

Causes of Stress and Anxiety in Adolescents Belonging To 2 Different Economic Classes in A City in India

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Abstract:

Mental health is an extremely serious issue studied and researched by psychologists for decades. But mental health among adolescents has been a growing concern among parents and health organizations worldwide. Stress and anxiety are increasingly prevalent among youngsters as well. Stress is defined as a state of worry or tension in a perceived difficult situation. This independent research paper presents the analysis and the results of the causes and effects of stress and anxiety on adolescents belonging to two different distinct economic classes. The primary purpose was to investigate what and how some factor cause more or less stress/anxiety in the age group of 12- 19 years. It was also to assess whether there were any similarities or differences between what causes stress/anxiety to samples of one economic category versus another economic category.

The supposition is that children from two distinct economic classes will experience different causes of stress and anxiety due to their living, social, intellectual and psychological reasons.

The study was conducted in Gurgaon, a city adjoining New Delhi. The sample size for the 'Low Income Group' was 57 numbers and the sample size for the 'Mid-High Income' group was 54 numbers. There were 35 questions classified under five different parameters.

The research analysed the results and attempted to delve into the reasons of the results among the samples of the distinct economic groups and identify probable reasons for the same.

Introduction

Children of different economic classes behave and grow up differently for obvious reasons. But what exactly are their thoughts, their needs, their requirements, and their expectations? Are there any correlations between their thoughts and feelings despite their economic disparity? This independent research paper presents the analysis and the results of the causes and effects of stress and anxiety on children belonging to two different distinct economic classes.

When the researcher was in Grade 10, she did a couple of interesting projects with an NGO located in her neighborhood, which worked exclusively with children belonging to the economically weaker section of the society. One of the projects was about teaching environmental science to pre-teens and the second one was a library project conceived to generate an interest in reading. During the researcher's interactions with the children, she was fascinated with their cheerfulness and positive energy despite having so little. As a parallel, she felt that her peers at school always seemed much more anxious, complexed, and moody.

Observation and curiosity germinated the idea to explore what causes stress and anxiety among the children belonging to two distinct economic classes, and consequently formed the basis of her study.

The researcher prepared multiple questions across five parameters and selected her samples carefully. Samples between the age group of 12-19 years were chosen because she felt that they would be mature enough to understand and answer the questions appropriately.

Interestingly, the results of the study were quite surprising and contrary to what her preconceived ideas were. The results will be discussed later at the end of the paper.

Statement of Purpose

- To investigate what and how some factor cause more or less stress/anxiety in the age group of 12-19 years
- If there is any similarity or the extent of differences between what causes stress/anxiety to samples of one economic category versus another economic category

Hypothesis

The supposition is that children from two distinct economic classes will experience different causes of stress and anxiety due to their living, social, intellectual and psychological reasons.

Research Methodology

The study was conducted in Gurgaon, a city spread over 732 square kilometres, adjoining New Delhi. The age group of the sample size was between 12-19 years of age and both males and females participated. The sample size for the 'Low Income Group' was 57 numbers and the sample size for the 'Mid-High Income' group was 54 numbers.

Children belonging to the two different economic classes were identified as follows:

Low-income group:

The researcher identified the selected children from an NGO, who she has been associated with since the past few years, and is located in Gurgaon city. These children of all ages are from extremely poor backgrounds and visit the NGO every day after their school hours. The care givers at this NGO provide these children with nutritious food and supplement their learning requirements through different methods of teaching, care and counselling.

Middle – High income group:

The selected children of this category were identified from the school of the researcher, children residing in the same community, and children of friends of the family.

All the research questions were conceived with the thought of identifying the common causes of stress and anxiety among the samples of the two economic groups and whether any correlation or understanding could be developed based on the results. The questions were prepared across five different parameters or influencers of stress and anxiety. The total number of questions were thirty-five. The five basic parameters were family, school and peer group, media, health and general parameters. The scale of the survey was constructed as:

5- **Strongly agree** (*indicates that the characteristic is always manifested*)

4- **Agree** (*indicates that the characteristic is often manifested*)

3- **Neutral** (*indicates that the characteristic is sometimes manifested*)

2- **Disagree** (indicates that the character is seldom manifested)

1- **Strongly disagree** (indicates that the character is never manifested)

The nature of the study and the type of questions were explained to most of the samples and then the questionnaire was circulated via email using Google Forms. The surveys were administered from November 15th, 2023 until February 15th, 2024. The participants were informed that they should take the survey at their own free time and with complete concentration and focus. After the surveys were filled, a detailed analysis was conducted to see the various causes of stress across the five parameters of both the economic classes. The possible reasoning for the causes was constructed through secondary data. The data was then represented through graphs and pie charts, and facts were presented through statements. The analysis is accompanied by a graphical representation for each section.

Economically Weaker Section is defined as section of the society with an annual income of less than Rs. 5.0 lakhs per annum as per an Indian Think Tank called People Research on India's Consumer Economy (PRICE)

Mid- Income is defined as section of the society with an annual income of less than Rs. 30.0 lakhs per annum as per an Indian Think Tank called People Research on India's Consumer Economy (PRICE)

High Income is defined as section of the society with an annual income of more than Rs. 30.0 lakhs per annum as per an Indian Think Tank called People Research on India's Consumer Economy (PRICE)

Description of the Data

The research was conducted across 5 parameters.

Parameter 1: Family

Research Question 1

Talking about the pressure of parents on the teenagers, the teenagers of the low-income group show that 47.4% of the teenagers agree, 8.8% strongly agree, 17.5% are neutral, 14 % disagree and 12.3% strongly disagree.

I feel stressed/anxious due to pressure from parents
57 responses

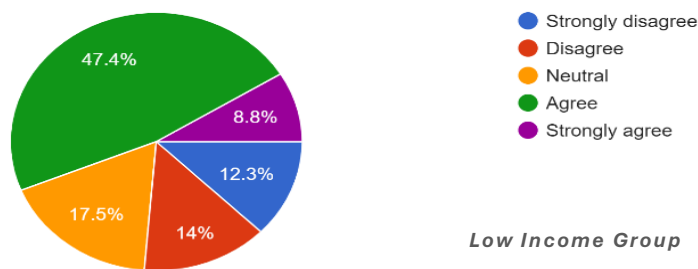


Fig 1.1

The pressure of parents on the teenagers of mid-high income group shows that only 29.6% agree, 14.8% strongly agree, 25.9% are neutral, 25.9% disagree and 3.7% strongly disagree.

I feel stressed/anxious due to pressure from parents
54 responses

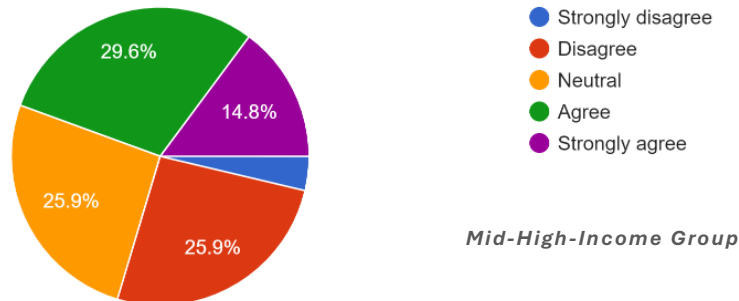


Fig 1.2

This comparison shows that about 47.4% from the low income group agree that they feel pressurised by parents compared to the mid-high-income group teenagers out of which only 29.6% feel pressurised, showing a significant difference of 17.8%. The probable reason is that parents from a poor background are more keen that their children do well given the scanty resources. In fact, the samples in the middle-high income group are more neutral and disagree with the stress caused by parents as compared to the low-income group.

Research Question 2

The next point probes the *stress/anxiousness caused by the fights at the respondents' home*. In the low-income group 45.6% agree, 14% strongly agree, 14% are neutral, 21.1% disagree and 5.3% strongly disagree.

I feel stressed/anxious when there is a fight at home
57 responses

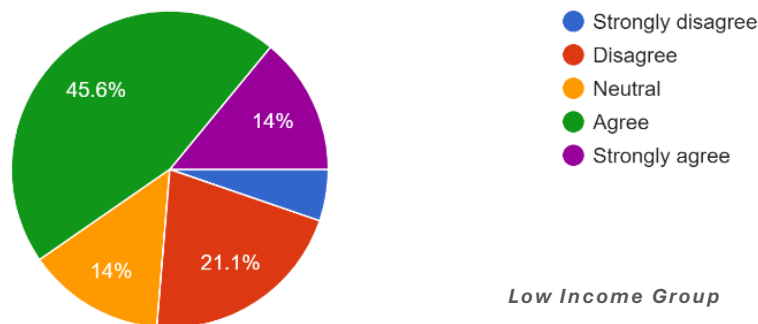


Fig 1.3

In the mid-high-income group 31.5% agree, 18.5% strongly agree, 31.5% are neutral, 14.8% disagree and 3.7% strongly disagree.

I feel stressed/anxious when there is a fight at home
54 responses

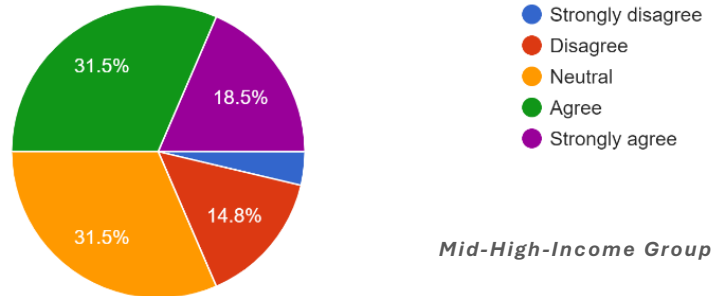


Fig 1.4

The comparison shows that out of the low-income group 45.6% agree on the cause of stress while in the mid-high group 31.5%, agree. And the number of samples who agree and are neutral is the same for the mid-high income group.

Research Question 3

The third question investigates the *stress and anxiety caused by a financial problem at home*. In the low-income group, the results indicate that 50.9% agree, 10.5% strongly agree, 21.1% are neutral, 15.8% disagree and only 1.8% strongly disagree.

I feel stressed/ anxious when there is a sense of financial problem
57 responses

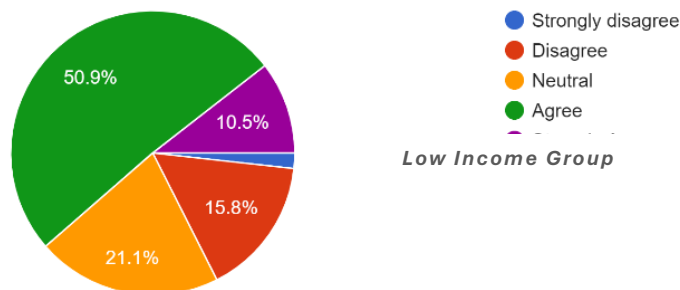


Fig 1.5

In the mid-high-income group, 33.3% agree, 14.8% strongly agree, 31.5% are neutral, 16.7% disagree and 3.7% strongly disagree.

I feel stressed/ anxious when there is a sense of financial problem
54 responses

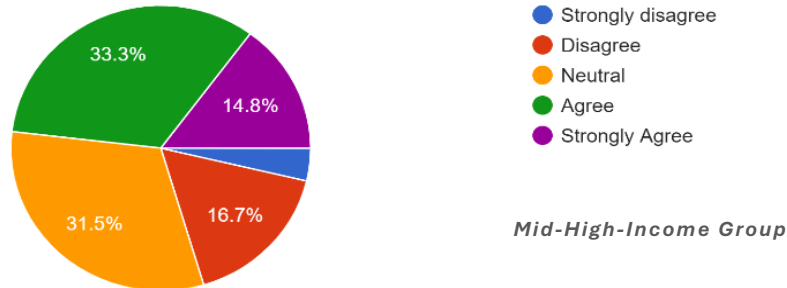


Fig 1.6

The comparison shows that 50.9% of the samples from a low-income group feel stressed/anxious due to financial problems while in the mid-high-income group, 33.3% of the samples feel this pressure. This shows a difference of 17.6%. In both the groups, the percentage of children who strongly disagree and disagree is similar, while there is a slight difference between the two in terms of the ones who strongly agree.

Research Question 4

The fourth question explores the stress/anxiety caused by other family members getting more attention. In the low-income group 22.8% agree, 12.3% strongly agree, 36.8% are neutral, 19.3% disagree and 8.8% strongly disagree.

I feel stressed/ anxious when other people get more attention in my family
57 responses

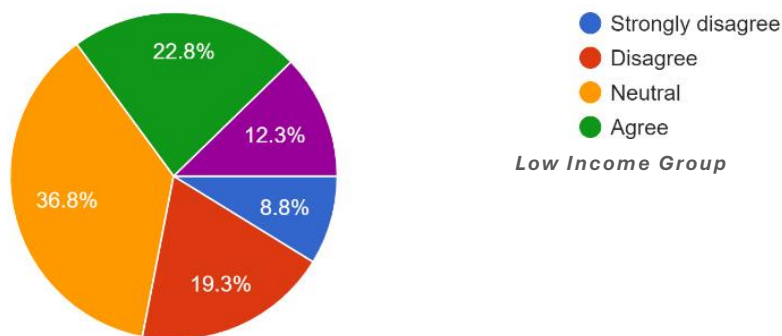


Fig 1.7

In the mid-high-income group, 13% agree, 9.3% strongly agree, 22.2% are neutral, 22.2% disagree and 33.3% strongly disagree.

I feel stressed/ anxious when other people get more attention in my family
54 responses

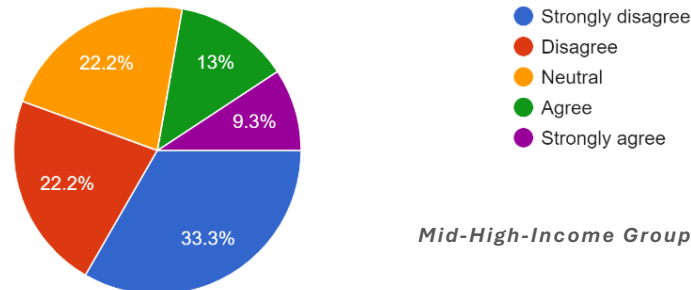


Fig 1.8

In this question, there is a significant difference between the samples who strongly disagree in both the income groups. In the mid-high-income group, 33.3% strongly disagree while in the low-income group 8.8% strongly disagree.

Research Question 5

This question studies stress/anxiety caused by the fact that family members are in a bad mood.

In the low-income group 38.6% agree, 12.3% strongly agree, 24.6% are neutral, 15.8% disagree and 8.8% strongly disagree.

I feel stressed/ anxious when my family members are behaving differently or are in a bad mood
57 responses

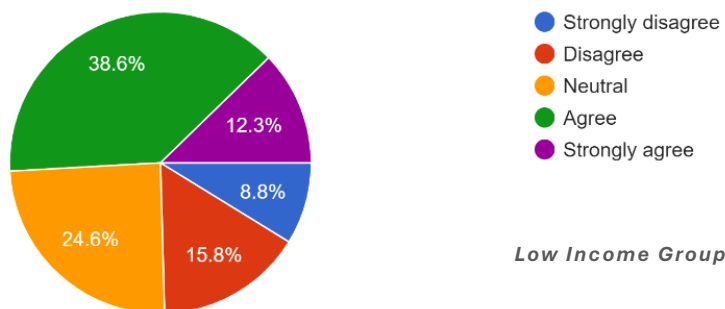


Fig 1.9

In the mid-high income group 40.7% agree, 31.5% strongly agree, 22.2% are neutral and 5.6% disagree and 0% strongly disagree.

I feel stressed/ anxious when my family members are behaving differently or are in a bad mood
54 responses

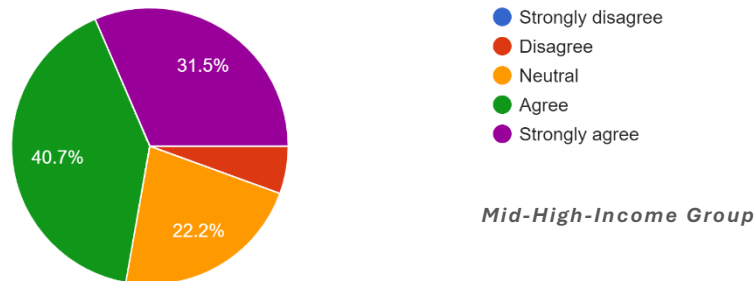


Fig 1.10

The comparison shows that there is a significant correlation between the two income groups in terms of agreeing with bad mood in the family causing stress. 38.6% in the low income group and 40.7% in the mid-high income group agree. Interestingly, a significant percentage (31.5%) in the mid-high-income group strongly agree on this factor being a cause of stress while 12.3% in the low-income group feel so. Overall, the mid income group samples are far more impacted (40.7% + 31.5%) as compared to the samples of the low income group (38.6% + 12.3%).

Research Question 6

The sixth question studies the stress/anxiety caused when teenagers have to share sensitive matters with their family.

In the low-income group 49.1% agree, 10.5% strongly agree, 17.5% are neutral, 17.5% disagree and 5.3% strongly disagree.

I feel stressed/ anxious when I have to share anything or a sensitive matter with my family
57 responses

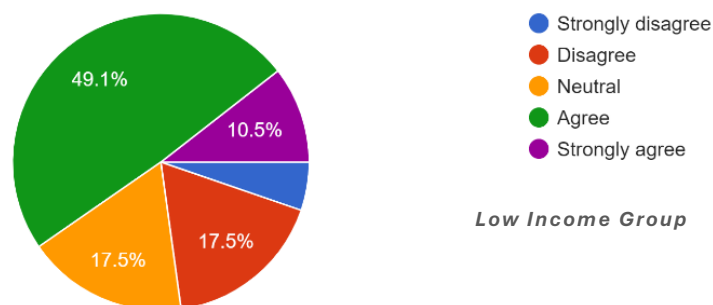


Fig 1.11

In the mid-high income group 31.5% agree, 33.3% strongly agree, 5.6% are neutral, 18.5% disagree and 11.1% strongly disagree.

I feel stressed/ anxious when I have to share anything or a sensitive matter with my family
54 responses

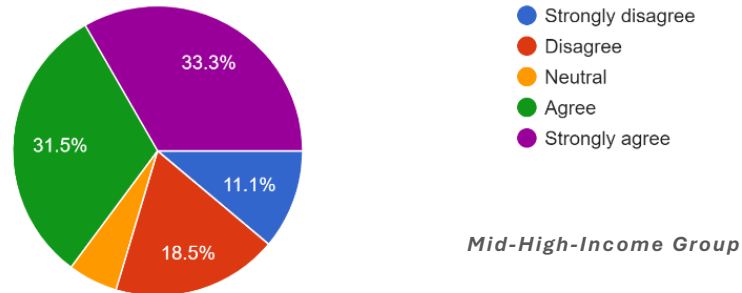


Fig 1.12

In this comparison it is evident that the percentage of samples who agree are more in the low-income group (49.1%) compared to the mid-high income group (31.5%), reflecting a difference of 17.6%. But the percentage of samples who strongly agree is significantly more in the mid-high income group (33.3% vs 10.5%) reflecting a difference of 22.8%.

Research Question 7

The last point of this parameter considers the *stress/anxiety caused when scolded by parents.*

In the low-income group 38.6% agree, 17.5% strongly agree, 22.8% are neutral, 14% disagree and 7% strongly disagree.

I feel stressed/anxious when I have done something which might get me scolded by my parents
57 responses

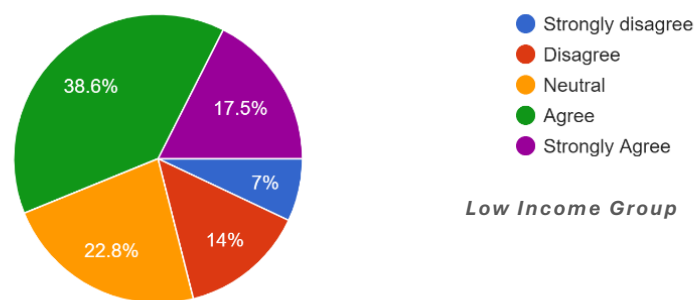


Fig 1.13

In the mid-high-income group 48.1% agree, 27.8% strongly agree, 9.3% are neutral, 3.7% disagree and 11.1% strongly disagree.

I feel stressed/anxious when I have done something which might get me scolded by my parents
54 responses

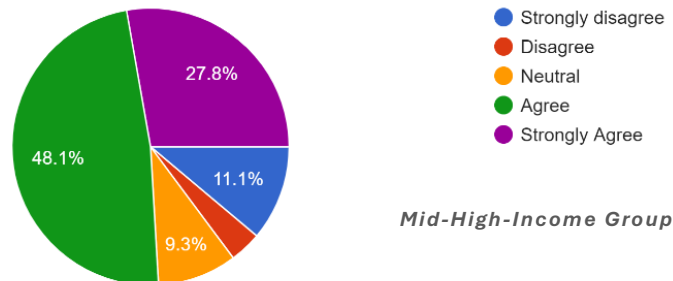


Fig 1.14

This cause of stress reveals that 48.1% of the samples agree in the mid-high-income group while 38.6% of the samples agree in the low-income group. The percentage of samples who strongly agree is significantly higher in the mid-high income group as compared to the low income group (27.8% vs 17.5%) reflecting a difference of a 10.3%.

Family and Stress: Observations by the Researcher

1. It is observed that the samples from the low-income group are more affected by parents as compared to the middle-high income group, which could be attributed to the insufficient resources and the need for a better life.
2. A large percentage of samples from the middle-high income group agrees/strongly agrees that they experience stress whenever they have to share something sensitive probably because of the fear of being judged by parents or siblings. It could also be a reflection of weak communication between the family members.

Family and Stress: Secondary Data

Research has shown that conflict in the home—particularly severe and prolonged conflict—can lead to worse psychosocial functioning for adolescents and young adults. High-level conflict, including or leading to violence and abusive behaviour on the part of one family member toward another, has been repeatedly shown to increase the risk of many problems for children living in the home, including conduct problems and depression.

Other studies suggest that even less severe forms of conflict (e.g., arguing and yelling) and closely related dynamics (e.g., parent-child disagreements and negative relationship quality), which are considered a normal part of parent-teen relationships can have immediate and some enduring consequences.

Family stressors, including marital conflict, harsh parenting), and parental psychological control are associated with poorer cognitive performance in children. *Marital conflict* refers to acts and/or threats of physical violence and verbal/psychological aggression between partners. *Harsh parenting* indicates similar acts of aggression that parents direct towards children. *Parental psychological control* refers to parents' attempts to control a child's behaviours, thoughts, and feelings in an intrusive manner that disregards the child's autonomy. Although these indices of family stress are related, they are distinct constructs that provide insight into different facets of family functioning.

Bioregulatory factors including sleep could influence the extent to which family parameters affect developmental outcomes in children and adolescents. Exposure to family stress may be specifically linked with poorer intellectual ability because family conflict and disrupted parenting practices are frequently threatening to youth, activating their stress response systems.

Families under too much stress for a long time can develop long-term dysfunctional behaviour patterns. The side effects of stress on a family may include:

1. **Arguments:** This is one of the first effects of stress, commonly fuelled by overloaded emotions and poor communication
2. **Health problems:** Exhaustion or burnout in busy, conflicting schedules can build and cause both physical and mental illness
3. **Substance overuse:** Increased dependence on food, alcohol, or drugs may occur due to stress
4. **Family discord:** Lasting feuds or estrangement can occur among family members, especially those who don't live together

Parameter 2: School and Peer Group

The research questions and the results of the surveys are presented in a tabular representation:

Low-income Group – 57 Responses

Table 2.1

	Questions	Scale (in %)				
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	I get overwhelmed with too many tasks	26.3	28.1	26.3	15.8	3.5
2	I get stressed/anxious before tests and exams	15.8	38.6	24.6	15.8	5.3
3	I get nervous/ anxious before any sports event or competition	7	40.4	22.8	17.5	12.3
4	I get stressed/anxious when my teachers ask me questions	8.8	33.3	31.6	21.1	5.3
5	I get anxious/nervous when I am scolded by my teachers	19.3	38.6	15.8	17.5	8.8
6	I get stressed with discussions related to studies, syllabus career etc.	17.5	24.6	24.6	26.3	7
7	I get stressed/anxious when my peer group has performed better than me	14	31.6	31.6	15.8	7
8	I get stressed/ anxious about relationships with friends	15.8	31.6	15.8	22.8	14

9	I get stressed with discussions and thoughts about romantic relationships at this age	15.8	24.6	29.8	17.5	12.3
10	I like going to school	26.3	49.1	12.3	8.8	3.5
11	I feel pressurised by the school	7	26.3	28.1	22.8	15.8
12	I get stressed with the thought of school	7	22.8	24.6	21.1	24.6
13	School is not instrumental in solving some of my problems	7.1	33.9	30.4	25	3.6

Mid – High Income Group – 54 Responses

Table 2.2

	Questions	Scale (in %)				
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	I get overwhelmed with too many tasks	18.5	37	22.2	14.8	7.4
2	I get stressed/anxious before tests and exams	42.6	31.5	9.3	9.3	7.4
3	I get nervous/ anxious before any sports event or competition	35.2	35.2	14.8	5.6	9.3
4	I get stressed/anxious when my teachers ask me questions	11.1	31.5	25.9	22.2	9.3
5	I get anxious/nervous when I am scolded by my teachers	22.2	27.8	24.1	16.7	9.3
6	I get stressed with discussions related to studies, syllabus career etc.	24.1	24.1	24.1	16.7	11.1
7	I get stressed/anxious when my peer group has performed better than me	11.1	33.3	20.4	18.5	16.7
8	I get stressed/ anxious about relationships with friends	29.6	24.1	18.5	14.8	13
9	I get stressed with discussions and thoughts about romantic relationships at this age	20.4	9.3	27.8	24.1	18.5

10	I like going to school	20.4	27.8	31.5	14.8	5.6
11	I feel pressurised by the school	14.8	29.6	33.3	16.7	5.6
12	I get stressed with the thought of school	5.6	22.2	27.8	31.5	13
13	School is not instrumental in solving some of my problems	17.3	40.4	26.9	11.5	3.8

Both the income groups show distinct results. An interesting observation is that 42.6% from the mid-high income group admit on being stressed/anxious before exams and tests whereas only 15.8% from the low-income group strongly agree on the same reflecting a significant difference. For another question regarding going to school, the samples belonging to the low income group revealed a higher keenness understandably to go to school (strongly agree + agree) with percentages of (26.3% + 49.1%) versus (20.4% + 27.8%) for the mid-high income group. Surprisingly, there was a strong alignment among both the groups when it came to samples being stressed about the thought of school.

School and Peer Group: Observations by the Researcher

1. The samples from the low income group experience significantly lesser stress on account of exams possibly because they are not as committed to education or do not feel the pressure of their parents due to their economic status.
2. On the other hand, samples from the low income group displayed significantly higher keenness to go to school and the possible reason could be because the samples are probably keener to utilise the educational resources or maybe even a reason as basic as getting mid-day meals.

School and Peer Group: Secondary Data

Students with busy schedules can quickly become overwhelmed because they are left with no free time to relax. Many students worry about getting a good grade or simply making time to study if there is more than one upcoming test. Test stress doesn't just affect struggling students, even high-achievers usually experience a lot of stress about doing well on tests.

Changing hormones, developing brains and emerging identities makes the start of adolescence a particularly vulnerable time, where peer pressure is most influential. This is also a stage in life where friend groups are of utmost importance and the need to fit in is a major factor in decision making.

The effects of peer pressure can manifest differently in each person. Peer pressure can play on certain strengths or challenges that an adolescent already faces. For example, a teen with low confidence and few close friends may be more susceptible to the effects of negative peer pressure, while a confident, extroverted teen may be more likely to give and receive positive peer pressure. Negative peer pressure can encourage teenagers to participate in negative behaviours and habits.

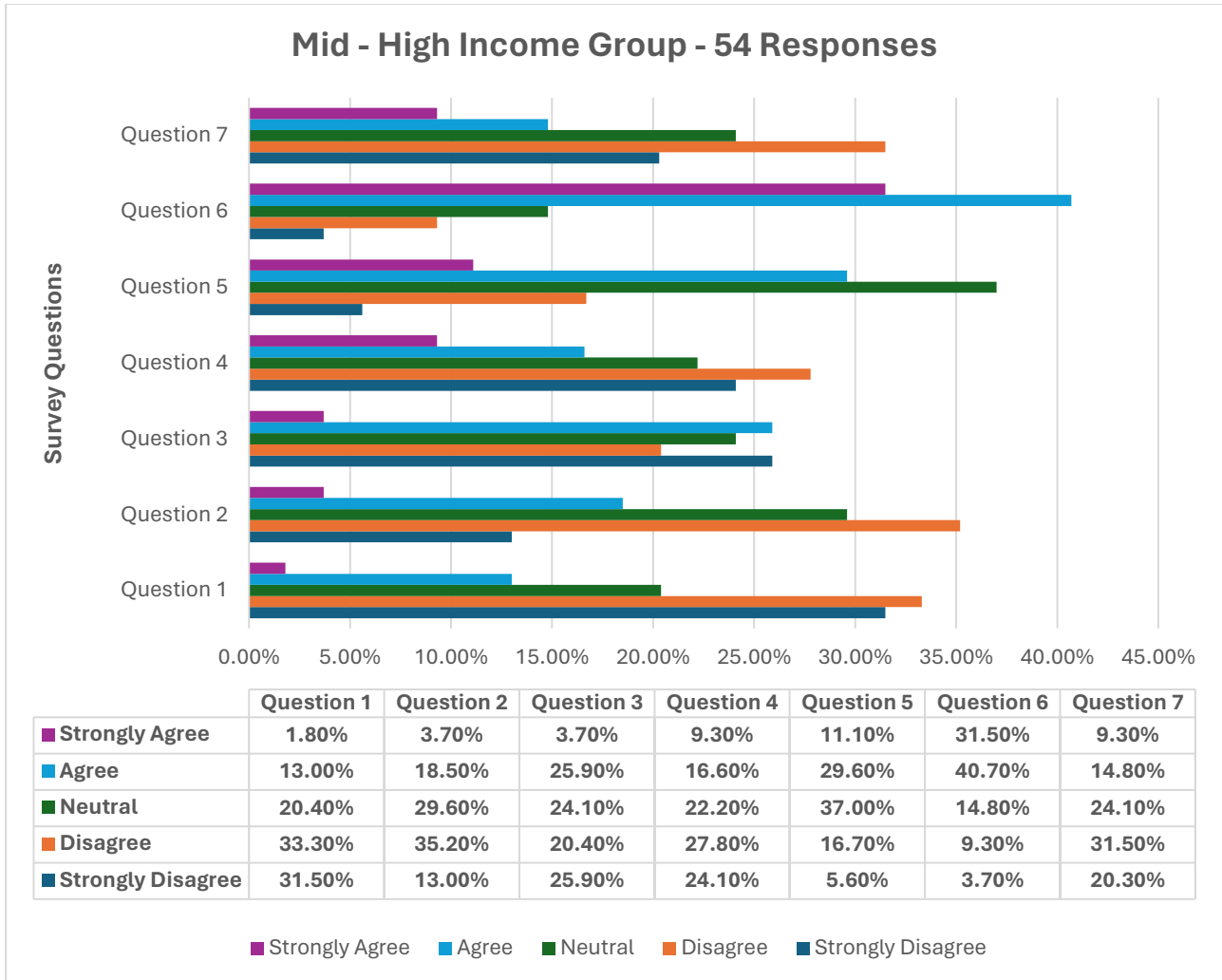
Parameter 3: Media

Survey Questions

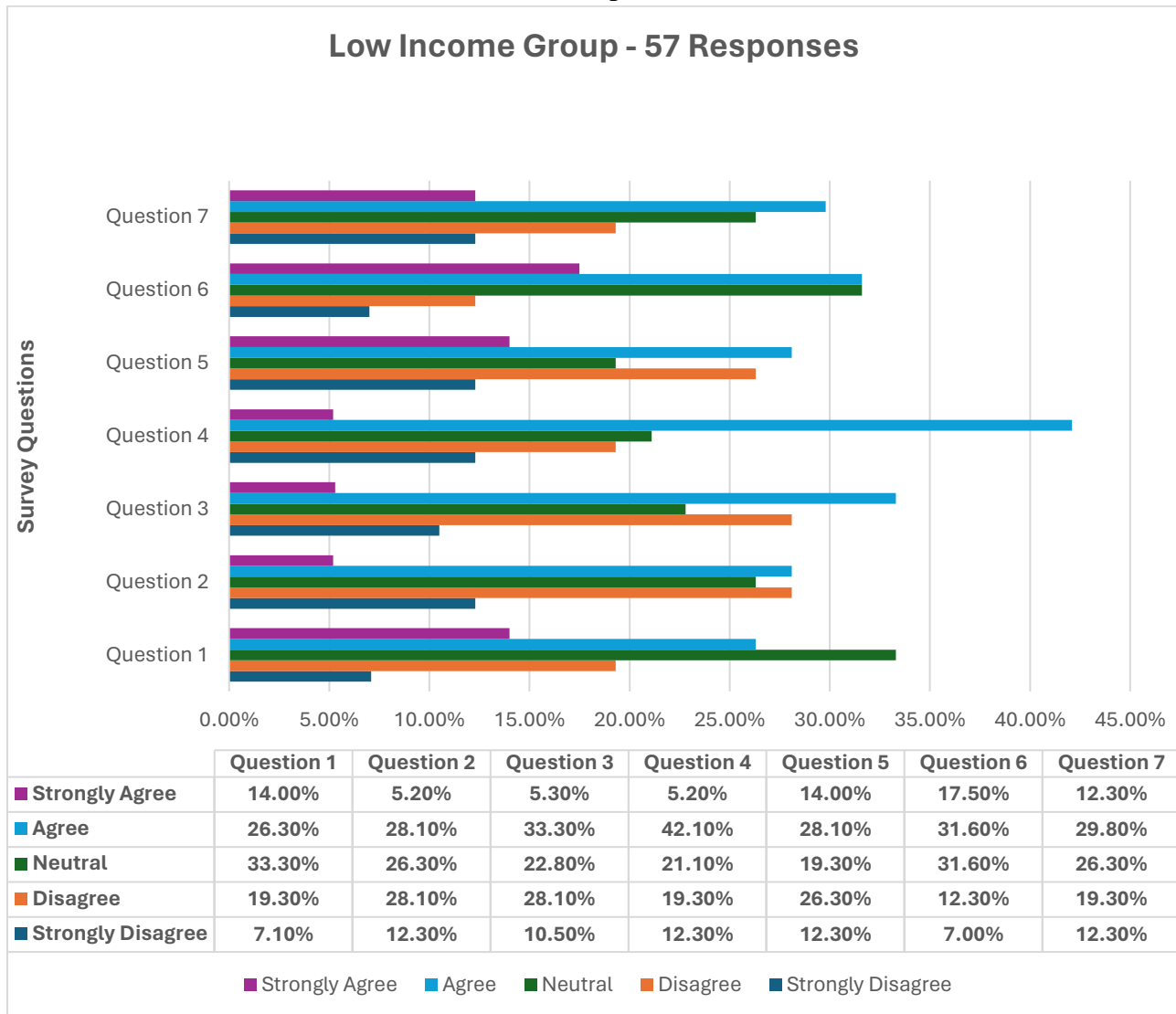
1. I feel the peer pressure to join social media

2. I get overwhelmed by the content on social media
3. I sometimes get stressed by watching the perfect lives showcased by influencers
4. I feel the need to post certain things on social media to fit in
5. I feel uncomfortable with certain things shown on social media
6. Social media is a distraction for me
7. Certain movies, shows etc. cause fear/stress/anxiety

Graph 3.1



Graph 3.2



The analysis of how media impacts both the classes is extremely intriguing. The first interesting detail is that how the samples from the mid-high income group feel less pressured by peers to join social media or get overwhelmed which does not seem true at all. Similarly, in the context of how the perfect life of influencers causes stress, it is again surprising that samples from the mid-high income group strongly disagree (25.9%). On the other hand, it makes sense when the results of the survey from samples belonging to the low income group reflect that the impact and pressures of social media are low because most of them do not have access to devices and hence experience no pressure. A strange anomaly which is difficult to explain is how only 16.7% of the samples in the mid-high income group feel the need to post things, while 42.1% in the low income group feel the pressure to post updates. In the mid-high income group, (31.5% and 40.7%) strongly agree/agree that social media is a distraction despite not feeling the pressure of it. It seems to the researcher that the first couple of questions have not been filled honestly by samples of this income group. The samples of the low income group however (17.5% and 31.6%) have a more balanced response in line with the other questions.

Media and Stress: Observations by the Researcher

1. In the mid-high income group, a significant percentage of samples strongly agree/agree to the fact that social media is a distraction which possibly indicates that they feel this way because they have easy access to all platforms due to the devices they have access to and feel the peer pressure accordingly
2. It is a possibility that the mid-high-income group may have not been completely honest with the question related to posting on social media because their responses to other questions sort of contradicts the responses to this one. It could possibly be because they may be compelled not to highlight the negative effects of this medium

Media and Stress: Secondary Data

How teens use social media also might determine its impact. For instance, viewing certain types of content may raise some teens' mental health risks. These types of content may be even more risky for teens who already have a mental health condition. Being exposed to discrimination, hate or cyberbullying on social media also can raise the risk of anxiety or depression.

What teens share about themselves on social media also matters.

With the teenage brain, it's common to make a choice before thinking it through. So, teens might post something when they're angry or upset, and regret it later.

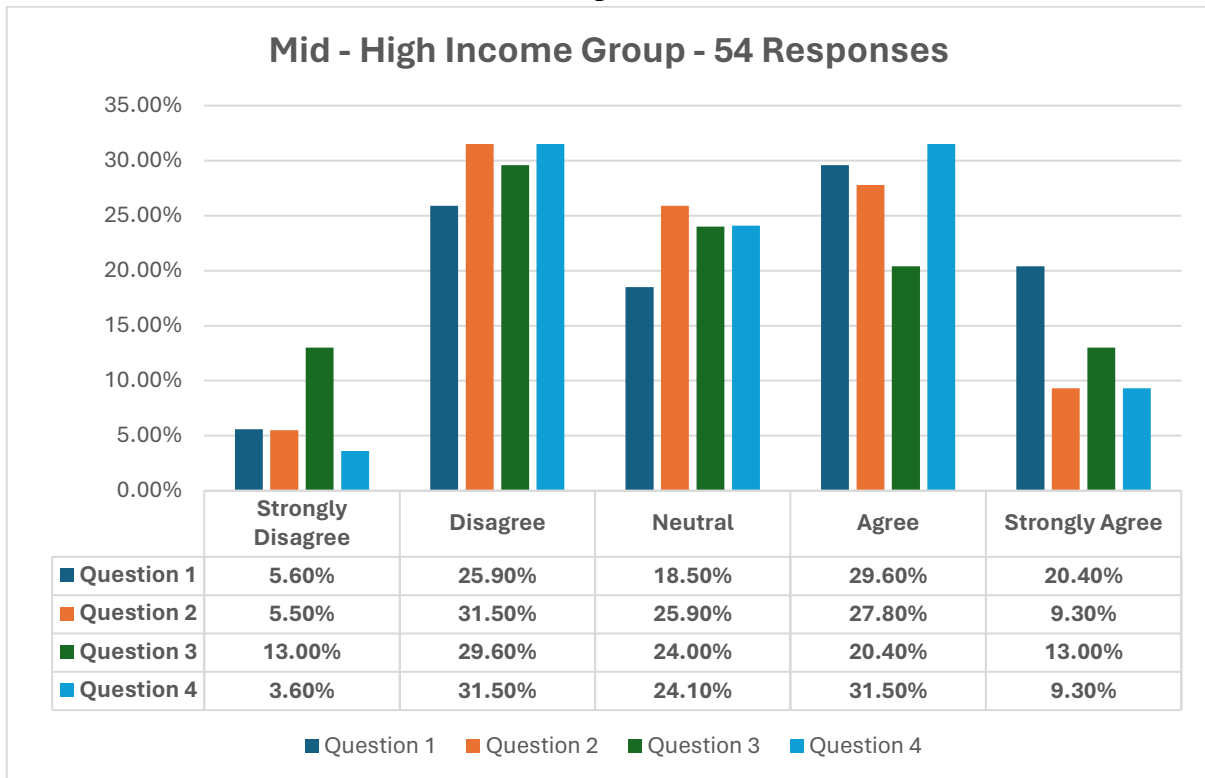
Despite mounting evidence of social media's negative effects on adolescent mental health, there is still a scarcity of empirical research on how teens comprehend social media, particularly as a body of wisdom, or how they might employ wider modern media discourses to express themselves. Youth use cell phones and other forms of media in large numbers, resulting in chronic sleep loss, which has a negative influence on cognitive ability, school performance, and socio-emotional functioning. According to data from several cross-sectional, longitudinal, and empirical research, smartphone and social media use among teenagers relates to an increase in mental distress, self-harming behaviours, and suicidality. Although there is a "generally correlated" link between teen social media use and depression, certain outcomes have been inconsistent (such as the association between time spent on social media and mental health issues). Browsing social media could increase your risk of self-harm, loneliness, and empathy loss, according to a number of research studies. Other studies either concluded that there is no harm or that some people, such as those who are socially isolated or marginalized, may benefit from using social media.

Parameter 4: Health

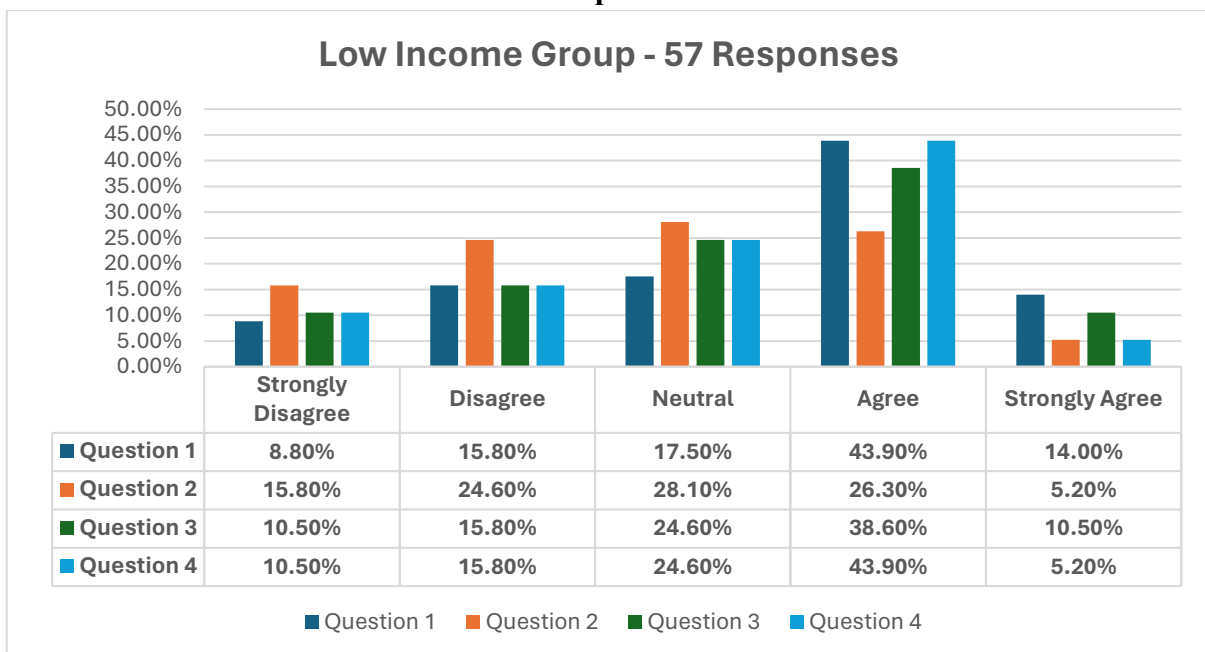
Survey Questions

1. When I am unwell/not fit, I feel anxious
2. I am a restless and anxious patient
3. Thinking about diseases and mental illnesses causes stress
4. When other people around me are unwell I feel stressed

Graph 4.1



Graph 4.2



In the context of health, 29.6% in the mid-high-income group agree that when they are ill/ unwell it causes them stress whereas 43.9% in the low-income group feel stressed when ill reflecting a significant difference between both the economic classes. Similarly, the data findings reveal the samples in the lower income group are far more stressed when they think about diseases or when other people around them are unwell as compared to the samples belonging to the mid-high income group. Evidently, the samples

belonging to the mid-high income group cumulatively disagree on the health questions causing them stress.

Health and Stress: Observations by the Researcher

1. Health as a cause of stress is more prominent in the low-income group. One of the most obvious reasons is a lack of financial resources and health facilities. The lack of knowledge amongst samples of this category could also cause them anxieties related to health issues.
2. The middle -high income group is overall less stressed when it comes to health probably because they are secure with the fact that they will be have access and support to medical facilities.

Health and Stress: Secondary Data

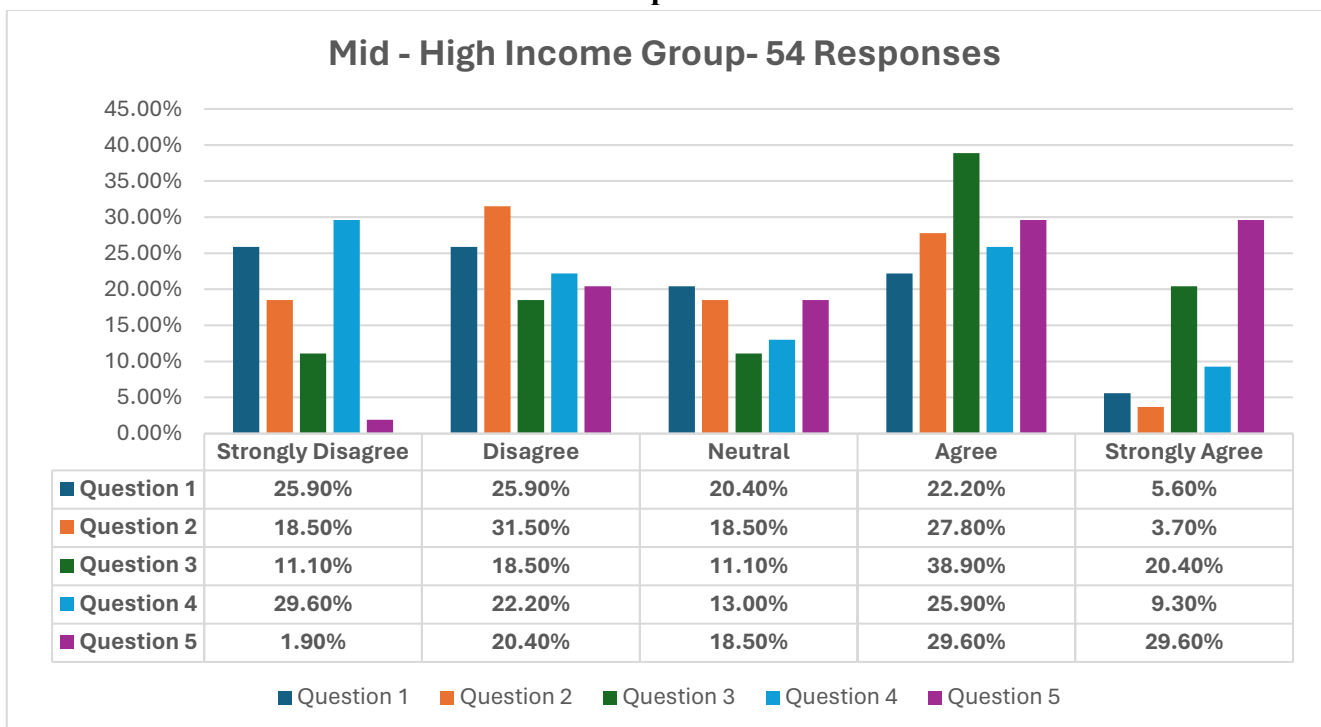
Adolescence represents a critical period during which problems in physical health (e.g., lower physical activity levels, increased obesity) and internalizing mental health (e.g., increased symptoms of depression, anxiety, stress) emerge and may lead to long-term health burdens. Health issues can be induced by stress as well, and health issues can cause stress as well. It is a two-way process and both mental stress and physical problems are highly interrelated.

Parameter 5: General Parameters

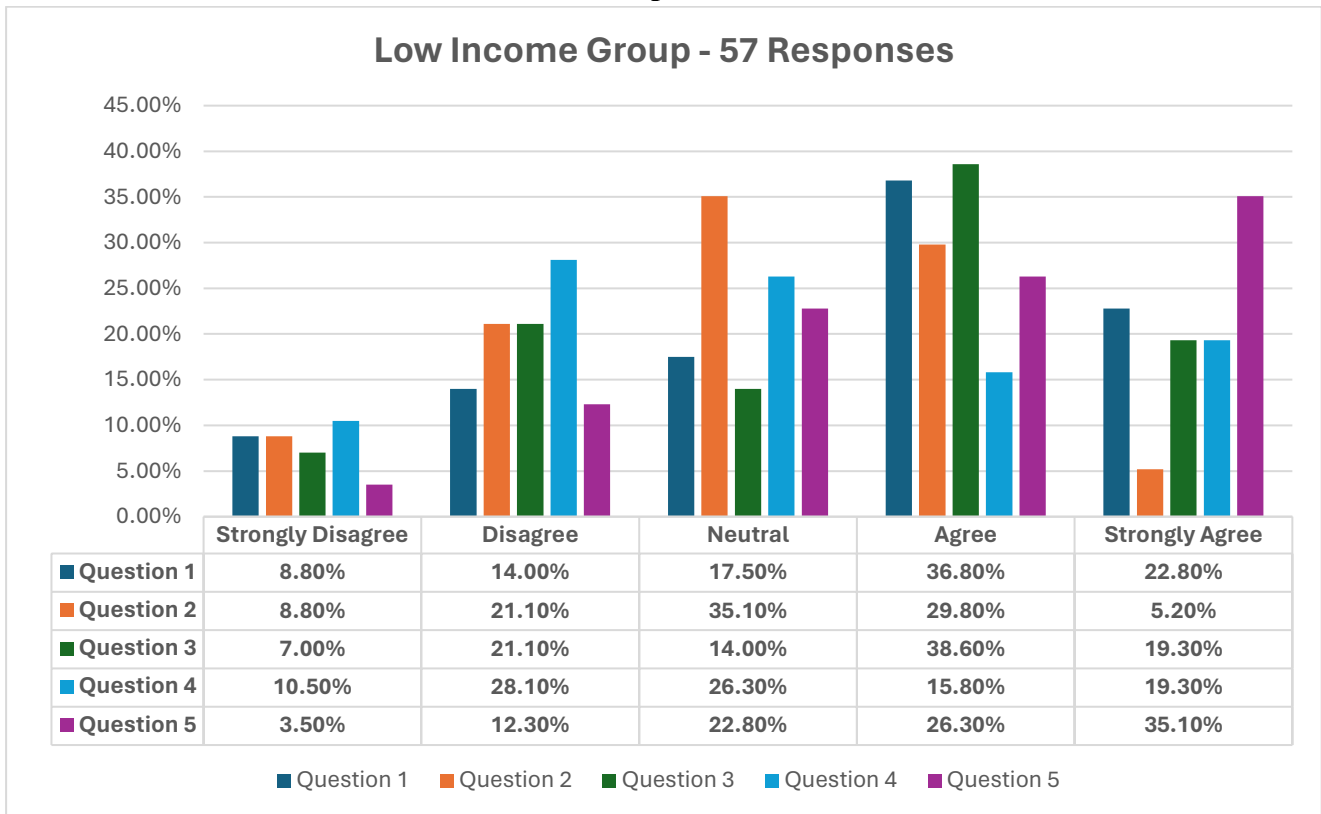
Survey Questions

1. Talking about sensitive topics (rape, sexual abuse) make me uncomfortable
2. I feel stressed/anxious to voice my opinions
3. I am nervous/anxious on stage or while giving a performance
4. Reading certain news and information disturb me (murder, crime, violence)
5. Thinking about my future and achievements /failures causes stress

Graph 5.1



Graph 5.2



In the question about talking about sensitive matters such as rape and sexual abuse, only a very small percentage (5.6%) of the mid-high income group strongly agree that it makes them feel uncomfortable. Whereas in the low-income group, 22.8% strongly agree on the same matter which shows that they are more affected by these issues. The stress which is caused by voicing opinions varies slightly in both the income groups as the percentage of the people who disagree and strongly disagree with this statement are higher in the middle-high income group. An interesting observation is that the percentage of the samplers who feel nervous/stressed while giving a performance is very similar in both the economic classes. For example, 38.6% agree on this cause belonging to the low-income group and 38.9% agree on this belonging to the middle-high income group. For the question related to reading about disturbing news, samplers from the mid-income group cumulatively disagreed that it causes them stress (29.6% + 22.2%) whereas from the lower income group, it is a low cumulative aggregate that disagrees with this cause of stress (10.5% + 28.10%). The future seems to affect samplers similarly across both the economic categories.

General Parameters and Stress: Observations by the Researcher

1. The low-income group seems to be more affected by issues such as rape and sexual abuse because they have probably have experienced these issues and their consequences in their neighbourhoods.
2. The reason why both sets of samples are similarly stressed about performances could be because performance anxiety is not directly linked to economic status. There is no direct correlation to facilities, resources or knowledge but more to do with the fact of expressing themselves in front of an audience.

General Parameters and Stress: Secondary Data

Teens are often privy to the 24-hour news cycle, and hearing bits and pieces of scary news, both domestic and

abroad, can leave teens wondering about their safety and the safety of their loved ones. In terms of performance, scientists suggest that performance anxiety develops when an 'estimation problem' of the brain occurs. This means that the child has a tendency to overestimate threats and risks associated with a situation and underestimate their capacity to fight them. A lot of times adolescents feel stressed or anxious to voice out their opinions, this is because they feel that they will be judged by the people around them. This thought inhibits them from speaking free in front of their peers or other people. Recent research studying news seeking and emotional responses has found that more exposure to the latest headlines—whether through traditional news outlets or highlighted on social media—can undercut mental health. One study, which surveyed 2,251 adults in the spring of 2020, found that the more frequently people sought information about COVID-19 across various mediums—television, newspapers, and social media—the more likely they were to report emotional distress. Overall, all types of news media consumption increased emotional distress, but television and social media exposure were more strongly associated, the researchers found. Younger adults and women were more vulnerable. People with conservative ideology were less likely to be distressed. Anxiety disorders have detrimental impacts on future-related thinking as well. Research shows that anxiety disorders are associated with a cognitive bias to threat. Therefore, anxious adults are more likely to interpret ambiguous information about the future as threatening. In addition, research demonstrates a negativity bias where anxious adults judge that negative future events are more likely to happen to them than neutral or positive ones.

Summary

Mental health is an extremely serious issue studied and researched by psychologists for decades. But mental health among adolescents has been a growing concern among parents and health organizations worldwide. Stress and anxiety are increasingly prevalent among youngsters as well. Stress is defined as a state of worry or tension in a perceived difficult situation. The researcher of this independent project set out to investigate the similarity/differences in the causes of stress among children between the age group of 12-19 years belonging to two distinct economic classes.

The researcher observed during her interactions that the samples belonging to the 'Low Income Group' were generally happy in their disposition. Their causes of stress were more directly related to circumstantial reasons such as less money, less facilities, inability to fit into urban areas, and experiencing the stark contrasts in economic classes. Therefore, it is not surprising that samples of this category feel more pressured with respect to their parents and peers. Also, based on the results of the survey, the researcher concludes that the samples of this economic group were more honest about what causes stress because they are less worried about being judged. Importantly, there is an evident correlation between the responses of the questions within a parameter and there appears to be no contradiction. For instance, the samples in this category tend to "Agree" on the pressures in school or the peer group but not "Strongly Agree". It seems that stress is more momentary for them rather than something they carry with them. They are also more honest in stating that when they have to share sensitive matters with the family, they feel stressed.

With respect to the samples belonging to the mid-high income group, the researcher feels that the causes of stress in the various parameters is more acquired than circumstantial. The probable causes could be a result of loneliness, competition, attempt to fulfil their parents' ambitions which is prevalent in this class of people abundantly. The researcher derives this observation from the results of the survey regarding the school and peers where in all questions related to exams, sports, etc, samples of this economic category

accepted these factors as a major cause of stress. The researcher also concludes that samples in this economic category feels very conscious and judged by others of their age and hence does not always express their opinions honestly. For example, in the questions on social media, the results of the survey reflected that the samples do not feel pressured which cannot be true. The researcher believes that the samples of this economic category suffer from stress due to emotional voids or even self-assumed pressures related to performance.

The only similarity between both the economic classes seems to converge on being stressed about their future or in questions related to voicing opinions or performing on stage all of which could be attributed to age rather than economic class.

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