze their learning situation, they will cause students great psychological stresses. The other one is that many high school students are considered to have no stress. Teachers cannot understand why they don't have stress so that they exert stress on students involuntarily. As a result, teachers have gradually become a source of stress for students. The strategy to solve this problem is to deeply study psychological knowledge and technology so as to better understand the

psychological state of students, and then accurately help students find targeted ways to relieve psychological stress with psychological thoughts and methods. At the same time, the author thinks that it's better not to make high school students become those who can only study. In addition, if emotional education is integrated into education, it may be easier for teachers to win recognition and acceptance of students, and to gain surprising educational effects.

### **4.3 Parents' Support for High School Students**

It is found in the study through interview with teachers and students that the psychological stress of high school students comes partly from parents and families. Generally speaking, parents have very high expectations of their children, which reflects the Chinese parents' idea to expect their children to have a bright future. However, this expectation may not be suitable for the actual situation of students. Parents encourage their children to study hard in their own ways without thinking about whether the children need this or not. Therefore, it is necessary for parents to understand and try their best to understand the needs of their children in all aspects, and reduce unreasonable stress on their children based on the actual situation.

The first social environment that individuals come into contact with is the family, and family education has a great effect on individual growth. The well-known educator Sukhumlinsky believes that everything about the individual comes from the mother. The mother's birth and education make a unique person, while the father needs to protect the soul of the child with his own actions. Although families may not be able to give their children professional knowledge, families are schools of love and it is necessary to create a healthy educational environment for high school students. It is a way to relieve Children's psychological stress to adjust educational concepts and methods, get along with children in an equal and democratic way, carefully observe and listen to children's confusion, and let children actively seek family support with effective communication, understanding and patience. Parents should first make their children understand that sometimes parents' criticism and guidance are response to their behavior instead of them. Scholars Dai Bibing et al verified the conclusion through investigation and research that the greater the study stress is, the worse the self-concept is and the better the social support is, the better the self-concept is. Therefore, objective and reasonable evaluation from parents is of great importance for children. Parents should strongly support high school students by giving them psychological support.

### **4.4 Active Guidance from Social Culture**

It can be seen from the studies of psychological stress that high school students can also have a variety of psychological stresses, and social culture plays a subtle role in the process of relieving stress. Although a large amount of information in daily life expands the knowledge of high school students and improves their view, sometimes it also increases the bad temptation. In the face of the fact that it is impossible to completely prevent high school students from contacting negative culture, in addition to reducing the influence of bad culture on society to the greatest extent, it is also necessary to make mainstream social culture try to absorb more positive content. At the same time, it is necessary for school teachers to objectively analyze the possible harm of bad behaviors caused by bad culture to high school students, clearly show the difference between excellent culture and bad culture, and guide high school students to consciously choose excellent culture. With the help of current science and technology and network technology, the society can make full use of its own huge resources to do something to alleviate the psychological stress of high school students, such as vigorously supporting and encouraging psychological workers with psychological background, using self-media to convey and specialize mental health knowledge that meets the tastes of young people, and providing a reliable network environment for students to study self-help psychology so that students can use their time out of school to focus on these relevant cases to help themselves.

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