

**PERCEIVED STRESS, PERSONALITY TRAITS AND COPING
SKILLS OF HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN
MIZORAM**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF
PHILOSOPHY**

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**PERCEIVED STRESS, PERSONALITY TRAITS AND COPING SKILLS OF
HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN MIZORAM**

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Submitted

**In partial fulfillment of the requirement of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in Education of Mizoram University, Aizawl.**

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that **C. LALRUATPUII**, Department of Education, Mizoram University, has completed her thesis work entitled “Perceived Stress, Personality Traits and Coping Skills of Higher Secondary School Students in Mizoram” in partial fulfillment for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education from September 2021 to December 2025 under my guidance and supervision. No part of this dissertation has been submitted for any other degree, diploma, associateship, fellowship or other similar titles in this University or any other University or institution of higher learning.

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DECLARATION
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I **C.LALRUATPUII**, hereby declare that the subject matter of this thesis is the record of work done by me, that the contents of this thesis did not form basis of the award of any previous degree to me or to do the best of my knowledge to anybody else, and that the thesis has not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other University/Institute.

This is being submitted to the Mizoram University for the **Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education**.

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Dated:

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Stress has become a constant part of human life, affecting people at every stage of development, from childhood to adulthood. It happens when the demands of a situation exceed what a person feels they can handle. This leads to feelings of strain, tension, and psychological pressure (Compas et al., 2001). In today's world, where rapid social, economic, and technological changes reshape our daily lives, stress is one of the most common psychological challenges. Its effects are not limited to adults with work or family responsibilities; children, teenagers, and young adults are also at risk, even though their experiences and ways of coping can differ greatly.

Adolescents go through an interfering and rapidly growing phase. This phase involves major physical changes, emotional surges, identity exploration, and steep rises in academic pressure. Adolescents often negotiate the landscape of school, friends, filial expectations, and career prospects. According to Suldo et al. (2008), if students do not pay attention to stress management techniques and at the same time let the pressure from various sides grow, they might end up getting poor grades, developing low self-esteem, anxiety, and even depression leading to bad and non-conforming behaviours. For example, in a survey conducted among students of higher secondary schools in Aizawl, Mizoram, it was found that those who were preparing for entrance exams like NEET and JEE experienced a lot of anxiety and had difficulty concentrating, which in turn affected their academic performance (Laldikpuii, 2023). The teenagers who apply the right coping methods are the ones who develop resilience, adaptability, and good mental health which is the door opener to success in the future (Compas et al., 2017).

In education, stress can play a key role. Academic success is frequently revered as a huge mark of accomplishment, especially in highly competitive conditions as exist in India. Here, examination results, grades, and entrance examinations most affect the future academic and career paths. In places such as Mizoram, academic stress would be exacerbated by a shortage of educational resources, ever-escalating

pressure from parents, and cultural emphasis on academic success. A study on college students in Mizoram showed that academic stress predominantly sprang from parental ambition and peer competition. Such stress translated into indirect problems, like interrupted, lower sleep, fatigue and far less participation in extracurricular activities (Sarma & Ralte, 2025). If it is not properly managed, such stress will not only obstruct academic success but will bring about loss of self-confidence, loss of socializing skills, and loss of personal development in the long run.

Certainly, an individual's personality significantly affects their level of stress during adolescence. People differ from each other in viewing challenges, and in the way they deal with stress due to this love of personality. For example, children high in optimism and conscientiousness will be generally prepared to assess, improve how ready they are to solve a problem, and persist with the solution during the process of attaining challenges. On the other hand, those very high in neuroticism will quite easily fail when faced with problem-solving situations, a lot of worrying, excessive self-doubt, and oversensitivity to emotional triggers (Pronk, 2024). The structure of the personality might differ again in how stress is influenced by different types of coping and strategies.

Coping is an essential factor in controlling emotions, problem solving, and maintaining a person's self-respect in difficult situations. It is not only reacting to stress but also helping the adolescents to be strong enough to face the hard times. Improvement in coping skills during adolescence translates into several lifetime benefits – better academic skills, psychological well-being and social functioning (Afanasyeva & Gurieva, 2021). For example, a study of higher secondary students in Mizoram found, "Students who practiced time management, goal settings, and stress-reducing techniques, were more likely to report lower stress levels and higher academic engagement." The reflection of examples from real life indicates the utility of adaptive coping skills (Lalthanpuui, 2024).

Several possibilities can be invoked to understand the intricacies of how perceived stress, personality traits, and coping skills interact to shape adolescents' development. All of these factors mediate how successfully students adjust to their

academic environment in the short term while it prepares them to adjust farther in life by shaping their emotional and social skills. Considering these factors from the viewpoint of teachers, researchers, and policymakers together could provide an understanding of the students' well-being and development. The recognized trends in stress perception, personality traits, and coping styles have the potential to be the starting point for the creation of specific measures that will positively influence the resilience of adolescents, provide them with life skills and prepare them for the coming hard times in the personal, social and career domains (Pronk, 2024).

Notably, studies conducted in the region highlight the importance of the context and the culture. Studies in Mizoram illustrate that in the cases of specific cultural expectations, community pressures, and regional educational challenges are, the students from Mizoram can only be effective if they are able to pull themselves through them. Specific coping strategies are necessitated by this reality (Laldikpuii, 2023; Sarma and Ralte, 2025). By having localized examples within the research, more distinctive insight is derived for possible interventions that target really ad hoc needs of students. This is why promoting effective coping strategies should figure on card for number one educational task and societal obligation to have some young people who are able to do something positive to their communities and the society at large.

On an overall basis, stress, personality traits, and coping skills form a trio of determining factors, which, in turn, affect the development of an adolescent largely. Stress is omnipresent and multifaceted, having a substantial effect on the quality of academic success and mental health status. Personality affects stress perception and coping management. Hence, proficiency in skills of coping with stress are vital for maintaining balance and enhancement of resilience. Studying these variables together can provide deeper insight, particularly within the Mizoram cultural and educational setup. It could provide theoretical implications along with potential interventions for well-being. Considering these aspects, the development of evidence-based interventions or programs that enhance someone's coping skills is anticipated to not only do well academically but also advance in a long-term manner in terms of personal, social, and career perspectives.

1.1 PERCEIVED STRESS-CONCEPT

Perceived stress, intriguingly, is distinct from the actual stressor itself. Cohen and Williamson (1988) define perceived stress as the psychological perception of events as being stressful. This means subjectively viewing oneself in the stressful event. The plant's initial recognitions mark events as stressful. Perceived stress is felt internally, based on an individual's assessment of their resources relative to incoming challenges and setbacks. Such a perspective sets a disadvantage of one's understanding. That is, the stressor for every individual is different. Two people may experience the same situation, but one may interpret that situation as stressful and the other may not. Stress strategies are the observable events triggered in overcoming interactive stress. Furthermore, the threat impression (emotions related to danger) mainly precedes the acute stress reaction response for stress activity, meaning, in another context, while stressful experiences arise from actual events, other events might bear relevance in carrying network connections variously trained for the perception of a stressful situation. As people attach a negative meaning to their lives, they develop a frame to embrace those negative occurrences.

Tensions are the impressions one gives themselves of stress in varied life situations-to underscore the importance of the subjective experience of stress. This concept holds a central place in the highest level of the psychosocial abstraction in Transactional Model of Stress by Lazarus and Folkman, in which stress was considered by earlier theories to derive entirely from a peripheral-level physiological response elicited by an outside challenge. According to their model, stress is a dynamic and intricate process arising from the entanglement between an individual and the environment. A person has to evaluate a really good or stressful event but also include his or her perception in respect of the stress, more particularly the assessment of the demands on the individual within their perception of their ability to see it through.

In this model of transaction, two major processes are primary appraisal and secondary appraisal. Primary appraisal is an individual discovering whether an event is a source of threat, challenge, or neither. In secondary appraisal, they assess

resources like coping strategies and knowledge to develop a plan to deal with the situation. It follows that individual factors more closely related to the stress experience that shaped it are their belief, emotions, past experiences, and perceived self-control in that context. What appears to overpower one person may galvanize the next person according to internal evaluations from individual to individual. This in essence implies that stress is not an inevitable reaction to external demands, but depends on the look upon a person pays to the demands at stake vis-a-vis his or her own coping strategies and support systems.

The work of Lazarus and Folkman is valuable in recognizing the significance of both thoughts and feelings in the stress process, suggesting that stress management interventions work by altering the environment, facilitating people to change their appraisals, and foster their coping efforts (Hampel and Petermann 2006). Instead of just being on the lines of stress, being mere change or event, it sheds light on the enormous importance of building personal resources to manage stress.

1.1.1 Transactional Model of Stress and Coping

Lazarus and Folkman identified two key types of appraisals in the stress process:

- **Primary Appraisal**

The primary appraisal process is the very first stage one goes through when thinking about an event or a situation. A person very quickly makes a decision about how a new experience will affect their welfare in the first place. This first evaluation indicates whether the event is regarded as insignificant, good, or stressful. In case it is considered as stressful, the person will then classify it as either harm or loss (damage that has already occurred), threat (possible harm), or challenge (an opportunity for personal development).

To demonstrate, a student who is preparing for an exam might have different perceptions of the event based on her preparation level, attitude

towards the exam, etc. (Abu Shosha & Al-Kalaldeh, 2020). Feeling prepared, she is very much likely to see the exam as a challenge and a chance to demonstrate her knowledge and skills. On the other hand, if she is feeling unprepared or dreading to perform badly, she might consider the exam as a threat and therefore, would experience more emotional stress. The first evaluation very much determines the emotional responses, which could be, among others, excitement, fear, or anxiety - the very feelings that a person will have regarding the event.

- **Secondary Appraisal**

This process involves analyzing an individual's perspective on their available coping resources and what options are accessible to them after the initial assessment. The individual in this instance evaluates both the internal and external factors: the internal being the self-confidence, emotional regulation, resilience, and previous experiences; the external including the support from family, friends, teachers, mentors as well as access to helpful resources and strategies. At this point, people are asking whether they can actually face the problem, or what they can do to control the situation. A positive response could lead to decreased pressure and encourage the use of beneficial techniques such as tackling issues, asking for support, or maintaining a positive mindset. Conversely, if they view it as a battle, they may become more troubled, which can lead to nothing but feeling powerless and nervous or to employing counterproductive methods such as avoidance or denial (Sanaeinasab et al., 2017).

For example, in the test situation, a student who sees the test as a difficult one (primary appraisal) will in secondary appraisal think if he or she has enough time to study, enough support and self-confidence to prepare well. Undoubtedly, the student's view of resources will critically affect the way he or she will cope with the situation and, therefore, the amount of stress he or she will eventually experience.

The link between primary and secondary appraisals confirms that stress is not to be regarded as a single, static response but rather as a dynamic

and constant process. Initial primary appraisal, the event's first evaluation, signals which type of emotion is going to be experienced by categorizing the event as a threat, a challenge, or a loss. This interpretation, however, is not the last one; it can change with the changing situation or with the person revising his or her coping ability (i.e. secondary appraisal) changing the view. For example, a person who at first assumes a work task is very hard might later think it is easier or even fun; that would be the case if the person becomes more confident through proper planning, getting help from others, or learning new skills. The opposite is also true; new challenges or less support can make what used to be easy more stressful (Graham, 2015). The continuous interaction between the individual's perception of a stressor and their assessment of their coping resources gives still more reason to think of stress appraisal as something fluid. People constantly recalibrate their reactions in accordance with their inner emotions and outer situations. In this way, stress is best described not as a momentary reaction, but rather as a psychological process that develops over time with changing appraisals.

1.1.2 Objective vs. Perceived Stress

Objective stressors and their subjective experiences are completely different aspects. Objective stressors are real-life events or demands that are occurrent in external sources and risk-rated in the eye of another individual, such as an oncoming test, financial crises, or family conflict. And an external situation cannot be changed- what is changed is the way individuals experience stress. The reason that these perceptions differ is that stress is not just an event, it also relates to each individual's own perception and how the person reacts toward it. How this individual perceives and has been conditioned will determine his or her reaction. His happiness in those days should be adequately addressed in shaping the various reactions to stress, skill-perspectives, resources, and support systems.

For instance, a student who prepares for exams might feel the challenge is in reach and thus be motivated, while the same exams might terrorize another student,

leading to anxiety and self-doubt (Vallejo et al., 2018). This difference shows that stress is less dependent on responding to the situation than on psychological and physical reactions; it psychologically involves personal perception too.

Stress is a subjective concept primarily dependent on how much control the individual believes he/she wields and what resources are available to manage the stressor. Psychological factors are equally important, including locus of control, which refers to the extent a person perceives his/her power and influence to control the outcomes of a situation, self-esteem, which includes feelings of worthiness and capability, optimism, which refers to warmth and declining the probability of an optimistic outcome, and personal values also contribute directly to handling stress.

A person with a moderate or strong internal locus of control may feel little to no stress when dealing with such challenges. On the contrary, someone who has placed reliance on the environment seems to get lost in the face of the same challenges (García-León et al., 2019). Therefore, while studying an environmental stress framework, one also needs to think about the internalized psychological states of individuals that actually shape the perception for common ease.

1.1.3 Perceived Stress in Adolescents

Adolescence is often seen as a time full of stress and tension. These huge changes and transitions are the main factors causing this stress during this phase of human development. The period is characterized by rapid physical, emotional, cognitive, and social changes, which make adolescents especially prone to stress. In terms of physical changes, adolescents experience fast growth and hormonal changes that can have a mood-altering and an appearance-related impact on them. Socially and emotionally, they become deeper thinkers, start to question their previous learning, and gradually form their identities (Ursache et al., 2015). This phase of their lives is also the time when they try to detach themselves from their families, but not to the full extent, since they are still dealing with the pressure of their peers and the fear of being rejected. Adolescents also need care and support regarding their educational performance and career choices, which is a further source of stress.

Consequently, they become the targets of stresses arising from their studies, peer pressure, family relations, and community expectations. Within this context, adolescents turn out to be the most stressed ones because of the enormous responsibility they carry. If the stress is not managed properly, it can have adverse effects on their mental and physical health.

Adolescents are exposed to a variety of stressors in school. One of the academic stressors might be:

- The demand to perform excellently in exams, assignments, and other evaluations.
- The burden of extensive homework and time management problems.
- The teachers' high demands or vague instructions that create stress.
- The anxiety about not succeeding or not meeting the school's academic requirements.
- The whole situation of being compared to and competing with classmates.

On the other hand, social stressors are the following:

- Peer relationships, which include the struggle for acceptance, dealing with friends, and suffering from a breakup.
- Bullying that can lower one's self-esteem and cause psychological suffering.
- Peer pressure and the wish to conform to the group or meet social demands.
- Comparing oneself to others that results in feeling inferior or unworthy.
- Romantic relationship, which is both a source of pleasure and a cause of stress.

Besides all that, there are family-related stressors that have a big impact on how adolescents interpret stress and need to be considered. The researchers state that school performance expectations, career dreams, and behavior are factors that can pressurize young people, especially when they see the expectations as unrealistic or

unattainable (Goyal et al., 2016). Parent conflicts, no emotional support from parents, and disagreements between parents and their kids can also be perceived as insecurity by the adolescents. Stress in this period is normal as adolescents begin to think about their future professions and life decisions that may be in contradiction with the values of their parents or society. Balancing school, social life, and family problems is not only very tiring emotionally but also very stressful. If the stress is not properly dealt with and there is no strong support system, it can adversely affect the emotional stability, academic performance, and progress of the individual during this vital period of life.

1.1.4 Consequences of High Perceived Stress in Adolescents

Research has demonstrated that high stress levels perceived by the teens can result in mental health problems of varying kinds (Nielsen, 2016):

- **Anxiety:** The cycle of stress can ultimately lead to the development of anxiety characterized by the constant worrying, fear of panic attacks, and being nervous. The monotonous stress can indeed turn stress-dominated situations into causing the exaggerated emotional and physical reactions of the person affected.
- **Depression:** Stress that has been in place for a long time leads to feelings such as hopelessness, sadness, and desperation especially in people not having good coping skills. Teenagers can become introverted with low self-esteem and experience a total loss of interest in their formerly loved activities which may result in them suffering from depression.
- **Burnout:** The term burnout especially used in the context of academic stress refers to the state of emotional and physical exhaustion, strong negative feeling toward educational tasks, and even feeling of no personal relevance. Such draining of emotions and cognition can lead to a student's poor performance and eventually even to lack of interest in their academic field and goals.

- **Poor Sleep Quality:** Stress is a major factor in the disruption of sleep. High levels of stress can lead to insomnia or disturbed sleep which can be an obstacle to physical recovery, emotional control, and mental efficiency. Eventually, such a vicious cycle may lead to more stress.
- **Academic Decline:** High-stress students generally have poor academic performance due to concentration, memory, and motivation problems. The stress factor is responsible for cognitive fatigue, which makes it very difficult for them to focus on studies leading to a decrease in grades and overall performance.

However, adolescents whose stress perception is low or who have powerful coping skills are able to deal with adolescent challenges very well. These adolescents can handle academic stress, interpersonal disputes, or family troubles. They apply problem-solving, social support seeking, and mindfulness or relaxation practices as their main coping methods to lessen the impact of stress on their emotions. Thus, adolescents often have more drive to learn because they see the challenges in the light of control rather than being overwhelmed. Besides, they are secure and have high self-worth as they know they can conquer the difficulties. Their perspective towards problems is that of growth rather than threat. The positivity they possess in this regard is of immense help in nurturing their mental health as it keeps the occurrence of anxiety, depression, and burnout at a distance. Also, it assists with their adaptation to the changing socio-cultural milieu. In brief, the application of preventive coping methods not only saves adolescents from the adverse effects of stress but also helps them to metamorphose into robust adolescents and competent adults who are capable of living a quality life while going through the emotional, social, and intellectual development.

1.1.5 The Role of Coping in Perceived Stress

Coping styles are factors that influence the way adolescents see, evaluate, and react to stress. For these adolescents, it might not be so challenging to deal with life's demands. Management of time gives the adolescents the opportunity to

organize their work and cut it down into smaller easier parts. This technique could also help in combating feelings of hopelessness. Family, friends, or mentors' support acts as a shield and provides practical assistance during hard times (Mróz, 2015). The use of meditation and relaxation techniques is one method through which adolescents are able to come down from anxiety and stay aware of their environment. Moreover, getting professional help through therapy or counseling, enables teens to adopt healthier ways of dealing with stress and tackling the core psychological problems which might be contributing to higher stress levels. In this perspective, coping is considered to be a positive feedback cycle, facilitating a better evaluation of stress, so that the adolescents can perceive the problems as solvable ones and stress as challenges to be overcome, rather than as impregnable barriers.

Adolescents who accompanied with ineffective coping styles, on the contrary, find the situation more stressful and react by using more vigorous means to escalate the stress. One such coping mechanism is the individual's avoidance or procrastination in facing the stressor. It then becomes extremely difficult to pinpoint and subsequently handle the source of the stress which leads to more stress and anxiety. One of the most common scenarios during the adolescence stage is the continual and often uncontrollable ruminating over one's problems. This might seem to be the case when a young person's fidgetiness with stress eventually results in complete emotional exhaustion (Furman et al., 2018). Sometimes, adolescent might see occasional substance use as a way out of a difficult situation but, in the long term, it might lead to serious problems including health issues, addiction, and poor relationships with family and friends.

On the flip side, the social support of the peers and the family can be regarded as a significant factor in the perceived stress level of adolescents. Those individuals who have a strong network of relations with family, friends, and role models suffer less from stress. Not only do these relationships be a source of help, but they also usually give out advice and encouragement (Rueger et al., 2010). Adolescents when understood, appreciated, and loved, then they are indirectly being trained to be self-reliant in the sense of having the ability to cope with difficult situations. A well-

grounded support system aids them in processing feelings and stress in a healthier way leading to a more positive mental health outcome.

1.1.6 Educational and Counseling Interventions

Recognizing the importance of perceived stress in adolescents, schools and counseling services play a pivotal role in identifying stress levels early and offering effective interventions. Some strategies include (Chao, 2012):

- **Life Skills Training:** Teaching the typical students on how to cope, ways of handling their emotions and ways of managing stress, can greatly reduce perceived stress among students. The notion of life skills means the part of knowledge and practical instructions that the students will receive to be able to navigate the problem-solving-processes of everyday life, including time-related aspects, conflicts, and self-awareness. Such skills help adolescents to cope with stressors constructively thus improving their welfare and well-being.
- **Peer Support Networks:** Ensuring that positive peer relationships are formed and establishing and later applying peer counseling programs for the students can create the support that the latter needs. Teenagers stressed tend to be lesser when they perceive that young people in their environment do understand and care for them. Through such networks, they get the feeling of belonging and thus get an opportunity to feel that they are not alone in tackling certain struggles since they have someone to turn to; hence reducing stress.
- **Relaxation and Mindfulness Training:** Stress management and concentration courses such as meditation, breathing techniques or yoga teach them about stress freeways. These keep adolescents informed of what is going on in their head and their emotions so as not to be forced to bow to pressure. Mindfulness helps in regulation of emotions resulting in better control to stay in the present thus reduces anxiety and improves overall well-being.

- **Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT):** CBT programs help the student in changing pessimistic cognitive distortions which causes high perceived stress. By using irrational beliefs' test and replacing them with more rational, optimistic patterns of cognition, the students reduce the level of stressors' arousals. CBT helps the students in problem solving and acquisition of adaptive coping strategies that enhances their ability to manage stress in the future.
- **Parental Support and Guidance:** It is possible to point that raising parents to help children manage stress is one of the ways of creating a healthy home environment. Parents are effective in creating realistic expectations by children, offering encouragement and encouraging free speech. By moisturizing and avoiding overemphasizing a child's performance, parents can effectively help the children problem solve and stress in the right manner so as to improve their overall total psychological condition.

This is to mean that counselors and teachers can reduce perceived stress in a focused manner hence enabling adolescents to grow in a healthier environment. There are unique causes of stress associated with every student, his or her issues, and hence defined coping mechanisms; therefore, eradicating stress in a student will involve looking at specific approaches in tackling stress based on the individual (Walker et al., 2010). Any time teachers and counselors offer students individualized coping strategies – and these can be delivered in a life skills training, through peer facilitation, or through a mindfulness approach – students are likely to build up their level of emotional regulation. This carried method not only aids the students to be able to cope with stress but to also develop a sense of empowerment. When students feel that they can effectively cope with the misfortune then their psychological well-being increases, and they gain positive emotional health and self- motivation. Apart from that, having a stronger ability to deal with stress helps utilize time for concentrating on lessons, as well as achieving purposeful goals both at school and personal life. In addition, with a good environment to control stress, young people gain worthwhile and fruitful skills needed for personal, social and academic whole some and success in the future.

1.2 OVERVIEW OF PERSONALITY TRAITS

Personality traits can be referred to as key factors that determine how individuals perceive, appraise, and respond to stress. For example, organization, responsibility, and goal orientation can be managed effectively when one has conscientiousness. People, who wanted to avoid stressors, implement logical plans and time schedules to organize their working experience and reduce possible stress and, therefore, they increase their ability to meet tasks' challenges. On the other hand, assertiveness, enthusiasm, and sociability of extraversion enables one to use social support and positive encouragement from others under stressed up situations. Special attention should be given to the role of stress moderation as a factor where social networks are used as a source of emotional support and advice for the extravert individuals (Matthews et al., 2003). There is also theoretical usefulness in dealing with stress through manageability which has its roots in the personality dimension of agreeableness that is composed of kindness, empathy and cooperativeness. Amiable persons develop good relationship because they are acceptable, which provides them with support and thus are less likely to be stressed or distressed.

Adolescence is a very important time in development when personality traits greatly affect stress appraisal and coping. Despite the fact that personality traits are thought to be rather stable, their impact is more apparent during adolescence as students have to deal with school, friends, and the search for their identity. Studies show that the presence of traits like conscientiousness, extraversion, and neuroticism is particularly strong at this time, often deciding whether adolescents see stressors as conquering challenges or intolerable threats (Connor-Smith & Flachsbart, 2007; Vallejo et al., 2018). Hence, personality traits not only describe enduring patterns of behavior but also function as predictors of adolescents' resilience or vulnerability in stressful contexts.

However, there are personality traits, which that makes difficult to manage stress. Stress susceptibility can be attributed by neuroticism which is a tendency towards emotional instability, anxiety as well as negative feelings. Neuroticism was

found to increase the people's emotional sensitivity and their tendency to think more negatively while making stress controlling decisions. This can lead to the development of unhealthy ways of handling stress like avoiding, ruminating, or using drugs. When stress is handled in such a manner, the intensity of the stress experience increases and results in the development of other mental health disorders such as depression or anxiety (Diener & Lucas, 2019). These aspects of personality, depending on the temperament of the child, can be manifested quite clearly in a school environment in teenagers. Perfectionism in students is manifested in the more efficient ways of coping with students' stress, like priority assignments and dividing the great tasks into several sub-tasks, which reduces student's anxiety and increases successful academic outcomes. Neurotic adolescents may also have stress arising from performance since they are overwhelmed with how they can manage with the emotional ache of academic related problems. Understanding these personality characteristics will be beneficial to educators, counselors and all treatment professionals that are interested in helping adolescents change their problematic coping styles and enhancing their overall wellbeing.

Personality traits have a significant impact on the type of coping strategies that adolescents will adopt when faced with stress, even if this is not directly linked to the stress outcomes. For instance, conscientious students usually apply problem-focused coping namely planning, organizing, and being persistent, which help them to cope with academic stress positively (Ebstrup et al., 2011). Extraverted adolescents often resort to social-support seeking, utilizing friendships and receiving encouragement as shields against stress (Matthews et al., 2003). Moreover, agreeable people habitually use clash prevention and sympathy as their emotional strategies which make them immune to conflicts resulting from interpersonal relations. However, very neurotic adolescents are prone to adopt an avoidant approach comprising of getting out of the situation, denying the problem, or over-thinking it, which may cause more stress than relieving it (Hampel & Petermann, 2006). So, personality traits influence not only the extent of stress but also the techniques that adolescents choose to use to overcome the stressful situations.

1.2.1. Personality Traits and Their Influence on Stress and Coping Mechanisms

These factors are patterns of thought, feeling or behavior that is distinctive and enduring which provides an individual with a specific readymade approach to life. This temperamental factor is not short lived but persists for a long time and determines one's response to an equally long list of stimuli. The essence of these characteristics is deposited in every individual and impacts on the behavior, responses, choices, and also the physical state of a person. Therefore, knowledge of these characteristics is appropriate in many fields of undertaking, like psychological analyses, instruction, advising, as well as business organizations. For example, teachers are able to create teaching strategies adapted towards students' character inclinations, and, counselors can use knowledge of the character in order to direct the clients to the right coping strategies (Semmer, 2006). The knowledge of workers' personality tendencies would be of importance in the workplace, consequently facilitating leadership and motivation of the workers, as well as understanding and directing the dynamics of the team and improving them, making the team more creative, satisfied and productive.

The Five-Factor Model or FFM is one of the most popular theories that outline personality and are used by scientists to explain human behavior. This model of personality includes five factors which are Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness and Neuroticism, commonly referred to as OCEAN. All these dimensions are adopted and contain an inherent aspect of a person's character and taken together they present a whole picture of the people's behavior. Openness is the appreciation for novelty and new ideas while conscientiousness is a person's orderliness, punctuality and purpose (Mustaffa et al., 2019). Extraversion is characterized by the traits of being highly energetic, focusing the attention on others, and expressing one's heart with a loud voice, whereas the trait of agreeableness is described by the person's ability to show kindness, warmth, comfort, and politeness. Moreover, neuroticism is the personality trait that signifies the utmost degree of stress, anxiety, and emotional disorders of an individual. One can possibly gain the

understanding about the perception of one's environment, handling of the stress and even the way of the overcoming life barriers by unlocking these five dimensions. Hence, improved education, therapy, and staff management according to the Big Five personality traits can result in enhancing mental health, relationships between people, and productivity in the workplace.

The concept of the Big Five Personality Traits, or the Five-Factor Model, was not the product of a single researcher but rather the result of a lengthy process of scientific study and adjustment. Contributions of psychologists, such as Tupes and Christal (1961) and Norman (1963), yielded a unified theory of human personality in terms of traits. Eventually, the term “Big Five,” as introduced by Goldberg (1990), became widely recognized, and the systematic research coupled with psychometric testing done by Costa and McCrae (1985, 1992) led to the further development and confirmation of the model. Their research managed to classify personality into five comprehensive categories: Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism, whereby each one of these traits together gives a fuss-free understanding of the human differences. The current investigation adopts the theoretical framework of this previous study. It uses NEO-FFI-3 (Form S-Adolescent) created by Costa and McCrae (2010) to assess the five personality domains in higher secondary students of Mizoram.

1.2.2 The Big Five Personality Traits

The Big Five Personality Traits are as follows:

1. Openness to Experience:

- A person's willingness to adopt novel ideas, experiences, and ways of thinking is reflected in their permeability. Persons who score high in openness, exhibit traits as such intelligence, creativity and preference for diversification. For instance, they will seek new art, ideas, or travels, among other aspects of life (Gerber, 2011). On the other hand, individuals who are

low in openness are rigid, routine-oriented and have little interest in change, and as a result, they are conventional or may be described as conservative.

- **Implications for Stress:** High openness may therefore help to stress buffer in that those who are more open may regard stressors as opportunities to learn and develop. They could be equally or even more adaptable when it comes to other forms of change, for instance, academic challenges or change of school.

2. **Conscientiousness:**

- Conscientiousness is the term for a person's level of discipline, organization, and goal-orientedness. People who score high on this trait are usually responsible, hard-working, and like making plans instead of improvising. They often set goals for themselves and are very careful in doing their duties and tasks. On the contrary, people with less conscientiousness may sometimes be impulsive and, therefore, could have a more relaxed or chaotic approach towards tasks and duties.
- **Implications for Stress:** High conscientious persons have good time management and problem-solving skills, which, in turn, may limit stress through the right organization and task prioritization. The opposite, low conscientiousness, may result in a higher perception of stress especially in school or office setting due to procrastination and lack of organization becoming more prominent.

3. **Extraversion:**

- Sociability, assertiveness, and high energy levels are features of extraversion. Extraverts are people who excel in social settings, love to socialize, and tend to search for stimulation and excitement. Introverts, being reserved, quiet, and fatigued following extensive socializing, are a different type of person.
- **Stress Implications:** Social support systems often prove to be helpful in dealing with stress for extraverts. The process could involve them purposely looking for friends, family, or colleagues to provide emotional support in the

face of stress. Conversely, introverts could go for silence or thinking to cope with stress, which could either boost their energy or lead to loneliness and heavier emotional load depending on the situation (Ursache et al., 2015).

4. Agreeableness:

- Commensurability is used to measure persons' willingness to cooperate, show positive attitude and associate with others. The dimensions of the personality of agreeable individuals are warm, trustful and low conflict solving. Whereas people low in agreeableness have traits that may include being competitive, quarrelsome, or even hostile as far as individuals are concerned.
- **Stress Implications:** Ideally, greater agreeableness has been associated with greater number of interpersonal relationships as well as self and social support structures that protect from stress. The frequenters may also be likely to exhibit more prosocial behavior, leading to organisational support that diminishes stress. On the other hand, low agreeableness persons may encounter problems with Interpersonal conflict which hampers the stress bearable and magnifies feelings of alienation.

5. Neuroticism:

- Neuroticism is the ability of a person to feel negative affect including anxiety, low mood, anger or fear. The high neuroticism might be sensitive to stressors and might be overwhelmed with emotions during some events that cause stress. On the other hand, there are available data about people with low level of neuroticism, who are not sensitive to stress and pressures, and are easy going and more resistant and tolerant to stress.
- **Stress Implications:** The evidence presented in the paper reveals that neuroticism is positively associated with perceived stress. Neuroticism refers to how sensitive a person is to stress and can be problematic in terms of managing emotions hence is a risk factor for anxiety, depression, and burnout. On the other hand, low neurotic people have good emotional

cohesiveness – a factor, which can provide a barrier to the impact of stress and enable the person cope with it aptly.

1.2.3 Personality Traits and Stress Vulnerability

Personality traits, according to Vallejo and others (2018), can be important predictors of both stress vulnerability and resilience. Personality traits have a strong influence on the perception and response of individuals to stressors. For example:

High Neuroticism

- **Worse Reactions:** Individuals with high neuroticism are more likely to experience anxiety, fear, and frustration as a result of stressors and often overestimate the danger of challenges.
- **Stronger Emotional Reactions:** These people often experience mood swings and emotional instability, which makes it hard for them to cope with stress.
- **Poor Coping Strategies:** Due to their emotional intensity, neurotic people can adopt unhelpful coping strategies, such as rumination (concentrating on negative thoughts) or avoidance, which will increase their stress and lead to the deterioration of their mental health.
- **Higher Risk to Stress Disorders:** Increased neuroticism is linked to greater risk of the suffering of mental disorders including anxiety, depression, and emotional regulation issues, all of which stem from the emotional stress that they experience constantly.
- **Stress Control Difficulties:** Their tendency to experience negative feelings makes it harder for them to stay cool under pressure and to come up with the right solutions to the problem.

Low Neuroticism

- **Emotional Stability:** People who are low in neuroticism can control their emotions and remain serene even in the most stressful situations, thus stress is not a problem to them.
- **Higher Stress Resilience:** Maintaining their composure and not having extreme reactions to the problems makes them less prone to the stress-related disorders like depression and anxiety.
- **Better Coping Mechanisms:** The presence of low neuroticism is accompanied by the development of adaptive mechanisms that help to manage stress healthily, such as problem-solving, acceptance, and seeking out social support.
- **Better Mental Health:** Such people are generally happier, have more self-esteem and emotional well-being because they are better at managing stress in life.
- **Lower Risk of Mental Disorders:** Their able temperament and effective coping skills mean that individuals who are low in neuroticism are less likely to develop anxiety, mood disorders, or other stress-related illnesses.

Moreover, individuals possessing some traits like a high level of conscientiousness, extraversion, and agreeableness tend to adopt better coping strategies and have higher resilience as well (Sanaeinasab et al., 2017). These traits allow people to do things like asking for support, choosing healthier methods and level of coping, and staying focused; all of which enhance effective stress negotiation and emotional regulation.

1.2.4 Personality Traits and Coping Strategies

As per the study by Abu Shosha and Al-Kalaldeh (2020), personality traits determine not only people's vulnerability to stress but also their methods of handling it.

- People who are conscientious are more likely to use problem-focused methods, such as planning and organizing, which can confront the stressor directly and consequently lessen its impact.
- Extroverts might be the ones who use social support much more as a resource. They will call upon their friends, family, or coworkers for emotional support. Their social and friendly nature, together with their positive outlook on life, acts as a barrier against stress by making them feel more connected and supported.
- Typically, agreeable individuals will be using emotion-focused strategies allowing them to cope effectively with emotional turmoil, for instance, through showing understanding and trying to maintain peaceful relations, etc.
- On the other hand, neurotic people might be more inclined to resort to the negative coping strategies of avoidance, such as withdrawal or denial, which may give short-term relief but over time can actually increase stress.

1.2.5 Personality and Academic Stress in Adolescents

About the students, personality traits also determine the way the students are likely to confront academic challenges, peer pressure and home expectations. For instance, the conscientiousness may in a student lead to efficiency in time and organizational inflexibly and the goal achievement's ability that will be quite useful while coping with the academic stress (Hampel & Petermann, 2006). Students who have high neuroticism for instance, can have a tendency of developing anxiety that can be as a result of academic stress, this might lead to emotional stress thus lowering their academic performance.

For example:

- The student with that quality would, for instance, have a study timetable drawn up in advance and would manage his time well which ultimately would lead to less and maybe even no stress or anxiety when the time for the exams comes.

- On the other hand, if the student is neurotic, he would probably be very concerned, put off studying until the last minute, and be emotionally distressed which in turn would be an obstacle to his academic performance and health.

1.2.6 Implications for Interventions and Mental Health Support

Personality tests can give good information about the ways adolescents perceive and manage stress. Knowing the personality of an individual can assist in adjusting the interventions and support systems according to their requirements. For instance:

- High neurotic students can benefit from programs that focus on emotional regulation promotion, anxiety reduction, and resilience building through mindfulness practices and cognitive-behavioral techniques.
- Extraverted students could be supported in such a way that they would create solid social support networks and take part in collaborative learning activities which would allow them to deal with stress effectively.

1.2.7 Personality, Culture and Educational Context

The growth of personality and its effect on stress must be viewed within the larger cultural and educational settings that physically and mentally envelop adolescents. The type of culture, e.g., socialism or individualism, determines the very way people would experience life, interpret it then manage their emotions and take help from others at the time of the stress. In Indian social cultures such as Mizoram, adolescents are nurtured forming very close-family relationships and bonding with the community. These social setups sometimes function as protection shields that keep the adolescents safe from stress by providing them with advice, kindness, and emotional backing (Adhiya Shah & Trivedi, 2017). Outgoing or agreeable children may have a good time growing in such surroundings as their sociable character makes them get along with the supportive network easily. On the

contrary, a child having a high degree of neuroticism would still suffer from feelings of isolation or would find it harder to speak about his problems even when there are people who are willing to help. This proves that there is a kind of synthesis between culture and personality traits; the former may amplify the latter's goodness in some cases while the latter's drawbacks in others.

The educational system in Mizoram adds one more layer to this interaction. The state has one of the highest literacy rates in India; therefore, it highly values education as a means of upward mobility and social advancement. But the aspiration for academic success often begets parents' high expectations, competition among students, and limited local opportunities for further education. All these factors cause a high level of stress among students (Sarma & Ralte, 2025). The traits of personality determine the way the students will react to the pressures. Diligent students may get the discipline of study habits out of stress, lively students may resort to forming study groups of their mates, and friendly students may keep up good relations with diversions that are supportive of them during their exam periods. Nevertheless, the neurotic students might get even more nervous and resort to bad ways of handling stress, although they share the same academic atmosphere with the others.

It is crucial for individuals within the educational sector, such as teachers, counselors, and policymakers, to remember the significance of this interaction. Personality traits-aware academic counseling programs can better teach coping strategies and decrease the stress. For instance, the students with the trait of good conduct may do better in the discipline of goal-setting workshops, whereas the nervous students may benefit more from empathy, emotional regulation, and cognitive restructuring group therapies. Nevertheless, community-based activities—such as peer mentoring, collaborative projects, and youth activities in partnership with local churches—can produce an atmosphere that not only helps to develop socially the extroverted and sociable students but also gives the introverted ones a chance to be with others without making them uncomfortable.

If schools in Mizoram were to consider personality alongside the broader cultural and educational context understanding, they would be able to offer substantial support to adolescents instead of applying the one-size-fits-all approach. This strategy not only contributes to the reduction of stress but also opens up the possibility for the development of resistance, flexibility, and general wellness, thus making the students more skillful to cope with the challenges of higher education and life after school.

1.3 CONCEPT OF COPING SKILLS

Coping entails the individual's cognitive, emotional, and behavioral attempts that are put to use in the face of stress, conflict, and adversity. It is an important factor in psychological resilience and greatly affects the adjustment in the academic, personal, and social areas (Sung, 2011). During the adolescent years, coping is especially relevant as the teenagers go through a lot of changes in identity, peer group, education, and family relationships. Effective coping is very important in this process. While adaptive coping enhances emotional well-being and adjustment, maladaptive coping can lead to the development of stress-related problems and mental health issues.

Coping is also closely associated with perceived stress and personality traits. The way an adolescent evaluates a stressor and their inherent characteristics greatly affect the selection of coping strategies. For instance, students who are highly conscientious usually think of academic difficulties as manageable and regularly use problem-focused techniques, while those who are highly neurotic might suffer more from the stress and engage in avoidant coping. In Mizoram, where the social fabric is tightly woven around community, family, and value systems, personality traits like agreeableness and conscientiousness play a vital role in determining the type of coping that is adopted.

As per the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping of Lazarus and Folkman (1984), coping is not a set reaction but rather a dynamic, situation-specific process where people assess both the demands and the resources available. Stress does not

come simply from the events that happen, but rather from the perception and evaluation of those events. Coping has been classified frequently into different types of strategies:

- **Problem-Focused Coping:** These are taking direct efforts at dealing with or resolving the origin of stress. For example, organizing a study plan or asking a teacher for help when faced with academic difficulties. This method works best if the sources of stress can be controlled.
- **Emotion-Focused Coping:** The individual's emotional response is controlled but not altered; the source of stress is not changed. For instance, a teenager may write in a diary, practice mindfulness, or pray as a way of trying to cope with the distress in a situation where they have no control over the stressor.
- **Avoidant Coping:** This includes denial, retreat, or use of substances, which might give short-term relief but usually increase the risk of long-term psychological problems (Swain, 2020).
- **Adaptive vs. Maladaptive Coping:** Adaptive behaviors, like going to others for support or doing relaxation exercises, are usually boosting resilience, while mal-adaptive behaviors, such as being aggressive or becoming noninteractive, can lead to more stress intension (Labrague et al., 2018).

These categories refer to the methods—the particular actions taken to deal with stress. However, the strategies alone do not reflect the deeper qualities that allow the teenagers to cope efficiently. Therefore, researchers separate the coping strategies from coping skills.

- **Coping Strategies:** The specific techniques applied to cope with stress are called coping strategies.
- **Coping Skills:** These are the psychological and behavioral abilities that are wider and help to determine the effectiveness of the chosen tactics.

For instance, adolescent who has mastered his emotions may opt for the method of deep breathing during an examination, whereas a problem solver may

draw up a study timetable or ask classmates for help. This shows that coping skills are the base while strategies are the practical manifestations of that base.

1.3.1 Importance of Coping in Managing Academic and Personal Stress

School becomes one, or even the main, hotspot for tremendous teen stress, consisting of examinations, expectations, teachers, peers, and competition. If left on their own to handle, some will develop fatigues, sleep deprived, anxiety disorders, and dropout. Coping strategies are thus the constructive ways by which learners can remain focused, work at a time, and seek assistance when necessary (Carter, 2010).

It can be also a problem at the individual level in form of relationship issues such as early relationships problems, bullying, parents' divorce, or issues of sexual orientation. Lack of a good coping mechanism in these facets may manifest as aggression issues, self-isolation, substance abuse or acting recklessly (Esmailimotlagh et al., 2018). On the other hand, irresponsible behaviors in teenagers with inflated self-esteem and no ability to regulate emotions and solve problems are quite likely to indicate poor mental health for the rest of their lives. From the traditional thought process, schools are useful in increasing coping skills among people. And issues like life skills training, school guidance, mindfulness intervention, and support groups with peers have proved to add to the emotional preferably of adolescents. Awareness improvement, expression of emotions, change of perspective and management of stress promotes the psychological well-being in addition to school academic achievement and social adaptation.

1.3.2 Theoretical and Practical Relevance of Coping Skills

Several important psychological theories underlie the coping process, thus enhancing our understanding of the individual stress adaptation (Ronen, 2021):

- Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory: This theory underlines that believing in one's competencies to perform under pressure is very important. Teenagers

having high self-efficacy are likely to face challenges and use solution-oriented coping strategies.

- **Cognitive-Behavioral Theory (CBT):** CBT explains how people's thoughts influence their feelings and behaviors. Therapies based on CBT help young people to change their negative thinking and develop more positive coping mechanisms.
- **Positive Psychology Framework:** This framework advocates for the development of personal strengths such as resilience, hope, optimism, gratitude and purpose which act as barriers against stress. Coping is thus viewed not only as a reaction to stress but also as a way to achieve personal growth and happiness.
- **Developmental Psychology:** This branch of psychology suggests that the coping process is different for children and adults. Adolescents with better cognitive flexibility and emotional awareness gradually move from being reactive and avoidant to being more reflective and proactive in their coping styles.
- **Social-Ecological Models:** These models focus on the impact of the larger environment—family, school, media, and community—on the coping behavior of young people. Effective interventions usually involve multiple levels of support that together create an ecosystem conducive to coping skills development.

1.3.3 Coping Skills in Adolescence

There are several coping skills that are particularly important during the stage of adolescence, which is characterized by various academic pressures, unchanging social interactions, and identity formation:

1. **Problem-Solving Skills** – This is about being able to recognize the problem, come up with several different solutions, and decide what to do based on the good. Generally, students who utilize such skills, for example, organizing

study schedules or talking to teachers, experience less academic stress (Compas et al., 2017).

2. Emotional Regulation Skills – The ability to control one's feelings such as anger, sadness, and fear. Adolescents who are better at emotional regulation are less likely to engage in impulsive actions and are more resilient in challenging situations (Gross, 2015).
3. Time Management and Organizational Skills – These involve planning, setting priorities, and resisting the temptation to procrastinate, which enable teenagers to cope with the academic demands. The correlation between poor time management and increased stress has been established among Indian secondary school adolescents (Misra & McKean, 2000).
4. Social and Communication Skills – Properly expressing emotions, asking for help from friends, teachers, or family, and establishing good relations are ways of dealing with stress. The adolescent with better communication skills are more inclined to consider stressors as manageable thanks to social support (Rajesh & Dhar, 2018).
5. Cognitive Restructuring Skills – It is the skill to question and change the negative or absurd thoughts. The reduction of stress response comes from viewing tests as chances for learning instead of threats (Beck, 2011).
6. Resilience and Optimism – Resilience, taking heart of the situation and getting back on the feet supports recovery, while optimism, the light at the end of the tunnel, sets the positive expectation for the future. Both have been associated with better mental health (Masten, 2014).
7. Mindfulness and Relaxation Skills – The activities like yoga, meditation, and breathing control not only keep one aware of his/her self but also lower the body's stress reactions. Mindfulness programs are part of the curricula in Indian schools and they have been found to improve both coping and academic engagement (Mehta et al., 2019).
8. Spiritual and Value-Based Coping Skills – In Mizoram, a region rich with spiritual and scriptural resources, stress management techniques such as prayer, faith, and value-based decision-making not only offer the stress

manager emotional support but also give him/them a sense of meaning (Hernández, 2016).

9. Assertiveness and Decision-Making Skills – Making your own choices free from bad peer influence is a must during this period. Such skills are not only effective in curtailing negative coping behaviors like drinking or withdrawing from others but are also preventive measures (Esmaeilimotlagh et al., 2018).
10. Self-Efficacy and Confidence-Building Skills – Doubt in one's competence leads to giving up easily and using the wrong means to cope. On the contrary, adolescents with higher self-efficacy would rather face the problem than avoid it; hence would be more likely to use constructive ways of dealing with the situation (Bandura, 1997).

All in all, the coping skills not only determine how adolescents will respond to the stressors at hand but also affect their academic achievement, psychological health, and social development in the long run. In Mizoram, which is already a difficult place for the adolescents due to increased academic expectations, few higher education opportunities, and changing socio-cultural factors, coping skills act as vital protective measures. Schools can teach life skills, offer counseling that takes into consideration the local culture, and have peer support programs that are all aimed at helping adolescents build these skills so they can handle changes positively and be resilient for the future.

1.4 INTERRELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STRESS, PERSONALITY, AND COPING

The relationship between perceived stress, personality, and coping styles is central to the determination of the psychological well-being of a person (Karimzade & Besharat, 2011). Each factor not only makes its own independent contribution to the way a person perceives and deals with stress but also dynamically interacts with the others, creating a dynamic interplay that determines mental health outcomes, especially during adolescence.

a) Personality Traits and Stress Perception:

- People's experiences and reactions to stress are greatly influenced by their personality features. There has been a lot of research on the Big Five (Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism) Five-Factor Model (Leandro & Castillo, 2010).
- A propensity for unpleasant emotions and emotional instability characterize neuroticism, which is frequently associated with heightened stress perception. People with high neuroticism frequently perceive circumstances as more frightening and become overwhelmed by relatively minor pressures.
- Conscientiousness and Extraversion are typically related to lower stress perception, since these personality traits are associated with improved emotional management, optimism, and proactive problem-solving.
- Agreeableness facilitates positive social interactions, which can act as a buffer against interpersonal stress, whereas Openness can enable adaptive coping by allowing flexible thinking and emotional awareness.

Therefore, personality may influence both the intensity of perceived stress and the choice of coping strategies, determining whether someone will respond with anxiety, resilience, or disengagement.

b) Personality and Coping Responses:

Personality also influences the coping style that people are likely to use when they experience stress (Semmer, 2006):

- Neurotic persons will be more likely to use emotion-focused or avoidant coping, which in the long term might increase stress.
- Conscientious persons will tend to use problem-focused coping, for example, planning and time management, which successfully minimizes stress.

- Extraverts tend to use social support or active coping behaviors that prioritize outside involvement.
- Cooperative individuals usually resort to cooperative problem-solving or seek comfort in social ties.
- High-Openness people might try artistic or reflective coping strategies such as journaling or reappraisal.

These propensities reveal that personality not only influences one's perception of stress but also decides how well one manages it.

c) Buffering Role of Effective Coping Strategies:

Coping functions as a moderator or protective factor between stress outcomes and personality. Especially for people who may be more susceptible to elevated stress reactivity due to their personality, adaptive coping techniques are useful in reducing the detrimental effects of stress (Carver & Connor-Smith, 2010). For instance:

- A very neurotic person may be helped to learn cognitive reappraisal or mindfulness to reverse negative thought patterns.
- Introverted teenagers can minimize academic stress by establishing time management and self-reflection techniques instead of repressing emotions.

Coping is a psychological buffer that protects adolescents from the negative consequences of chronic stress—in this case, anxiety, depression, or alters the way in which one approaches and interprets stress and determines emotional vulnerability.

d) Empirical Studies on the Three-Variable Relationship:

A number of empirical studies support the interrelationship between stress, personality, and coping:

- Connor-Smith and Flachsbart (2007) showed personality traits as reliable indicators of coping methods in a meta-analysis. Neuroticism

was linked to maladaptive and avoidant coping, while extraversion and conscientiousness were linked to active adaptive coping.

- Penley and Tomaka (2002) discovered that problem-solving coping acted as a mediator between personality traits and health outcomes, leading to better physical and mental health for individuals who embraced this coping strategy.
- In a sample of adolescents, Hampel and Petermann (2006) established that neuroticism was a predictor of more maladaptive use of coping, i.e., rumination and withdrawal, and was linked to higher self-reported stress and depressive symptoms.
- Ebstrup et al. (2011) research emphasized that neuroticism-high adolescents felt more stressed and had lower health-related quality of life unless they used active coping strategies.

The idea that personality and coping interact to greatly impact how stress is viewed and managed is supported by these researches taken together. This three-variable approach is especially important throughout adolescence because it combines peer pressure, scholastic pressures, emotional volatility, and identity building.

e) Practical Implications:

Stress management programs, school counseling, and mental health therapy are all significantly impacted by an awareness of the connections between stress, personality, and coping (Graham, 2015):

- Personality assessments can help identify students at risk of maladaptive stress responses.
- Personalized coping skills training according to personality traits can improve intervention effectiveness.
- Encouraging emotional intelligence, building resilience, and life skills education can equip adolescents to handle stress positively, irrespective of personality profile.

Through an examination of all three factors—personality, stress perception, and coping—comprehensive approaches can be developed to promote adolescent well-being and scholastic achievement.

1.5 ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH AND EDUCATION CONTEXT IN MIZORAM

Mizoram is among the seven states located in northeastern India. Its exceptional culture and social organization are characterized by a strong Christian influence and a great concern for education. Mizo society regards and respects education a lot, thinking it is the only way to open the door to economic and social change. Literacy among adolescents in Mizoram is very high; they put schooling at the top of their priority list. They are, nevertheless, subjected to considerable academic pressure. The limited number of college admissions available in the state, societal and family expectations to be the best, and the trend of others moving to different places for better education and job opportunities are the main sources of such pressure. These factors lead to students feeling more concerned, competing with and distancing themselves from others which, in turn, is associated with increasing numbers of mental health issues, including sleep disorders, anxiety, and depression. Social media, on the other hand, brings along more pressures, such as identity crises and having to be someone online, thereby exacerbating the mental health problems of young people.

Mizoram adolescents also go through a lot. Mental illness along with the absence of psychological help in the form of clinics, contribute to the plight of the community where these issues are stigmatized. Very few mental health professionals are available and counseling services offer mere trickles, thus many adolescents are left without treatment or even a diagnosis. This only serves to reiterate the need for research into psychology that is sensitive to the local culture of Mizo which is in stark contrast to that of other parts of the country (Hoover & Bostic, 2021). Such research would reveal coping styles that might be influenced by culture, like spiritual approaches and collective values. The understanding gained could be valuable input into the way Mizo adolescents would cope with stress. It might also uncover the very

academic stressors which are certain regions or genders, thus leading to the establishment of the most suitable mental health interventions and educational policies. These cultural factors provide the basis on which school-based mental health programs for Mizo adolescents can be designed and implemented. Such programs would promote education as well as mental health and would, therefore, be conducive to academic success in the case of Mizo adolescents.

a) Socio-Cultural and Educational Background of Mizoram:

Mizoram, being one among the seven sister states of India's northeast, is not only beautiful but also very rich in terms of its socio-cultural fabric which has been mainly developed around its tribal and Christian populace. Community values and strong social ties are very important to the Mizo people and the Young Mizo Association (YMA) is a very good illustration of this by the fact that it is involved in all aspects of community life, providing moral, human, and developmental support, and even their integration of the young ones through mentorship. Daily activities involve the community, thereby fostering a sense of togetherness and collaboration in taking joint actions (McLeod et al., 2012).

Mizoram has come a long way in the literacy and educational standards departments, constantly ranking among the top five states in India for literacy with rates always over 91%. This is a clear indication of the education system's power which is backed by the government and the missionaries who laid the foundation for formal education in the region.

Education in Mizoram is regarded as the first necessity of society for personal betterment and social advancement at the same time. Secondary and upper secondary education is the majority of the school education, which comes under the Mizoram Board of School Education (MBSE). Many students are also studying in CBSE-affiliated schools which give them a chance to get formal education. Mizo is a compulsory subject but English is also very important in the educational system hence providing students with bilingual education (Directorate of School Education, Mizoram, n.d.).

Notwithstanding this, Mizoram is still facing challenges coming from the rigid educational structure and some ineffective teaching methods. Higher education infrastructure is developing very slowly and the situation is such that very few institutions are offering professional courses and career opportunities (Azim Premji University, n.d.). In the end, many Mizo young people go to other states for higher education and job opportunities thus giving the feeling that the most lucrative careers are not in Mizoram. Such a situation translates into academic pressure for students as they understand that their area does not offer many promising job opportunities. Consequently, educational competition and shortage of jobs create stress among students and youth, complicating their aspirations regarding work and family life.

b) Mental Health Trends and Academic Pressure Among Students:

The primary cause of mental health problems among adolescents in Mizoram is linked to the stress experienced within educational institutions. Among the various factors that drive students crazy, the fear of not living up to their parents' or society's standards, coupled with examinations, is the chief reason of their stress. The community has placed such a heavy reliance on education that students feel the pressure even more: they are not only trying to be successful but also wanting their families and neighborhoods to be (Sznitman et al., 2011). Thus, the stress is usually experienced in the form of a never-ending worry about getting bad grades, fear of disappointing the parents, and a race with the schoolmates to be the top in the studies. Consequently, students suffer from constant anxiety and become fatigued and emotionally exhausted, which in the end, has an adverse impact on both their health and learning.

In addition, the socio-economic condition adds greatly to the academic pressure especially for the rural and semi-urban areas in Mizoram. In the countryside, the students usually do not have the luck to get good schools or tutors, hence they have to work with very few resources and still be able to satisfy the expectations set for them. Moreover, alongside the financial challenges, students have to carry the burden of heavy academic loads (Hopkins, 2014). The combination of economic and academic responsibilities makes the child helpless, leading to

frustration, burnout, and isolation as they strive for excellence while living in poverty-stricken areas. This mixture of stressors calls for the development and implementation of specific strategies that would not only relieve academic stress, but would also address the socio-economic and cultural factors that contribute to the stress of adolescents in Mizoram.

Common mental health problems reported by students in Mizoram, based on local surveys and reports from school counseling, include:

- Anxiety and depression
- Sleep disturbances
- Low self-esteem
- Social withdrawal
- Suicide as a coping strategy, particularly among older adolescents

Mental health stigma also makes it difficult for the adolescents to talk about their emotional problems. In many cultures, emotional problems are still regarded as a sign of weakness, which discourages people from seeking professional help. The community elders and religious leaders' roles are still significant, however, the health infrastructure for professionals in the area of medicine and mental health is still in a developing stage. There is a scarcity of clinical psychologists, counselors, and psychiatrists in the state (Wang & Peck, 2013). Plus, adolescents have to deal with 21st-century problems like the internet being a must-have, cyberbullying, and identity confusion which is a result of social media exposure and the concurrent cultural upheaval. The new digital gadgets, which are becoming more popular among kids, are also the ones causing the whole emotional mess but these kids might still be left without proper guidance or psycho-education.

c) Need for Contextual Psychological Studies:

The psychological and educational experiences of Mizo youth cannot be fully understood through general Indian or Western psychology (Zainah et al., 2019). Mizoram's unique cultural context, Christian faith, and communal living require

psychological research that fits the local culture. These studies are essential for revealing:

- Coping mechanisms rooted in culture, like prayer, family, and social support.
- The influence of spirituality, traditional values, and community on mental health.
- Experiences unique to gender, particularly the specific challenges faced by young Mizo girls as they navigate both tradition and modernity.
- Differences between urban and rural areas regarding access to educational resources and mental health support networks.

Culturally adapted assessment tools that can accurately measure stress, personality traits, and coping skills in young Mizo people are needed urgently. It is necessary to investigate the impact of school-based mental health programs, counseling initiatives, and NGOs' interventions in the Mizo region through research (Diener & Lucas, 2019).

In conclusion, these researches may lead up to the creation of inclusive curriculums which are aimed at academic performance but at the same time fostering psychological resistance, emotional intelligence, and overall well-being of the students. They can also come in handy for teacher training and policy-making.

1.6 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Adolescence is often regarded as a significant developmental milestone that bridges childhood and adulthood. During this stage, individuals experience rapid transformations in their physical and mental development, emotional regulation, and social interactions. Such changes bring both advantages and difficulties. Adolescents working on their self-discovery and independence and preparing for future careers are also facing academic pressure, fighting for peer acceptance, and trying to please their families. The resulting conflicting demands may lead to stress. If these

adolescents do not handle this stress properly, it might impact their general wellness and future adjustment negatively (Compas et al., 2017).

Stress among adolescents is not solely a reaction to external pressures, but it also varies according to their distortion and interpretation of those pressures. Perceived stress is something very personal and it varies with the youth's interpretation of the situations, their emotional growth, and their coping strategies (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The very high level of stress can cause a variety of problems such as anxiety, depression, poor school performance, lack of self-confidence, and even drug addiction (Cohen et al., 1983). As a result of the still improving coping skills, the stress may turn out to be a barrier in the adolescents' personal development and their transition from childhood to adulthood.

Personality traits play a significant role in the stress management of adolescents. Traits such as conscientiousness and extraversion mostly serve as the youth's protective barrier. They help the teenagers to plan, keep a positive view, and reach others' support during hard times (McCrae & Costa, 2008). On the other hand, the case of traits like neuroticism may become more troublesome by heightening negative feelings and making the use of ineffective coping methods more prevalent. Hence, personality not only decides on the amount of stress that an individual feels but also the ways that are most likely to be applied by him/'her in cases of hardships. This being the case, adolescence is still a phase of identity-building, the knowledge of personality characteristics becomes very important in the context of helping young individuals figure out who they are and how they fit in the world.

The skill of coping is what works as an important link between personality and the consequences of stress. By employing methods such as problem-solving, managing one's feelings, and seeking help from friends or family, one can reduce the negative impact of stress and build resistance (Carver et al., 1989). On the other hand, unproductive ways such as putting off actions, being untruthful to oneself, and isolation may provide momentary relief, but eventually, they will make it harder to cope with. The power of good coping mechanisms not only determines the students' academic performance and emotional health but also paves the way for resilience in

adulthood. Therefore, it is extremely important to consider personality traits, perceived stress, and coping skills as interconnected factors, when trying to understand adolescent adjustment.

In the socio-cultural and educational context of Mizoram the interaction among stress, personality, and coping is particularly notable. Mizoram is the state with the highest literacy rate in India and education is culturally very much prioritized (Government of Mizoram, 2023), so the adolescents in Mizoram are under the greatest academic pressure. The combination of few college and job opportunities, high performance expectations from parents and society, and the students' already overbearing stress level is certainly not manageable without some support. Furthermore, the continuous rise of technology and social media has contributed to even greater problems related to identity, comparison, and peer pressure. Unfortunately, mental health services and counseling are very limited in Mizoram, and the stigma surrounding psychological problems very often keeps adolescents from getting the necessary help.

All these factors render the need of conducting a locally focused study crucial, as stress and its management are significantly influenced by cultural values, community life, and aspirations in such a region.

The need for this study arises primarily from the problem of the scarcity of combined research that investigates perceived stress, personality traits, and coping skills as a whole especially among adolescents of the North-East India. The studies that have been done so far often treat these topics separately. Nonetheless, the day-to-day situations of the students imply that these factors are interlinked. Thus, treating them as a part of one framework can yield clearer insights and allow the schools to provide better assistance.

This research aims at filling this void. By investigating how stress is dealt with by higher secondary students in Mizoram, the research not only intends to contribute to region-specific knowledge on the matter but also the traits that determine their responses and the extent of their coping skills. Furthermore, the revelations can lead

to the direct creation of therapeutic services at the schools, advancement of life-skills teaching, and giving directions to teachers, parents, and policymakers in setting up conducive learning environments. Since the period of adolescence lays the groundwork for the rest of one's life in terms of well-being, this research shall be geared towards ensuring that adolescents of Mizoram receive the understanding and support required to eventually grow into self-assured, skilled, and robust adults.

1.7 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the level of perceived stress among higher secondary school students in Mizoram?
2. Which personality traits are most commonly observed among higher secondary school students in Mizoram?
3. To what extent do higher secondary school students in Mizoram demonstrate effective coping skills?
4. Are there noticeable differences in perceived stress among students based on their gender, chosen stream of study, or type of school management?
5. How do personality traits vary among students according to their gender, academic stream, and school management type?
6. In what ways do coping skills differ among students in relation to their gender, stream of study, and type of school management?
7. What is the relationship between perceived stress and personality traits among higher secondary school students in Mizoram?
8. How are perceived stress levels related to coping skills among these students?
9. What connection exists between personality traits and coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram?
10. Which factors appear to influence students' stress levels, personality development, and ability to cope with challenges in the higher secondary school context of Mizoram?

1.8 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem of the study has been stated as **“Perceived Stress, Personality Traits and Coping Skills of Higher Secondary School Students in Mizoram”**.

1.9 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF THE KEY TERMS

Perceived Stress:

Perceived stress is how students feel and interpret the demands and pressures in their daily lives. It shows the tension, worry, or strain that happens when situations feel overwhelming or hard to handle. For higher secondary school students in Mizoram, perceived stress captures how they view the effects of schoolwork, social interactions, and personal issues on their emotional and mental health. This concept highlights that stress is a personal experience shaped by individual perception, not just the presence of outside challenges.

Personality Traits:

Personality traits are stable patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving that make each student unique. They affect how students respond to situations, make decisions, interact with others, and handle learning along with personal challenges. Among higher secondary school students, personality traits help explain individual differences in attitudes, behavior, and emotional reactions. They reveal the unique psychological characteristics that shape how students perceive and manage their daily lives.

Coping Skills:

Coping skills are a student’s ability to manage emotions, keep mental balance, and deal with daily challenges. For higher secondary school students, these skills include the ability to stay emotionally steady, maintain overall well-being, and adjust to academic pressures, social relationships, spiritual and emotional needs, and physical health. Coping skills let students respond constructively to difficulties, stay focused on their goals, and build resilience

through everyday experiences.

Higher Secondary School Students:

Higher secondary school students in Mizoram are those enrolled in the last two years of school (Class XI and XII) in Arts, Science, and Commerce streams. This period is crucial for growth, as students face more academic responsibilities, social challenges, and decisions about their future education or careers. Their experiences during this time significantly shape their cognitive, emotional, and social development, along with their readiness for higher education and adult life.

1.10 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following objectives have been framed to guide the study on stress, personality traits, and coping skills among higher secondary students in Mizoram.

1. To find out the level of perceived stress among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.
2. To find out the level of personality traits among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.
3. To find out the level of coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.
4. To examine the differences in perceived stress among higher secondary school students in Mizoram with reference to their:
 - a) Gender
 - b) Stream of study
 - c) Type of school management
5. To examine the differences in personality traits among higher secondary school students in Mizoram with reference to their:
 - a) Gender
 - b) Stream of study
 - c) Type of school management
6. To examine the differences in coping skills among higher secondary school

students in Mizoram with reference to their:

- a) Gender
- b) Stream of study
- c) Type of school management

7. To examine the relationship between:

- a) Perceived stress and personality traits among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.
- b) Perceived stress and coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.
- c) Personality traits and coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.

8. To explore the factors contributing to the psychological and physiological stress, personality traits and coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.

9. To suggest measures for managing stress, development of personality and enhancing coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.

1.11 HYPOTHESES

The following null hypotheses are framed to test the objectives of the proposed study:

1. There is no significant difference in the level of perceived stress among higher secondary school students in Mizoram with reference to their gender, stream of study and type of school management.
2. There is no significant difference in the level of personality traits among higher secondary school students in Mizoram with reference to their gender, stream of study and type of school management.
3. There is no significant difference in the level of coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram with reference to their gender, stream of study and type of school management.
4. There is no significant correlation between perceived stress and personality

traits among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.

5. There is no significant correlation between perceived stress and coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.
6. There is no significant correlation between personality traits and coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.

1.12 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The present study is confined to higher secondary school students (enrolled in Classes XI and XII) from five selected districts of Mizoram, namely Aizawl, Champhai, Lunglei, Serchhip, and Kolasib. Although Mizoram comprises a total of eleven districts, the study focuses only on these five districts to provide a manageable and representative sample for the research.

The following chapter presents the review of related literature connected to the variables explored in this study.

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CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

- 2.1. Studies on Perceived Stress**
- 2.2 Studies on Personality Traits**
- 2.3. Studies on Coping Skills**
- 2.4. Analysis of the Review of Related Literature**
- 2.5. Identification of Research Gaps**
- 2.6. Conclusion**

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter presents a comprehensive review of related literature to position the present study within a broader academic framework and to emphasize its relevance and originality. The review traces how the concepts of perceived stress, personality traits, and coping skills have developed over time, both in India and abroad, and how these constructs have been examined together in the field of educational psychology.

A systematic examination of previous research strengthens the conceptual foundation of the present investigation by connecting theoretical viewpoints with empirical evidence. It offers clarity on how scholars have explored the psychological well-being of adolescents—particularly higher secondary students—and what methods, tools, and analytical approaches they have employed. Through this critical engagement with existing studies, the present research identifies meaningful insights as well as areas that remain under-explored.

A close review of the available literature also reveals certain gaps and inconsistencies in past findings. These unaddressed areas bring sharper focus to the present inquiry and justify its contribution to the field. Moreover, the review helps readers appreciate key academic debates, conceptual trends, and methodological directions that shape understanding of stress, personality, and coping among adolescents.

For clarity and coherence, the literature has been organized variable-wise, each variable divided into studies conducted in India and abroad, as outlined below.

1. Studies on Perceived Stress
 - a) Studies Conducted in India
 - b) Studies Conducted Abroad
2. Studies on Personality Traits
 - a) Studies Conducted in India

- b) Studies Conducted Abroad
- 3. Studies on Coping Skills
 - a) Studies Conducted in India
 - b) Studies Conducted Abroad

This classification ensures a clear and comparative understanding of research trends across contexts, allowing insights from both Indian and international perspectives to emerge in a balanced and meaningful way.

2.1 STUDIES ON PERCEIVED STRESS

Perceived stress is a subjective measure of the individual's interpretation of the daily pressures and not of the pressures themselves. Students are often under stress because of study, social interaction, and family expectations. The following section examines key research on these experiences in various settings.

2.1.1 Studies Conducted in India

Sharma and Kaur (2005) conducted research entitled "Academic Pressure and Psychological Distress among Indian Adolescents," wherein they particularly focused on psychological distress in Indian adolescents. Chandigarh was the research site, which took a descriptive survey approach and included 210 higher secondary students participating. A stratified random sampling method was applied to select the students. Students were assessed through the use of a variety of tools, like the Perceived Stress Scale and the Academic Anxiety Inventory. The analysis involved techniques such as calculation of the mean, standard deviation, and t-tests. The results confirmed the existence of significant stressors: examination stress, parental expectations, and being a girl was associated with a higher stress level. Students in the science stream were the most affected by their workload and difficulties from competing with others.

Patel (2007) assessed adolescent well-being in a project named "Perceived Stress and Adjustment Patterns of Urban School Students." The research took place in Mumbai. Poor emotional adjustment and family conflict increased stress

manifestations, whereas gender had only moderate influence on the stress levels. The 180 students of grades IX–XI who were selected by simple random sampling served as the study's sample. The correlational survey design of the research included the use of the Perceived Stress Scale and an Adjustment Inventory for School Students as well. Pearson correlation and ANOVA were the techniques adopted for the statistical analysis.

Nair and Joseph (2009) investigated “Sources of Stress and Coping Behaviours among Kerala High-School Students.” This descriptive study covered 200 students of government and private schools on an Ernakulam district level, who were selected through cluster sampling. A Student-Stress Questionnaire and Coping Behavior Checklist were used by the researchers. The data were analyzed using frequency percentages and chi-square tests. The primary stressors identified were exams, peer competition, and fear of failure, while some positive coping methods were also found, like sports, group studies, and sharing with peers.

Bhasin, Sharma, and Saini (2010) studied “Stress, Anxiety and Depression among Adolescents in Delhi Schools” using a cross-sectional survey design. They surveyed 242 students of classes IX to XII selected through stratified random sampling method. The DASS-21 was used to measure levels of stress, anxiety, and depression. Descriptive statistics and t-tests were used to analyze the data. About 50% of the students taking part in the survey said that they experienced stress at the moderate to severe level. The girls scored much higher than the boys in all measures of emotional distress, thus stressing the importance of mental health education in schools even more.

Augustine et al. (2011) conducted a study titled “Global Survey of Stress, Traumatic Events and Coping among High-School Students.” This research took place in Hyderabad, involving 80 students aged 16–17 years, selected through stratified random sampling from six schools. They used a descriptive correlational design and administered the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), Stressful Life Events Inventory, and GHQ-12. Multiple regression analysis indicated that avoidance coping led to higher

stress, while positive coping reduced it; coping styles accounted for nearly 10 percent of the variance in perceived stress.

Rao and Menon (2012) studied “Examination Stress and Psychosomatic Symptoms in Senior Secondary Students.” This research occurred in Bengaluru and used a descriptive survey method with 160 students preparing for board examinations, selected through purposive sampling. Stress and psychosomatic symptom checklists were handed out to participants, and their responses were analyzed via mean scores and chi-square tests. The results indicated that prolonged study hours and insufficient sleep were the main causes of headaches, fatigue, and anxiety. The students practicing relaxation techniques noted a reduction in the occurrence of psychosomatic complaints.

Thaker and Verma (2014) explored adolescent stress in their work titled “Perceived Stress and Coping Styles among Mid-Adolescents.” This study, having comparative-descriptive type of design, was conducted in Ahmedabad. A total of 72 students from one government school and one private school in the 14–16 years age group were selected by simple random sampling. They used PSS-14 and the Folkman and Lazarus Coping Inventory. Mean, standard deviation, and t-tests show a nonsignificant difference in total stress between schools; however, boys had slightly higher stress level scores and stronger dependence on problem-focused coping strategies.

Nandhini and Kumar (2014) conducted a study called “A Comparative Study of Academic Stress among Urban and Rural Adolescents.” Research was primarily descriptive and used a sample of 240 students selected through stratified random sampling; 120 students were from urban areas and the other 120 from rural areas. An Academic Stress Scale was used to assess the stress levels, and the data were analyzed for their means, standard deviations, and a test. Thus, the urban students reported more stress due to academic competition and digital distractions while the rural students reported having had more stress due to lack of resources and language barriers.

Kumari and Ghosh (2015) looked into adolescent well-being in their study “Effect of Cyclic Meditation on Quality of Life and Perceived Stress in Female Adolescents.” The study was based on an experimental one-group pre-test post-test design using 58 young girls in the age group of 14 to 17 from a girls' school in Howrah, who were selected through purposive sampling. The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) and Quality-of-Life Inventory were administered, and the mean, standard deviation, and paired t-test were used to investigate the data. The results pointed out that the perceived stress was markedly reduced and the emotional balance improved as a result of participation in meditation practice each day.

Watode, Kishore, and Kohli (2015) studied “Prevalence of Stress among School Adolescents in Delhi” a cross-sectional survey design was utilized to survey 300 students from classes IX to XII, all picked through a systematic sampling process cannot be achieved. The PSS-10 measured stress levels, and data was assessed using descriptive statistics and analysis of variance. The major result showed that most students experienced moderate stress; their sources of stress differ, with parental expectations and exam burdens mentioned by most of the learners.

Joseph et al. (2015) explored student mental health in a study titled “Assessment and Determinants of Emotional Intelligence and Perceived Stress among Medical Students in South India.” The researchers used a correlational design to study 220 undergraduate medical students, selected through convenience sampling. They administered the PSS and Emotional Intelligence Scale, and analyzed the data using Pearson’s correlation and independent t-tests. The study found that students with higher emotional intelligence had lower stress levels, with female students reporting more stress compared to males.

Gokul and Jayalakshmi (2016) surveyed stress levels among students enrolled in various professional programs. Their study, titled “The Mental Stress Levels of Students Studying in Different Professional Courses,” was conducted in professional colleges in Tamil Nadu using a descriptive survey design. A total of 250 students from engineering, medical, and business courses participated in the study, which was conducted through random sampling. A Student Stress Questionnaire served as the

tool for data collection and the data were subsequently analyzed using mean, standard deviation, and t-tests. The results showed that students from more demanding classes had problems with mental stress to such a degree that they suffered from insomnia, depression, and fatigue. The main reasons were mentioned to be parental pressure, fear of failure, and academic competition. The authors recommended introducing counseling and peer-support programs in order to alleviate stress.

Singh and Kaur (2017) conducted a study titled “Academic Stress and Life Skills among Adolescents.” The study was carried out in the state of Punjab using a descriptive survey design. A total of 300 secondary school students participated in the study through a stratified random sample. The quantitative data were obtained by using the following two instruments: the Academic Stress Inventory and the Life Skills Assessment Scale, which were administered to the students, and the collected results were analyzed using the mean, standard deviation, correlation studies, and t-test. The results made known the fact that most adolescents suffer from moderate stress, mainly due to exam atrocities, competition, and some mental imbalance. Nonetheless, with the exception of students who had developed good life skills, incorporating good time management and emotion regulation, these were found with less academic stress.

Rani and Chand (2018) conducted research titled “Gender and School Differences in Perceived Stress among Adolescents.” The research was conducted in Delhi, where a comparative descriptive design was employed, and 260 senior-secondary students (130 males and 130 females) from both private and government schools were selected through simple random sampling. The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10) was the instrument implemented, and t-tests and ANOVA were used to analyze the data. The findings showed that female students experienced significantly higher levels of stress than their male counterparts, while the differences between school management types were not significant.

Nagle and Sharma (2018) reviewed “Academic Stress and Coping Mechanisms among Indian Adolescents: A Review-Based Study.” This study used a documentary analysis design to examine published research on adolescent academic stress from 2010 to 2017. The analysis identified parental expectations and peer competition as key stressors and found that interventions involving yoga and life-skills programs were effective in reducing academic stress.

Ramamoorthy, Kamaldeen, Ravichandran, and Sundaramahalingam (2019) explored “Effect of Stress on Sleep Hygiene among School-Going Adolescents in Chennai.” The research took place in Chennai and adopted a descriptive correlational design. It included 132 participants, all students ages 15 to 19, who had been chosen through purposive sampling. The PSS and the ESS-CHAD were given to the students by the researchers, and the data were analyzed with the help of mean, standard deviation, and Pearson correlation. The results indicated that 84.8% of the students were under moderate tension, while bad sleeping practices were strongly connected to the increased tension among the students.

Parikh et al. (2019) started a qualitative study named "It Is Like a Mind Attack: Stress and Coping among Urban School-Going Adolescents." Goa and Delhi were the two cities where the study was carried out through a purposive sampling of 191 adolescents aged between 11 to 17 years. Besides utilizing focus group discussions (FGDs) as a data collection method, the researchers also conducted thematic analysis. The findings revealed that stress was perceived by the adolescents as a "mind attack," which was caused by parental expectations, academic competition, and peer pressure. The researchers pointed out the necessity of mental health education and stress management training in schools.

Pangtey et al. (2020) examined the “Reliability and Validity of the Hindi Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10) among Indian Youth.” To assess the Hindi version of PSS-10 on 300 students from secondary and college levels, the research employed a psychometric validation design and convenience sampling. Methods of data analysis included Cronbach’s alpha, factor analysis, and Pearson correlation. The findings revealed high internal consistency ($\alpha = .86$) and strong construct validity

confirmation, indicating that the Hindi PSS-10 is a valid tool for measuring perceived stress among adolescents.

Bharti et al. (2021) conducted a study titled “Perceived Stress, Coping, and Internet Addiction among School Students.” The research was performed in Varanasi with a descriptive correlational design. Out of a variety of schools, three-hundred students were picked at random. The research used the PSS, Coping Strategy Inventory, and Internet Addiction Test (IAT), and performed a correlation and regression analysis of the data. The results revealed that there is a strong positive correlation between internet addiction and perceived stress, with the use of negative coping styles aggravating the stress reactions.

Batabyal et al. (2021) explored “Perceived Stress and Cortisol Responses in Indian University Students.” Even though only first-year students were involved in the study, it nevertheless disclosed the stress patterns during the transition period which affected school leavers too. The researchers utilized a repeated-measures method with a sample of 120 students, measuring stress with PSS-14 and also through physiological methods by taking salivary cortisol. They performed the statistical analysis with the help of ANOVA and mixed-model techniques. The findings indicated that male students' levels of stress and cortisol dropped gradually, whereas female students always claimed to be more stressed, which could be interpreted as reflecting different ways of dealing with stress by gender.

Jagannathan et al. (2022) developed a study titled “Development and Validation of the Adolescence Stress Scale–India” that aimed to create and validate an assessment tool for 450 adolescents aged 13 to 18 years from different Indian schools. The students were selected by means of multi-stage random sampling. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) along with reliability tests were performed.

Agarwal and Chakraborty (2023) conducted a study titled “Government vs. Private Schools: Do Management Types Differ in Perceived Stress?”. Equal representation of senior secondary students from two school types was compared through a toggle survey in an urban area in India. The stratified random sampling

selected 280 students for the study. Stress levels were assessed through the use of the PSS-10, and then analyses were carried out with t-tests and MANOVA. When in-depth personal interviews were conducted to endorse the politics, no significant difference in stress levels among the schools was shown. This is indicative of a particular concern for the structure of the institution when comparing such proposals.

The Indian Journal of Pediatrics (2023) published a large-scale study titled “Academic Load and Perceived Stress in Indian High-Schoolers.” This multi-site descriptive survey included 1,200 students from four Indian states, selected through multistage stratified sampling. Academic Stress Scale and PSS were employed, and the data were analyzed using many correlation and regression techniques. As per the study conducted, heavy academic load, frequent test taking, and lack of leisure time were the foremost stress-invokers, though time management was observed to lower stress perceptions significantly.

Keerthi et al. (2024) titled their research "Prevalence of Perceived Stress among Higher Secondary Students in Thiruvananthapuram District." The method of data collection for this cross-sectional descriptive study was through systematic random sampling 320 higher secondary students from 15 to 18 years old. The PSS-10 was used for measurements, results were calculated and analyzed using mean, SD, and chi-square tests. As a result, it was found that the majority of students had moderate stress levels with girls being slightly ahead of boys in scores. Counseling sessions in schools and peer mentoring were recommended by the researchers as stress-reducing techniques.

Mishra (2024) performed a research study titled “Gender Differences in Academic Stress among Adolescents.” The research used a comparative descriptive design of different kinds of schools across India, and 150 students (150 boys and 150 girls) were chosen and included in this research through the simple random sampling technique. They measured the Academic Stress Scale, while data were analyzed using t-tests and ANOVA. The data were found to show that girls mostly report greater intensity of academic history than boys (in particular, examination anxiety and parental expectations).

The Indian Nursing Journal (2025) reported a study titled “Prevalence and Consequences of Academic Stress among High-School Students.” This cross-sectional nationwide survey included 500 students from different states selected through multistage sampling. PSS and a researcher-developed questionnaire on stress symptoms were used. Thereafter, mean, SD, chi-square analyses were conducted. The research revealed that academic pressure in regard to both genders is generally high and leads to similar kinds of effects such as being easily annoyed, tired, and not able to focus. The authors of the study recommended that methods of relaxation therapy should be included and also training for teachers to identify stress should be given.

2.1.2 Studies Conducted Abroad

Misra and McKean (2005) did research called "College Students' Academic Stress and Its Relationship to Time Management and Coping". It was in the USA, Ohio, where this study was conducted and it employed a correlational survey design. They examined 249 undergraduates selected through cluster sampling. The researchers analyzed the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) and a Time-Management Questionnaire using Pearson correlation and multiple regression. The results showed moderate stress overall. Students with better time-management skills reported significantly lower stress.

Wong and Wong (2006) examined the different cultures' interpretations and reactions to stress. The authors state that stress is neither purely a response to adverse conditions nor a one-dimensional process. It is rather a complex phenomenon that depends on the individual's way of perceiving the requirements posed by the situation. Their cross-cultural investigations revealed that the cultural background was a major factor influencing the nature of the stressful event and the respective coping strategies. Coping was seen as a personal meaning and cultural context closely connected, with people resorting to the techniques that correspond to their values and beliefs.

Leung et al. (2007) conducted a study titled “Stress in Secondary School Students in Hong Kong.” Using a descriptive survey design, they examined 350 students aged

13 to 17 selected through stratified sampling. They used the Academic Stress Scale and PSS-10, analyzing data with mean, standard deviation, and t-test. The results indicated high academic stress levels, especially among female students and those in science streams.

Yusoff et al. (2010) carried out a study titled “Perceived Stress, Sources and Coping Mechanisms Among Medical Students” was performed using a cross-sectional survey in Kuala Lumpur. In this research, the authors sampled 761 student-medical systematically. There were also tools administered, like the Student Stressor Questionnaire with the help of mean and standard deviations, and PSS-10. The most common finding was that most participants claim to experience moderate to high stress, with females rated higher.

Bayram and Bilgel (2011) studied “Depression and Stress Among University Students.” This research took place in Turkey, specifically Izmir, involving 1,617 students through a descriptive correlational design and stratified sampling. They used the Depression-Anxiety-Stress Scales (DASS-21) for analysis via ANOVA and correlation. The findings revealed increased stress among first-year students.

Lee and Larson (2012) explored “Daily Stress and Mood Among Korean Adolescents.” This longitudinal diary study conducted in Seoul, South Korea, involved 240 high school students selected through cluster sampling. By using daily mood reports and PSS, and analyzing the data with hierarchical linear modeling, the study found that daily academic hassles predicted mood swings. However, average stress levels remained moderate.

Evans and Steiger (2013) studied “Gender Differences in Perceived Stress and Academic Performance.” The comparison survey took place in Toronto, Canada and took 420 students from secondary schools, all random selections. They compared overall PSS and the correlation of GPAs using t-tests and multiple linear regression analysis. They found that girls are significantly more stressed and do not correlate as highly with GPA compared to boys.

Khan and Abid (2014) researched “Academic Stress Among Secondary School Students in Pakistan.” This descriptive survey was conducted in Lahore with 300

students selected through simple random sampling. They used an Academic Stress Scale, analyzing with mean, standard deviation, and t-tests. The study found high stress levels among both genders, particularly stronger among students in science streams.

Chen and Huang (2014) conducted a study on “Perceived Stress and Sleep Quality Among Taiwanese High-School Students.” This was a correlational study that was conducted in Taipei, involving 500 students chosen through a technique of stratified sampling. Pearson correlation and regression were conducted using recognized instruments such as PSS-10 and the Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI). The results were able to suggest that poor sleep was a much stronger predictor of high stress, thereby emphasizing the connection between stress and sleep quality.

Sulaiman et al. (2015) studied “Sources of Stress and Coping Strategies Among University Students.” This research from Nigeria, specifically Lagos, used a descriptive correlational design with 400 participants chosen through multistage sampling. The tools included PSS and Brief COPE, with analysis through ANOVA and multiple regression. Most participants reported moderate stress, with inadequate financial support identified as a significant stressor.

Mokdad et al. (2016) conducted a study on “Perceived Stress and Self-Efficacy Among Moroccan Adolescents.” It was a cross-sectional survey performed in Casablanca with 280 participants, who were 15 to 18 years old, were sampled through stratified random sampling. The tools used were the PSS and General Self-Efficacy Scale. The correlation and t-tests of data led to the results that show more self-efficacy-lesser stress, which sheds light on the buffering from stress by the persons who already have a much adaptive trait.

Martínez and González (2016) researched “Academic Stress and Gender Differences Among Spanish Adolescents.” Conducted in Madrid, Spain, this comparative survey included 310 students selected through simple random sampling. They applied the Educational Stress Scale for Adolescents (ESSA), analyzing with mean, standard deviation, and two-way ANOVA. The results showed that female students experienced higher emotional stress.

Alharbi and Smith (2017) studied “Stress and Coping Among Saudi High-School Students”. A descriptive cross-sectional design was used in the study in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, and 360 students were obtained by cluster sampling. The tools included PSS-10 and Brief COPE, with statistics analyzed through mean, standard deviation, and Pearson correlation. Findings indicated moderate stress levels, with religion-based coping being the most protective, similar to spiritual coping skills.

Li and Chow (2018) studied “Perceived Stress and Academic Achievement Among Chinese Secondary Students.” This correlational study in Beijing involved 500 students using PSS-10 and the Academic Performance Index, with data analyzed through regression analysis. The results indicated that there was a direct relationship between moderate stress and performance, which reached an optimal point. Afterward, stress had a detrimental effect on performance, thus reinforcing the concept of keeping stress managed.

Habibah and Norlaila (2019) conducted a study titled “Gender and Coping Differences in Stress Among Malaysian Secondary Students.” This comparative descriptive study in Penang, Malaysia, included 420 students selected through stratified sampling. They analyzed PSS-10 and COPE Inventory using t-tests and MANOVA. The results indicated that girls reported higher stress and relied more on emotional coping strategies.

Andersson and Hansson (2020) studied “Academic Demands and Stress Among Swedish Upper-Secondary Students.” A quantitative survey of 380 students chosen through cluster random sampling took place in Stockholm. The participants were using the School Stress Scale, with the data being evaluated via mean, standard deviation, and regression. The findings showed that there were high levels of academic pressure and stress that were not dependent on the participants' gender.

Pérez and Navarro (2021) did research about “Stress and Well-Being in Latin American Youth”. They carried out a cross-national investigation in Chile and Peru with a sample of 500 students selected by multistage sampling technique. By using the PSS and the Well-Being Index, they analyzed the data with correlation and path

analysis. The study showed that supportive teacher-student relationships significantly reduced stress.

Kato and Shinoda (2022) titled their work “School Environment and Perceived Stress Among Japanese Adolescents.” The research which was carried out in Tokyo was descriptive correlational design and included 410 students who were chosen through systematic random sampling. PSS and the School-Climate Scale were analyzed by using multiple regression. The researchers concluded that high stress levels were caused by academic competition and strict discipline.

Wright and Johnson (2023) studied “Coping Resources and Perceived Stress in High-School Students.” The study was conducted by mixed methods in London, United Kingdom with a sample of 200 students grouped through purposive sampling. The quantitative tool employed was the PSS-10; qualitative data were collected through interviews and analyzed through correlation and thematic analysis. The results showed a moderate level of stress against a robust social support.

Müller et al. (2023) explored “Digital Learning and Stress Levels Among German Adolescents Post-Pandemic.” They conducted a descriptive study of 420 students in Berlin including students who were being sampled by multi-stage stratified sampling were drawn on Digital Stress Inventory and PSS-10 with the use of ANOVA and other correlation techniques. The results demonstrated increased online stress and loss of peer-to-peer relations.

Abdullahi and Okon (2024) researched “Perceived Stress and Resilience Among Nigerian Senior Students” involving 360 participants, who were drawn from Abuja, Nigeria, via multistage sampling. In this research, the PSS-10 and Resilience Scale for Adolescents were used as instruments.

Davis and Lee (2025) conducted a study titled “Gender Differences in Perceived Stress Among High-School Students in the United States.” This descriptive comparative study took place in New York City with 350 students chosen through stratified sampling. Their tools included the PSS-10 and a Demographic Checklist. They analyzed the data using t-test and ANOVA. The findings confirmed that female students reported higher stress and that school type had no significant effect.

2.2 STUDIES ON PERSONALITY TRAITS

Personality traits are the distinct patterns of thinking and behaving that define an individual's interaction with the world. Among students, such traits are usually significant in determining the motivation, learning style, and stress response. A review of the main studies that have investigated these traits in various environments is presented in the following section.

2.2.1 Studies Conducted in India

Bharadwaj and Sharma (2005) performed a study titled "Personality and Academic Achievement of Adolescents." The study was carried out in Delhi, and the method used was descriptive survey design with 300 secondary school students as a sample, chosen via stratified random sampling. The researchers performed t-tests and correlation analysis on the Maudsley Personality Inventory and school exam scores. Their results showed that Extraversion and Conscientiousness were linked to academic success, whereas Neuroticism was detrimental.

Das and Sinha (2008) carried out a study titled "The Five-Factor Model of Personality and School Performance in Urban Adolescents." This research was conducted in Mumbai with a correlational design, focusing on 320 students chosen through cluster sampling. The NEO-FFI and school records were analyzed using multiple regression. It was indicated by the data that the traits of Conscientiousness and Openness were substantial predictors of success, whereas Neuroticism had a detrimental influence on the scores.

Roy and Banerjee (2009) investigated "Personality Dimensions and Emotional Intelligence of Adolescent Learners." The research occurred in West Bengal and involved 200 students selected using purposive sampling from both urban and rural schools. The Big Five Inventory and Emotional Intelligence Scale were applied, and the data were evaluated using correlation and ANOVA methods. The results showed that emotional intelligence scores of the participants were very much associated with the traits of Agreeableness and Openness.

Halder et al. (2010) conducted a study in Kolkata involving 165 teachers that focused on “The Influence of Personality Traits on Information Seeking Behaviour of Students”. Using the NEO Five Factor Questionnaire and the Career Stage Scale, they found positive connections between agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness, and teachers’ career stages. The fact that extraversion was linked to stable periods and disengagement phases, while neuroticism was mostly found in stocktaking and disengagement stages makes it clear that personality traits have a significant impact on the way students look for and use information. This is the main point highlighted by the study which consequently suggests that personality should always be taken into account in information literacy support programs.

Singh and Arora (2010) conducted a study on “Personality and Motivational Patterns of High School Students.” This research in Ludhiana included 270 randomly selected students and employed the Eysenck Personality Inventory and Achievement Motivation Scale. Analyses using t-tests and correlation showed that Conscientiousness and Extraversion were positively linked to motivation toward academic goals.

Hafen et al. (2011) examined “The Happy Personality in India: The Role of Emotional Intelligence” among 205 Indian college students. They used mediational path analysis and found that emotional intelligence mediated the connection between conscientiousness, emotional instability, and happiness for women. The findings for men showed only direct associations. The research posed cultural and gender differences in the manner that emotional intelligence influenced the well-being of students.

Sood and Gupta (2012) conducted a study that investigated "Personality Traits, Spiritual Intelligence and Well Being in University Students". This comparative correlational research included 120 undergraduates in Jammu and New Delhi, selected through convenience sampling. Data were analyzed using the Big Five Inventory, SISRI-24 Scale, and the WHO-5 Well-Being Index with t-tests and multiple regression. The results indicated that Agreeableness and Extraversion were

positively associated with spiritual intelligence and subjective well-being, while Neuroticism had the opposite effect.

Basak and Ghosh (2014) studied “Personality Traits and Different Career Stages – A Study on Indian School Teachers.” This research in Kolkata included a sample of 160 teachers from various schools. Data were gathered using the Career Stage Scale and the NEO Five Factor Personality Questionnaire and analyzed through correlation and regression. The study discovered that agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness were positively associated with teachers’ career stages, while extraversion linked to stable and disengagement phases, and neuroticism associated with stocktaking and disengagement stages.

Kant (2014) conducted a study in India titled “Interrelationship between Personality Traits and Emotional Intelligence of Secondary Teachers.” This research examined the connection between emotional intelligence and various personality traits among 200 secondary teachers. The study found no significant differences in emotional intelligence based on gender or teaching stream. While some personality traits showed positive links with emotional intelligence, many showed weak or insignificant associations. The conclusion highlighted that while the connection between emotional intelligence and personality traits among secondary teachers existed, it was not strongly defined.

Singh (2014) studied “Personality Traits and Academic Achievement among College Students” in Ranchi, Jharkhand. Utilizing the 16 PF on 200 students, the research found that high achievers displayed noticeably different personality traits compared to low achievers, suggesting that certain traits may correlate with stronger academic performance.

Das and Choudhary (2015) did research called “Five-Factor Model of Personality and School Adjustment in Secondary Students.” This study in Delhi used correlational design and it involved a sample of 260 students who were selected using multistage sampling. They employed the NEO-FFI and Adjustment Inventory for School Students, analyzing the data with correlation and ANOVA. The results demonstrated that Agreeableness and Conscientiousness were very good predictors

of school adjustment, whereas Neuroticism had a negative impact on peer relationships.

Saxena and Mishra (2015) carried out research titled "A Study of the Relation Between Personality Type and Academic Success" which investigated the correlation of Big Five characteristics with students' academic marks. They conducted a survey to obtain 162 valid responses and concluded that the trait of conscientiousness showed a noteworthy connection with the academic success. Those students who had the qualities of being responsible, disciplined, and future-oriented were the ones who usually got good grades. The authors recommended that evaluation of personality traits—particularly conscientiousness—could be one of the tools for the teachers to detect the strengths of the students and to support their learning needs.

Sharma and Verma (2015) carried out research on "Personality Traits and Emotional Maturity of Adolescents". The study taking place in Himachal Pradesh applied a descriptive survey technique and involved a sample of 200 students who were chosen through simple random sampling. The researchers employed the 16 PF Questionnaire and Emotional Maturity Scale for data collection while the data was processed through t-test and correlation. It was discovered that the students with higher Emotional Stability and Extraversion were more emotionally mature in comparison to the ones with high Neuroticism scores.

Pradhan et al. (2016) examined the influence of celebrity, brand, and user personality congruence on brand attitude and purchase intention. They gathered data from 431 Indian consumers through an online survey and tested their hypotheses using mediation-based regression. The findings indicated that the congruence of user-brand and brand-celebrity had powerful influences on brand attitude and purchase intention, whereas the congruence of celebrity-user had only a slight effect. Additionally, brand attitude played a mediating role in the connection between personality congruence and purchase intention. The research asserted that aligning personalities among celebrities, brands, and consumers increased the effectiveness of endorsement campaigns.

Rani and Bhatnagar (2016) conducted a study titled “Personality Traits and Academic Resilience Among Secondary School Students.” The research was conducted in Delhi using a descriptive correlational method with 300 students selected through stratified random sampling. The NEO-FFI Personality Inventory and the Academic Resilience Scale were utilized in this study, and correlation and regression were the methods for analyzing the data. The results came out so that among the personality traits, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, and Agreeableness contributed a lot to the prediction of resilience while Neuroticism had an adverse effect on persistence in academics.

Chaudhary (2017) in the research “Demographic Factors, Personality and Entrepreneurial Inclination: A Study Among Indian University Students” presented an examination of the factors affecting students' attraction to entrepreneurship. The author carried out a survey among 274 university students, and the results indicated that among the personal traits analyzed, innovativeness, self-confidence, tolerance for ambiguity, and internal locus of control were the ones to predict entrepreneurial inclination, while risk-taking and need for achievement did not play a role. Family business background and institutional support also played important roles.

Joshi and Chauhan (2017) conducted a study on “Personality Traits and Emotional Intelligence in Relation to Stress Tolerance of College Students.” This research took place in Gujarat with 200 undergraduate students selected through purposive sampling. The Big Five Inventory and Emotional Intelligence Scale have been applied, and the information has been processed through correlation and regression. The results indicated that the students who scored high on Agreeableness and Emotional Stability were more capable of stress toleration in comparison to those who scored high on Neuroticism.

Patel and Mehta (2018) conducted a study on “Personality Traits and Stress Management Strategies Among Adolescents.” The research took place in Gujarat using a descriptive method with a sample of 250 students selected through simple random sampling. The Big Five Inventory and Stress Management Scale were used, and data were analyzed using correlation and ANOVA. The research revealed that

the combination of high Conscientiousness and Extraversion resulted in good stress management, whereas Neuroticism was connected to escape behavior.

Jain et al. (2020) in their research paper titled "Personality Traits of Senior Secondary Schools and Their Impact on Academic Achievement," determined that personality influenced academic performance among 200 senior secondary students in Jabalpur, India. With the help of recent exam scores, they noticed very different personalities among boys and girls and also found that a lot of students possessed traits like perseverance, emotional control, and self-sufficiency. The study concluded that character factors were incredibly important in students' performance, highlighting a strong connection between personality and academic success.

Taneja et al. (2020) performed a research study called "Emotional Intelligence and Personality Traits Among Medical Students" at a public medical college in New Delhi. The sample consisted of 210 students whose data was collected using the Schutte Emotional Intelligence Scale and the Ten-Item Personality Inventory. The researchers ascertained that the students' emotional intelligence could be classified as high or moderate. A robust positive correlation between emotional intelligence and personality traits was indicated in the study, which means that personality contributed significantly to the growth of emotional intelligence among medical students.

Biswas and Verma (2021) conducted a study on how personality traits could lead to the formation of entrepreneurial intentions among the brightest Indian university students. Their research, "Attitude and Alertness in Personality Traits: A Pathway to Building Entrepreneurial Intentions Among University Students," utilized a 7-point questionnaire and purposive sampling to conclude that entrepreneurial attitude and alertness were highly correlated to the students' business-starting wish. The need for achievement, in particular, turned out to be the most powerful predictor, while entrepreneurial alertness acted as a mediator for the influences of proactiveness and self-efficacy. Eventually, the authors were of the opinion that if these traits were made stronger, the students' entrepreneurial motivation would consequently increase.

Sahoo and Pradhan (2021) conducted a study titled “Personality Traits and Academic Stress Among Indian Adolescents.” This project was conducted in the Indian state of Odisha, using correlational design with three hundred students as the sample drawn by the multistage random sampling technique. The NEO-FFI and Academic Stress Inventory were administered as tests and results were processed through correlation and regression. The analysis disclosed that the trait of neuroticism was linked to academic stress in a positive way, while conscientiousness and extraversion were the fighters that helped to lower the stress levels.

Shandilya et al. (2021) in “The Influence of Personality Traits on Digital Quotient: An Indian Metro City Perspective” probed the connection between personality and the degree of users’ participation on digital platforms. Their research, which involved 83 participants of three major Indian cities, was based on NLP tools for text data analysis and discovering through text the main traits. They put forward the UCCCEEE framework that delineated seven characteristics, which— modern, self-assured, social, inquisitive, experimental, efficient, and epicurean were fundamental to the digital participation. The researchers proposed that along with the continuous digital transformation, these traits would also be powerful in shaping digital behavior , making it easier for the institutions to filter and nurture the talent that fits the ever-widening digital economy.

Sharma and Kumari (2021) carried out the research titled “Influence of Personality Traits on Psychological Well-being Among College Students” in Delhi, where 220 college students were chosen through purposive sampling for the study. The Big Five Inventory and the Psychological Well-being Scale were implemented, and the data was analyzed via t-tests and regression. The findings suggested that Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness were the most significant factors affecting students’ psychological well-being.

Singhal et al. (2021) conducted a study titled “Big Five Personality Traits and Well-being: Evidence from University Students of India.” Using data from 320 students, they found that extraversion was linked to positive emotions, neuroticism to negative emotions, and agreeableness to both emotional stability and varied feelings. The

study showed that personality traits strongly influenced students' emotional well-being.

Jojo and Sundaramoorthy (2022) analyzed the role of personality in the dependency on the internet among 421 students aged 18 to 25 in Kerala in their paper "Personality Traits Associated with Internet Addiction Among College Students in South India." They used the IAT and NEO-FFI-3, and concluded that the presence of neuroticism as a personality trait was a risk factor for addiction. Meanwhile, the presence of agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness was a protective factor against it. Moreover, extraversion was also among the traits predicting the addiction levels. Male students and those belonging to nuclear families displayed higher rates of addiction. The study posited the necessity for personality-based and demographic-sensitive interventions in order to pre-emptively respond to the growing issue of internet addiction.

Sahil and Nagar (2022) performed a study called "The Relationship of Personality Traits and Communal Orientation Among Afghan and Indian Students Studying at Indian Universities in Punjab." The researchers surveyed Afghan and Indian students at Indian universities and discovered that sharedness was positively associated with agreeableness and emotional stability, while it had a negative correlation with openness. Extraversion was inversely associated with communal orientation among Afghan students only and conscientiousness among Indian students only, respectively. The study concluded that personality and cultural background had a joint impact on the development of students' communal values.

Das and Pradhan (2023) investigated the issues of "Personality Traits and Mindfulness Among Indian Youth." A research project was launched in Odisha where a descriptive correlational method was used on a sample of 210 college students who were selected randomly. The NEO-FFI and Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale were given to the students and the data was analysed using correlation and regression methods. Openness and emotional stability were found to be the two factors that positively influenced mindfulness levels.

Kaur and Thakur (2023) in Punjab, investigated “Personality Traits and Life Satisfaction Among Adolescents” The descriptive survey method was employed with 300 students who were chosen through cluster sampling. The Big Five Inventory and a Satisfaction with Life Scale were given to the students. Correlation and regression analyses revealed that life satisfaction had positive relationships with agreeableness, conscientiousness, and extraversion, while higher neuroticism was associated with lower perceived quality of life.

Chadha and Alam (2024) in their work entitled "Association of Vedic Personality Traits and Empathy among Medical Students: A Cross-sectional Study," focused on the relationship of Vedic traits (Sattva, Rajas, Tamas) with empathy in a sample of 122 first-year medical students from Kanpur. Using the VPI and B-IRI, they observed that higher Sattva related to greater emotional stability and better perspective-taking. Women scored higher on empathy dimensions than men, although Vedic traits did not vary by gender. The research ultimately arrived at the conclusion that the incorporation of personality tests into medical education could improve the level of empathy that students feel towards patients.

Kumar and Sinha (2024) carried out a research study "Personality Traits, Emotional Intelligence, and Coping Skills Among Indian Adolescents." The study done in Patna consisted of a correlational survey design with 250 adolescents who were chosen through stratified sampling. The Big Five Inventory, Emotional Intelligence Scale, and Coping Skills Questionnaire were used, and the data was analyzed through correlation and multiple regression. The results revealed that extraversion and conscientiousness had a positive correlation with emotional intelligence and coping skills.

Sharma et al. (2024) carried out a study titled “Does Culture Influence the Development of Personality Traits of Accounting Students at Indian Universities?” The research made use of a survey method for gathering data from accounting students belonging to 4 different regions of India, having different cultures. The study drew comparisons between the traits like agreeableness, conscientiousness, and extraversion, and the cultural factors like masculinity, uncertainty avoidance,

and individualism. The results pointed out that culture had a profound impact on the development of these traits. The study proposed that cultural background of students should be taken into account when developing the teaching and assessment practices for accounting programs.

Pandey and Bansal (2025) conducted a study on “Big Five Personality Traits and Stress Resilience Among Higher Secondary Students.” The research was conducted in Uttar Pradesh with a descriptive correlational design comprising 280 randomly selected students. They used NEO-FFI and Stress Resilience Scale for measuring the variables and analyzed the data with the help of correlation and ANOVA. The study showed that students high in conscientiousness and agreeableness were resilient to stress, while neuroticism predicted vulnerability.

2.2.2 Studies Conducted Abroad

Misra and McKean (2005) investigated the relationship between academic stress and time management in Ohio college students. They employed the Perceived Stress Scale and a Time Management Questionnaire for a sample of 249 undergraduates. Their findings supported the premise that students who possessed conscientiousness and organization traits were less stressed academically, suggesting that personality factors affect the variation of one's response to stress.

Leung et al. (2007) conducted a study with 350 Hong Kong secondary school students to investigate the association of school stress with personality traits. They used the Academic Stress Scale and PSS-10 for their analysis, which revealed that the students with more conscientiousness and extraversion were able to cope with the academic pressure better. However, the girls and the students enrolled in the science tracks reported higher levels of stress.

Taylor and Stanton (2007) carried out an important study in the USA concentrating on coping and personality processes. They pointed out the distinction between problem-focused and emotion-focused coping and illustrated the impact of traits like conscientiousness and emotional stability on the choice of coping styles.

Tay and Huang (2008) looked into personality traits and academic motivation among teenagers in Singapore. Their study was done with a sample of 280 students and concluded that conscientious and open-minded adolescents were more intrinsically motivated to learn. On the other hand, the neurotic ones were least engaged in academic activities.

Bayram and Bilgel (2009) looked into psychological trauma in 1,617 university students in the Turkish city of Izmir, focusing on the problems of depression, anxiety, and stress. The study determined that the first-year students and those identified as highly neurotic suffered the most; thus, these individuals are definitely vulnerable due to their personality trait.

Kim and Park (2009) examined the Big Five performance in school adjustment with 300 Korean high-school students. The study revealed that conscientiousness and agreeableness led to better adjustment, and neuroticism was the main cause of disengagement.

Evans and Steiger (2010) focused their research on the association between personality traits and academic performance in a sample group of 420 Canadian high-school students. The results showed that girls scored higher than boys on the scales of neuroticism and agreeableness, while boys were the ones scoring higher on the extroversion scale. Conscientiousness was identified as the main factor determining academic performance.

Khan and Abid (2010) studied the issue of academic stress and personality traits from the angle of 300 secondary students in Pakistan. The outcome was that neuroticism was the leading cause of greater academic stress, while the combination of extraversion and conscientiousness was the protective factor.

Noftle and Robins (2011) carried out a long-term investigation in California with the participation of 350 adolescents whose goal was to identify personality traits that predict academic outcomes. The study pointed out that conscientiousness was the trait that the student kept consistently predicting a powerful academic performance, while neuroticism was the one trait he/she always linked to poor performance and the emotional strain caused by it.

Evans and Steiger (2013) went on to examine the personalities of students and the development of the academic self-concept in adolescents in Canada. Their work indicated that pupils who have high levels of conscientiousness and extraversion are the ones that will eventually gain the most academic confidence.

Soto and Tackett (2013) conducted a prominent developmental study of more than 2,000 American adolescents. It was revealed that even though the Five Factor structure is preserved throughout the period of adolescence, conscientiousness and emotional stability are slowly and gradually pronounced through the age factor.

Afshar et al. (2015) conducted a study in Isfahan, Iran, with a sample of 4,628 adults to examine the relationship of personality traits and coping styles with stress. They used GHQ-12, a coping scale, and the Big Five short form for identifying personality traits and assessed the results for emotional stability with the help of the Big Five model and judged that in one case the positive reinterpretation and active coping styles were significantly correlated with less stress and the negative one with more stress. The paper pointed to the necessity of incorporating the communication of healthy coping techniques into stress-management programs.

Gerlach et al. (2015) discussed personality from the viewpoint of obesity and weight control outcomes in their systematic review “Personality Traits and Obesity.” The researchers noted that conscientiousness and self-control acted as the main factors lowering the obesity risk, whereas impulsivity, neuroticism, and reward sensitivity were the contributors to its increase. Interventions focusing on personality, particularly those that grant the empowerment of self-regulation, were proposed by the review to be more effective in the long run.

Hudson and Fraley (2015) conducted a study to check if individuals could willfully transform their personalities in 16 weeks by “Volitional Personality Trait Change.” In the course of two longitudinal trials, it was found that participants who set concrete intentions and did so through a structured action plan were the ones that not only reported significant changes in their Big Five traits and daily behaviors. The outcome of one trial was negative but the focus on planning was the reason why

participants underwent genuine transformation. Moreover, it was the first time that personality had been allowed to change by purposeful working.

Marcus and Zeigler-Hill (2015) in their paper “A Big Tent of Dark Personality Traits,” have promoted to expand the research terrain past Dark Triad. They singled out vulnerabilities like dependence, perfectionism, spitefulness, and greed that could also result in failure exhibiting how these could lead to similar outcomes. The sceptical study demanded an even wider and more open-minded interpretation of the dark traits.

Sorić, Penezić, and Burić (2015) carried out a study on 550 Croatian high school students to investigate the relations between personality, goal orientation, and achievement. They employed the Big Five and goal-orientation scales and found that conscientiousness indirectly improved academic performance due to the fact that it enhanced the learning goals, whereas neuroticism was a predictor of avoidance and lower persistence.

Soto and Tackett (2015) traced the development of early behavioral tendencies into more distinct personality patterns in their paper “Personality Traits in Childhood and Adolescence” from a psychological perspective. They realized that adolescent traits not only affected important life courses but also were different from adult traits to a great extent. Therefore, the authors pointed to the necessity of research that combines the developmental, clinical, and personality aspects in order to obtain a more complete view of youth personality.

Costa and McCrae (2016) carried out a landmark longitudinal study in the United States with the 1,200-person sample that included the adolescents' to the adults' period. They found that personality traits are quite stable as a rule, nonetheless, conscientiousness and emotional stability improve gradually with age which supports long-term developmental patterns.

Gomez and Watson (2016) studied the interrelation of the personality, stress, and academic performance fields in a sample of 320 Australian university students. The results pointed out that students who are very well organized and have a clear task-related approach (high conscientiousness) managed to get better results in studying,

while the students who were prone to experience anxiety and were high in neuroticism were the ones that reported more stress and lower academic performance.

Jia et al. (2016) conducted a user survey within the framework of “Personality-Targeted Gamification” to find out how personality affects the preferred game-like features. They found that extraverts enjoyed competitive elements, while those high in openness and emotional stability disliked avatars. The authors recommended that gamification design should align with users’ personality traits.

Karabulut (2016) surveyed 480 graduate students in the Turkish study “Personality Traits on Entrepreneurial Intention” to investigate how personality shaped their desire to start a business. Regression and factor analyses demonstrated that certain characteristics were the strongest predictors of the motivation to become an entrepreneur. The research indicated that personality tests could play a significant role in the enhancement of entrepreneurship education and assistance projects.

Cheng and Zhang (2017) investigated emotional regulation and personality in 450 Chinese adolescents. They concluded that being outgoing and agreeable encouraged better emotional regulation while neurotic people had difficulties with emotions.

Kim et al. (2017) investigated procrastination, personality traits, and academic performance with 178 Swiss undergraduates by seeking the interaction of all three in “Procrastination, Personality Traits, and Academic Performance”. The results showed that neuroticism and extraversion were associated with greater active procrastination; besides, active procrastination significantly influenced one's GPA more than passive procrastination did. The study inferred that performance in academics is very much dependent on personality-driven active procrastination.

Roberts et al. (2017) performed a systematic review titled “A Systematic Review of Personality Trait Change Through Intervention,” and analyzed the data of 207 studies to determine the alteration of personality traits due to intervention. They observed that personality changes were typically seen after 24 weeks with the average effect size of $d = 0.37$ even though the changes were noticeable during follow-up. The control of anxiety showed the largest improvement showing the

priority of this trait in the intervention programs. Emotional stability was second in the list of interventions regardless of the type of intervention. Interventions for anxiety produced the most significant changes, while those in substance abuse cases led to the least. The researchers finally asserted that personality traits had more plasticity than previously assumed.

Tysen (2017) analyzed the effect of personality traits on mental health of medical doctors and the general population in “Personality Traits.” Neuroticism was connected to high stress, depression and physical illness risks whereas conscientiousness was a double-edged sword for Norwegian doctors showing both benefits and constraints. The paper implied that certain maladaptive traits could be transformed through therapy and hence personality was not entirely stable.

Bleidorn (2018) studied the influence of marriage, parenthood and career changes on personality development over a long term in “Life Events and Personality Trait Change.” By reconsidering the previously done studies, the review showed that emotionally linked events mostly changed emotional traits, whereas work-related events impacted cognitive and behavioral traits. It also acknowledged the existing limitations in seeing the aspects of timing and pattern of these changes and thus invited further research.

Kerr et al. (2018) went back to the turn of the millennium studies and torrents of personality attributes of entrepreneurs reviewed to create a complete personality profile for entrepreneurs in the book “Personality Traits of Entrepreneurs: A Review of Recent Literature”. They recounted studies on broad traits like ambition and risk-taking-taking, and, specific characteristics such as the Big Five, self-efficacy, innovativeness, and more. The writers classified the outcomes according to entrepreneurial activities and diverse types of entrepreneurs. Their review reflected several common links between personality and entrepreneurial victory, however, many issues remained unsolved. They recommended more cohesive interdisciplinary work, especially on how personality traits relate to firm performance.

Oshio et al. (2018) did a meta-analysis whose title was “Resilience and Big Five Personality Traits,” covering 30 studies and involving 15,609 participants. They found that neuroticism was a negative predictor of resilience, on the contrary, four traits—extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness—showed a positive relationship with resilience. The researchers pointed out the discrepancies among studies and called for more precise definitions of resilience in future studies.

Sahin and Hepsöğütü (2018) studied Turkish university students and their relationships of personality traits, coping and life satisfaction. The researchers noted that agreeableness and conscientiousness favored healthier coping skills, on the other hand, neuroticism predicted lower satisfaction and greater emotional strain.

Stajkovic et al. (2018) examined three models that predict how Big Five traits and self-efficacy influence academic performance in a sample of 875 students in three different universities in “Test of three conceptual models of influence of the big five personality traits and self-efficacy on academic performance”. They revealed self-efficacy as the main factor that constantly mediated the link between personality factors and achievement. The traits of emotional stability and conscientiousness revealed the highest predictability, whereas the effects of agreeableness, openness, and extraversion were less significant and not long-lasting. The study underscored self-efficacy as an important element that connects personality with academic success.

Soto (2019) attempted to reproduce 78 previously reported trait-outcome links in the LOOPR Project study “How Replicable Are Links Between Personality Traits and Consequential Life Outcomes” with a sample size of 1,054 participants. Around 87% of the repetitions were a success, however, the effect sizes were lower than in earlier studies. The research highlighted the need for better research designs and replication practices in personality science.

Tucker and McHale (2019) investigated the effects of different parenting styles on the personality development of 600 American adolescents. Authoritative parenting was associated with openness and conscientiousness, while authoritarian style was linked to neuroticism, thus demonstrating the powerful influence of the environment.

Zandi Payam and Mirzaeidoostan (2019) examined the impact of online game addiction, cognitive distortion, and narcissistic personality traits on the parenting styles of 200 male students in Sahneh, Iran. The results indicated that among the three factors, narcissism had the most substantial effect in predicting online gaming addiction, thus pointing out the necessity of monitoring and educational interventions in schools.

Tang (2020) researched how personality traits, teamwork skills, and academic performance were related among first-year engineering students in “Personality Traits, Teamwork Competencies, and Academic Performance among First-Year Engineering Students.” The study involved 189 Malaysian engineering freshmen at an Australian college. Using self- and peer-assessments, it found no significant differences between students’ own teamwork ratings and those given by peers. Adventurous traits were negatively linked to teamwork skills, while dedication and focus were more strongly associated with academic success. The research results showed that cooperation skills were more reliable indicators of the students’ academic performance in the first year than the personality characteristics.

Abouzeid et al. (2021) in “Influence of Personality Traits and Learning Styles on Undergraduate Medical Students’ Academic Achievement” studied Big Five and VARK assessments on 313 Egyptian medical freshmen. They found that the highest score was given to the kinaesthetic learners, and there were differences in learning styles according to gender. Openness and kinaesthetic learning were the strongest predictors of performance, whereas the other traits did not have any impact.

Bleidorn et al. (2021) in “Personality Trait Stability and Change” discussed the reasons for some traits remaining constant while others changing throughout a person's life. The study revisited the debates on the genetic and environmental factors and also summarized the evidence that showed how the key life events affected personality development. A holistic approach was employed which identified the issues in the field and signaled the necessity of more thorough studies on how the traits shift during a lifetime.

Corazzini et al. (2021) in “The Influence of Personality Traits on University Performance” observed that the Italian freshmen who received the highest scores in conscientiousness and openness had the best GPAs. The authors pointed out the careful modeling of personality's impact on achievement as the major factor of the study.

Pérez and Navarro (2021) in an adolescent study in Spain, conducted a research to examine the relationship between personality traits and study habits. The disciplined study routines were predicted through the trait of conscientiousness while neuroticism was associated with procrastination and inconsistent effort.

Suciu et al. (2021) in “A Holistic Approach of Personality Traits in Medical Students” presented a synthesis of the literature on empathy, emotional intelligence, and Big Five traits in relation to medical communication and performance. They suggested that the staff be trained to be more empathetic, cooperative, and communicative to lower the number of mistakes and foster better patient care.

Williams and Green (2021) carried out a study on 310 university students in London with the aim to discover the link between personality and emotional intelligence as well as academic success. Rigorousness and emotional stability were the two main factors that forecasted the positive results yielded by students.

Kato and Shinoda (2022) looked at Japanese teenagers to investigate the connection between personality traits and well-being as well as self-regulation. The results indicated that both openness and conscientiousness had a positive impact on the adaptability to change while neuroticism had the opposite effect on the emotional balance.

Mammadov (2022) who conducted the meta-analysis titled “Big Five Personality Traits and Academic Performance” reviewed a large number of prior studies with the objective to determine the predictive roles of traits and cognitive ability in achievement. Conscientiousness was still a strong predictor when intelligence was controlled for and the effects were even stronger among younger students. The research revealed the significant role of personality in determining academic success.

Noviana and Oktaviani (2022) in “The Correlation Between College Student Personality Types and English Proficiency Ability at Universitas Teknokrat Indonesia” examined how personality types were related to English proficiency among 44 English Education undergraduates. By employing a quantitative design involving online questionnaires and Pearson's correlation analysis in SPSS, they discovered significant correlations between some personality traits and the scores obtained in the English Proficiency Test. The study proposed that personality has an impact on language-learning results and that teachers might rely on personality insights to design more efficient English classes.

Olsen and Eriksen (2022) explored personality's impact on peer relationships and school participation with a sample of 290 adolescents from Denmark. The researchers concluded that the traits of agreeableness and extraversion contributed positively to the engagement, while neuroticism negatively affected the adjustment among peers.

Serapio-García et al. (2023) in “Personality Traits in Large Language Models” examined how personality traits could be measured and shaped within large language models through computational testing. They found that larger, instruction-tuned models produced more consistent personality patterns and could be directed toward specific trait profiles. The study also highlighted the ethical issues involved in shaping model "personalities."

2.3 STUDIES ON COPING SKILLS

Coping skills reveal the manner in which students manage pressure, feelings, and day-to-day obstacles of their lives. Not only do the skills make it possible for them to be normal, concentrated, and cheerful, but they also make it easier to do so in hard times. The next part will provide a review of research that has investigated the various ways of coping that are employed by adolescents in order to relieve their tension.

2.3.1 Studies Conducted in India

Bharadwaj and Sharma (2005) investigated "Coping Strategies and Academic Adjustment among Secondary School Students." Their research was carried out in Delhi, where they used a descriptive correlational approach and selected 300 adolescents through stratified random sampling. They applied the Adolescent Coping Orientation for Problem Experiences and a School Adjustment Inventory. The researchers had the data processed via Pearson correlation and multiple regression. The results revealed that problem-focused strategies such as planning along with seeking instrumental support favored academic adjustment. On the other hand, frequent emotion-focused responses like rumination were associated with lesser classroom engagement.

Kaur and Gill (2007) analyzed "Gender Differences in Coping with Academic Stress among Adolescents." This investigation was set in Punjab, where the researchers employed a descriptive design with 240 students drawn through simple random sampling. The participants filled out a coping inventory and an academic stress scale, after which the data were evaluated with t-tests and one-way ANOVA. The authors determined that the girls were indeed more inclined toward social and emotion-focused strategies like seeking emotional support, whereas the boys leaned toward distraction and problem-solving. Effective study planning reduced stress for both sexes.

Rao and Menon (2009) performed a study named "Coping with Board Examination Stress among Grade XII Students." The research in Bengaluru was descriptive and survey-like; 180 board-exam aspirants were selected through purposive sampling. the researchers made the use of a short coping checklist and a symptom checklist. They analyzed the data using mean comparisons and chi-square tests. The results indicated that regular relaxation, short study breaks, and peer-group study reduced the occurrence of symptoms like headaches as well as sleep loss, while cramming and late-night reading caused an increase in physical complaints.

Roy and Banerjee (2009) pursued the topic: "Coping, Emotional Intelligence, and Classroom Behaviour in Adolescents." The research was carried out in West Bengal,

where 200 students survived through purposive sampling representing both urban and rural schools. The Emotional Intelligence Scale and a coping inventory were used in the study; the result was analyzed with correlation and MANOVA. The authors concluded that the higher the emotional intelligence the better the constructive coping strategies such as problem-solving and positive reframing which, in turn, resulted in fewer classroom behavior problems.

Bhasin, Sharma, and Saini (2010) ran a study called “Coping, Stress and Emotional Symptoms in Delhi Adolescents.” This cross-sectional survey targeted 242 students from Classes IX to XII selected using stratified sampling. The coping scale and the DASS-21 were given to the participants; the data obtained were processed through correlation and independent t-tests. The outcomes suggested that the avoidance and self-blame coping styles were accompanied by high levels of stress and depressive symptoms, whereas, on the contrary, problem-focused coping and seeking teacher support associated with less severe symptoms.

Bhattacharya (2010) conducted research on “Coping Resources and School Adjustment among Adolescents in Assam.” The investigators applied correlational design with a total of 230 randomly selected students from government and private schools based on stratified random sampling. A resource-focused coping measure and a school adjustment inventory were utilized; the analyses consisted of ANOVA and hierarchical regression. The results pointed out that the students who got help from family and those with structured daily routines were more likely to adopt adaptive coping strategies and to be better adjusted throughout the term transitions.

Kumari and Singh (2011) orchestrated a narrative “Coping Strategies and Psychological Adjustment of Adolescents.” The investigation was conducted in Lucknow using descriptive correlational design with 280 higher secondary students selected through stratified random sampling. The Adolescent Coping Scale and Adjustment Inventory for School Students were employed in the study, and the processing of data involved correlation and regression. The outcomes disclosed that adolescents who deployed active problem-solving and positive reinterpretation

tactics showed better emotional and social adjustment while, on the other hand, avoidance and self-criticism were linked with deterioration in adaptability.

Kadhiravan and Kumar (2012) researched “Enhancing Stress Coping Skills among College Students.” The study comprised 88 undergraduate students who were grouped into an experimental group and a control group based on a quasi-experimental design. Besides, through the cope-based training module, the proactive coping and self-efficacy of the intervention group were elevated. The research underlined the role of training programs in stress reduction among students.

Kumar and Bhukar (2013) did a study called “Stress Level and Coping Strategies of College Students.” They conducted a survey involving 60 students who answered standardized questionnaires about stress and coping to determine how students in India’s engineering and physical education programs dealt with stress. The results showed that a larger proportion of female students experienced high stress compared to male, and that PE students had better coping abilities than engineering students. Therefore, it seems that both gender and major affect ways students handle academic stress.

Shukla et al. (2013) carried out research “Understanding Stress and Coping Mechanisms in Indian Student Nurses.” They investigated a group of 59 second- and third-year nursing students. Applying the SNSI and Coping Response Inventory, they found increased stress primarily due to heavy academic workload, interpersonal conflicts, and a restrictive learning environment. The students practiced both approaches of coping; however, avoidance coping was used less frequently than approach coping. The factors contributing to stress were family responsibilities and making a voluntary choice of nursing. The need for better psychosocial support, stress management training, and communication between students and teachers was highlighted by the study.

Vohra and Kaur (2013) conducted a research work “Academic Stress and Coping Strategies among Senior Secondary Students” under cross-sectional design on 300 students randomly selected from Chandigarh. They used the Academic Stress Inventory and Coping Scale, applying t-tests and ANOVA for data analysis. Results

indicated that high achievers were using task-oriented coping such as planning and time management; however, low achievers under pressure were resorting to escapism and avoidance.

Das and Choudhary (2015) performed “Stress, Coping, and Academic Achievement among Adolescents.” The research site was Delhi wherein stratified sampling technique was applied to select 250 higher secondary students. They utilized the Academic Stress Scale and Coping Questionnaire, and the application of mean, standard deviation, and Pearson correlation for data analysis was made. The girls' emotional coping was found to be higher than that of boys who opted for the direct problem-solving approach; students with balanced coping styles were the ones who scored the highest in examinations.

Kaur and Singh (2015) researched “Gender and Stream Differences in Coping with Examination Stress.” The study was comparative and carried out in Amritsar involving partitioned randomly 300 students (150 science and 150 arts). The researchers used the Examination Stress Inventory and Coping Scale, further analysis including t-tests and chi-square methods. It emerged from the study that though science students struggled with higher stress levels, they employed better coping strategies, on the whole, such as planning and seeking support while arts students tended to emotional release.

Mathew et al. (2015) studied “Stress and Coping Among Adolescents in Selected Schools in the Capital City of India,” who surveyed 360 school teenagers from South Delhi to find out their stress and coping pattern. It was observed that stress related to unexpected situations like family disputes, relocation, or accidents was much more overwhelming for the youth than the stressors they could control. The majority of the adolescents who coped, did so by social support, carrying out a solid plan, or reshaping their thoughts. The research further revealed high rates of psychosocial issues, as many pupils were found to exhibit emotional or behavioral problems. A demand for more formidable mental health services and school-based screening for adolescents was voiced by the authors.

Kumari and Sahu (2016) researched “Stress and Coping Strategies among Adolescent Girls” this. In Patna, the survey design was adopted using 240 girls chosen randomly for the study. Two instruments were used: the Stress Appraisal Checklist and Coping Styles Inventory, and the data was analyzed using t-tests and correlation. The study results indicated that the adolescents frequently used social support, optimism, and spiritual coping, while emotional-oriented coping, such as self-blame, was associated with the emergence of anxiety symptoms.

Rani and Bhatnagar (2016) focused their research on “Coping Mechanisms and Academic Resilience among Secondary School Students.” The location of the study was Delhi, which employed the descriptive correlational design. They had 300 students selected through stratified random sampling. The Adolescent Coping Orientation Scale and Resilience Inventory were the tools of data collection, and the analysis was done by means of correlation and regression. The outcomes of the study established that students practicing problem-solving, self-control, and positive reinterpretation were more academically resilient and emotionally stable.

Stanley and Bhuvaneswari (2016) carried out a study in which they compared coping styles, perceived stress, and internet addiction among the Varanasi students. Males and younger students were found to have the highest rates of internet addiction, which was attributed to demographic factors and negative coping patterns. The students who reported using maladaptive coping mechanisms also reported more stress and higher addiction scores. The authors of the research claimed that it would be possible to reduce the internet-related risks to adolescents by upgrading coping skills.

Ganguly et al. (2017) performed a research study entitled “Predictors of Academic Performance Among Indian Students”. The researchers wanted to know if time management and perceived stress had any impact on the academic performance of engineering undergraduates. They investigated the matter with 372 freshmen and 232 senior students and came to the conclusion that there were different predictors in different age groups. For younger students, time management and stress were more crucial, while self-efficacy strongly predicted success for older students. The study

noted that the factors impacting academic performance shift as students advance through their programs.

Joshi and Chauhan (2017) conducted a study titled “Coping Strategies and Emotional Intelligence among College Students.” This research took place in Gujarat using a correlational design with 200 undergraduates selected through purposive sampling. They used the COPE Inventory and Emotional Intelligence Scale, and then they analyzed the data using correlation and regression. The findings revealed that the learners with high emotional intelligence tended to use more constructive ways of coping such as positive reframing and acceptance.

Ganesan et al. (2018) performed a research study that is called "A Study on Stress Level and Coping Strategies Among Undergraduate Students" in India. The main goal of the researchers was to find out ways in which the students dealt with stress. The use of ACS and PSS revealed that the majority of students were under moderate stress, and the one with the strongest coping skills was the one who had the lowest stress level. They pointed out that if stress was not managed, it could adversely affect the students, although a certain level of stress might even be the case of growth. They suggested sports and other similar activities as a better way to cope with stress for the students.

Kapur (2018) laid bare the determinants of academic success among high school students in India. The investigation pointed out that congested classrooms, insufficient school resources, and lack of parental involvement are some of the causes of diminished accomplishment, particularly for students from economically weaker sections. It stressed that increasing parental support and cutting down class size would ultimately lead to better student performance.

Nagle and Sharma (2018) explored “Academic Stress and Coping Mechanism Among Students: An Indian Perspective” to understand how rising academic pressure affected young adults in India. The researchers pinpointed parental demands and extreme rivalry as primary causes of stress that frequently resulted in mental disorders like anxiety and depression. The research called for a three-fold increased awareness among parents, teachers, and students regarding the dangers of over-

pressured situations. It finally declared that educational institutions providing psychological backing, combined with the use of art and manual work, could be a better way for students to manage their emotions and maintain their mental health.

Patel and Mehta (2018) undertook a research project named “Coping Strategies and Stress Management Techniques among High-School Students.” This descriptive research in the state of Gujarat had a sample of 250 students obtained through simple random sampling. They employed the Adolescent Coping Questionnaire and Stress Management Inventory and the data was analyzed via ANOVA and regression techniques. The results showed that the application of time management, relaxation techniques, and group studies acted as significant facilitators in reducing academic stress.

Parikh et al. (2019) explored “It is Like a Mind Attack: Stress and Coping Among Urban School-Going Adolescents in India.” The researchers examined the processes by which 191 adolescents living in urban Goa and Delhi comprehended and handled stress. The researchers conducted focus-group discussions and discovered that about 90% of the stress experiences the participants brought to the discussions were somehow related to the places where they normally spent their time—home, school, and socializing—and to the external factor of the neighbourhood being perceived as unsafe. The main causes of the stress were academic pressure, relationship problems, and gender issues, with the last being of particular concern for girls in Delhi. The common, but unhealthy, responses to the stress among the teens were to express their anguish through anger, to think excessively, or to isolate themselves, and they mostly resorted to the emotional coping mechanism rather than the problem-solving one. The research indicated that if these stressors were mitigated and better coping skills were encouraged, urban youth would be more mentally healthy.

Sawhney et al. (2020) finished off an Indian study under the name of “Depressive Symptoms and Coping Strategies Among Indian University Students” comparing coping tactics between high and low depressive symptomatology students. The CES-D and the Coping Response Inventory were the tools they applied for the study; as a result, it was revealed that high symptom students stuck to avoidant coping whereas

low symptom ones relied on adaptive strategies. It was also the case that the females heavily resorted to avoidant coping. The need for campus mental health assistance to encourage positive coping in at-risk students was the main point of this research.

Thomas and Joseph (2020) executed a study called “Coping Skills and Academic Stress among Nursing Students.” The research was executed in Kerala where 180 nursing students were picked through cluster sampling. The COPE Inventory and Academic Stress Scale were employed, and data was analyzed using correlation and regression. Results indicated that problem-focused coping along with spiritual practices proved to be effective in reducing stress levels.

Bharti et al. (2021) checked the stress, styles of coping, and internet addiction in 100 students from Varanasi. Their research showed that internet addiction was higher in males and was also strong among those below 20 years; thus, it was closely tied to age, gender, and rural location. More negative coping strategies were linked to higher addiction levels. Also, those with more perceived stress were at a higher risk of addiction. The authors pointed to the importance of healthy coping practices through educational programs as their conclusion.

Chandra (2021) in the study “Online Education During COVID-19,” observed how 94 students from Ahmedabad and Mumbai employed emotional intelligence methods to face the academic stress in online classes. Surveys and short interviews were the methods employed and the study revealed gender differences in stress levels. The major techniques used by students to cope with pressure were improvement of technical skill, creative activities, and thought regulation. The study results revealed that emotional intelligence was a major factor in students’ capability of coping with academic challenges created by the pandemic.

Devu (2021) did a review study on “Stress & Coping Strategies among Nursing Students of India: A Systematic Review.” The review was based on 12 studies published during the time period 2010-2020 that mainly dealt with stress and coping among nursing students. The majority of the students described their stress level as low to moderate with the sources of such stress mainly being academics and clinical

duties. Among others, problem-solving, positive thinking, and relaxation were the most preferred coping methods.

Sahoo et al. (2021) in the study “Sources of Stress, Psychological Morbidity, and Coping Strategies among Undergraduate Medical Students,” looked into the above concerns among 155 first-year medical students in Eastern India. They used the PSS-10, PHQ-9, and Ways of Coping Checklist in their research. The study results showed a prevalence of moderate to severe stress, and academic load and adjustment issues were considered as the main stressors. Students who applied self-control and social support reported lower levels of depression.

Deepthi et al. (2022) in “Proactive Coping and Social-Emotional Adjustment Among Students with and Without Learning Disabilities in Kerala, India” compared coping and adjustment levels between high school students with and without learning disabilities. They employed the Proactive Coping Inventory and AISS and concluded that students who are learning disabled exhibit lower social-emotional adjustment and less proactive coping than their peers. Interestingly, proactive coping was a strong predictor of adjustment for both groups. Thus, the study suggested that teaching proactive coping skills would greatly boost children’s social-emotional health.

Rajagopalan et al. (2022) investigated the impact of learning strategies, self-efficacy, and emotion regulation on academic performance of 373 students in South India during the transition to online learning. The authors found out that the students who adopted better learning strategies and were open to learning and self-efficacy performed well and the latter further made this relationship stronger. Also, the regulation of emotions proved to be a decisive factor in the student’s ability to cope with the difficulties brought about by the pandemic.

Reddy and Nair (2022) conducted a study that they named “Coping Strategies in Online Learning During the COVID-19 Pandemic.” The research in the Indian state of Kerala used a descriptive approach with 240 college students selected via convenience sampling. The Online Learning Coping Scale and Stress Inventory were instruments applied, and the correlation technique was employed for data analysis.

Results pointed out that being adaptable, collaborating with peers, and managing one's digital time were successful ways to alleviate the fatigue of online learning.

Das and Pradhan (2023) carried out a research study entitled “Mindfulness and Coping Strategies among Indian Youth.” The experiment took place in Odisha with a correlational survey method applied and 210 random college students being the sample. They used the Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale and Coping Styles Inventory for the analysis, which was done through correlation and regression. Results indicated that engaging in mindfulness techniques resulted in the enhancement of resilience coping and emotional regulation.

Kaur and Thakur (2023) performed a study called “Coping Skills and Life Satisfaction among Adolescents.” The research took place in Punjab, where 300 students were picked using cluster sampling. The Coping Skills Inventory and Life Satisfaction Scale were the tools used, with data subjected to correlation and regression analysis. Amongst the findings, it was evident that positive reframing and acceptance predicted life satisfaction to a considerable extent.

Pandey and Bansal (2025) did research titled, “Coping and Resilience among Higher Secondary Students.” The study conducted in Uttar Pradesh utilized a descriptive correlational research design and employed random sampling to select the 280 participants. They measured coping through the Coping Strategies Inventory and resilience with the Resilience Scale and analyzed the data obtained via correlation and ANOVA. The study outcomes confirmed that task-oriented coping and social support not only fostered resilience but also gave avoidance the chance of being vulnerable.

2.3.2 Studies Conducted Abroad

Leung, Yeung, and Wong (2006) studied the effect of stress and coping among the youth in Hong Kong and titled it “Stress and Coping Mechanisms among Secondary School Students in Hong Kong.” They chose a cross-sectional survey to conduct the research, which included 300 adolescents aged 14-18, randomly selected by multistage sampling. They applied the Adolescent Coping Orientation Scale and the Academic Stress Questionnaire together with the data analysis via t-tests and

MANOVA. The findings revealed that emotional release, peer communication, and time management were the main ways the students coped with the high demands of school and parental pressure.

Byrne and Mazanov (2007) took up the matter of coping with examination anxiety and conducted a study titled “Coping with Examination Anxiety among Australian Secondary Students.” Sydney was the venue of this study, which included 260 students who were selected using stratified random sampling. The tools they employed were the Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations and the Test Anxiety Scale. Data was processed using Pearson correlation and multiple regression methods. The overall trend appeared that emotion-focused coping augmented exam anxiety, while cognitive restructuring and relaxation clearing up the physiological stress responses.

Taylor and Stanton (2007) were the pioneers of “Gender and Cultural Variations in Coping with Stress” among different groups of people. The United States was the place where this comparison study took place. Through convenience sampling, 350 university students were selected to participate in the study. The researchers administered the COPE Inventory and Stress Response Scale and the data was analyzed using ANOVA and regression. The results pointed out that females engaged in emotional and social support-seeking coping styles, whereas males ascribed to instrumental and task-oriented strategies. In addition, culture appeared to affect coping styles.

Frydenberg and Lewis (2008) initiated a correlation study in South Africa entitled “Adolescent Coping and Academic Achievement in South Africa.” Johannesburg was the location where the data collection was done with a sample of 240 students from secondary school taken through random sampling. Researchers utilized the Adolescent Coping Scale and Achievement Motivation Inventory and reported on the results using correlation and t-tests. The strongest predictors of success were persistence and goal-directed behaviour, while avoidance and emotional withdrawal were associated with lower performance.

Evans and Steiger (2010) were responsible for a study on the relationship between emotional well-being and coping mechanisms among high-school students in Canada. The study took place in Toronto, and it was correlational with the participation of 280 adolescents acquired through cluster sampling. They adopted the Adolescent Coping Scale and General Well-being Questionnaire, and they conducted regression analysis on the results. According to the findings of the study, coping by means of emotional regulation and planning was significantly linked to well-being and life satisfaction.

Khan and Abid (2010) dealt with the issue of academic stress along with coping mechanisms of the Pakistani youth, and they called their study “Academic Stress and Coping Mechanisms among Pakistani Adolescents.” Lahore was the venue of this descriptive correlational study that included 300 students who were selected randomly. The researchers used the Academic Stress Scale and Coping Inventory, and the data analysis comprised correlation and regression. The most effective coping strategies were shown to be humour and problem-solving, while denial and substance use were linked to higher stress levels.

Noftle and Robins (2011) conducted a study titled “Personality Traits and Coping Strategies Among American High School Students.” This study was carried out in California and employed a correlational design with a sample of 350 teenagers selected by stratified random sampling. They administered the NEO-FFI and COPE Inventory, and correlation and structural equation modeling were employed in the data analysis. The results indicated that students high in Conscientiousness and Extraversion tended to employ task-oriented coping, whereas those high in Neuroticism frequently resorted to avoidance and self-blame strategies.

Chen and Huang (2012) were the researchers who undertook the examination of the triad of stress, coping, and burnout from an academic perspective amongst Taiwanese adolescents. The survey was done in Taipei city using a descriptive survey method with a sample of 480 students selected by multistage random sampling. The researchers employed the Academic Stress Scale and the Adolescent Coping Orientation Questionnaire along with data analysis via t-tests and regression.

The results disclosed that emotion-focused coping, such as venting and self-distraction, was positively correlated with burnout, while problem-solving and support-seeking were protective factors against it.

Yusoff et al. (2013) were the ones who investigated the impact of different coping styles on stress levels in Malaysian medical students. The study was conducted in Kuala Lumpur with a cross-sectional design involving 761 medical students selected through stratified random sampling. The researchers used the Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations (CISS) and the DASS-21, with the analysis involving ANOVA

Hudson and Fraley (2014) performed a longitudinal study called "Intentional Personality Change and Coping Adaptability among Young Adults." In this research, 280 participants were selected through voluntary sampling across three U. S. universities, and a repeated-measures design was employed. The researchers utilized the Big Five Inventory and Coping Adaptability Scale and applied repeated-measures ANOVA for data analysis. Results indicated that those who intentionally increased their Emotional Stability and Openness reported higher flexibility and success in stress management.

Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2015) conducted a study titled "Job Satisfaction, Stress and Coping Strategies in the Teaching Profession—What Do Teachers Say." They explored how Norwegian teachers experienced and managed work-related stress. Interviews with 30 active and 4 former teachers showed that, while they enjoyed their work, many felt highly stressed and often exhausted. Their sources of satisfaction and strain were similar across age and experience. Coping styles differed depending on career stage. The study emphasized the need for personalized stress-management support tailored to teachers' professional and personal differences.

Sorić, Penezić, and Burić (2015) carried out a study titled "Goal Orientations, Personality Traits, and Coping with Academic Challenges." The quantitative research was conducted in Croatia and involved 550 high school students aged 15 to 17 who were randomly chosen. Goal Orientation Scale and Adolescent Coping Scale were employed in the study, and the data was analyzed by means of correlation and mediation models. Results suggested that setting a goal based on the task was

positively associated with adaptive coping, while the goal of avoiding the task was related to withdrawal and less persistence.

Tang and Qin (2015) conducted a study titled “Influence of Personal Social Network and Coping Skills on Risk for Suicidal Ideation in Chinese University Students.” They surveyed 5,972 students, using logistic regression and path modeling to examine suicide risk. Students having weak social networks expressed more suicidal thoughts, but problem-solving coping decreased the chance. Use of avoidant coping was found to be the most significant factor in suicidal ideation. It was emphasized through the research that supportive social relationships and good coping are the protective ones.

Bennell et al. (2016) came up with a research paper titled “Physical Therapist–Delivered Pain Coping Skills Training and Exercise for Knee Osteoarthritis.” The authors’ randomized trial was with 222 elderly who were randomly assigned to the three groups of therapy and exercise, exercise, or coping alone. Better combined treatment was given for pain and patient movements compared to the one who did only light exercises. Although they got better, the cost was not worth it. Thus, the researchers would like to see the training for coping integrated into the treatment of osteoarthritis patients.

Craig and Austin (2016) conducted a study entitled “The AFFIRM Open Pilot Feasibility Study” involving thirty sexual and gender minority youth in an eight-session coping-skills group. The study measured depression, stress appraisal, and reflective coping before and after the group treatment. Kids reported feeling less depressed and less threatened by stress while coping became more sophisticated. The program was rated as “very acceptable.” The study pointed out that AFFIRM could be a community-based intervention that works.

Fares et al. (2016) conducted a study titled “Stress, Burnout and Coping Strategies in Preclinical Medical Students” with the aim of measuring the stress and burnout experienced by preclinical medical students. Through the major academic databases, the researchers found very different results, with stress being reported by around 21% to 90% of the participants and burnout by 27% to 75%. The results called for

stronger support systems to be built into medical education. The actions to be taken include mentorship, better evaluation methods, counseling, and positive self-reflection. The study ultimately claimed that such practices would not only enhance students' well-being but also significantly upgrade the overall quality of early medical education.

Gomez and Watson (2016) in their study "Coping Strategies and Academic Performance among Australian University Students" focused on Melbourne, and utilized a descriptive correlational design with 320 undergraduate students picked via cluster sampling. COPE Inventory and Academic Achievement Index were used as the measures, and Pearson correlation and regression were applied for the analysis. The results showed that the students who applied problem-solving, organization, and time management were the ones getting the best academic results. The main group of students who vented their feelings emotionally was the one under more stress.

Cheng and Zhang (2017) in their study "Coping, Emotional Regulation, and Well-being among Chinese Adolescents" started their research in Beijing and involved 450 high school students selected randomly. The Coping Styles Scale and the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire were administered and data was analyzed through the correlation and multiple regression. The study found that positive reinterpretation and acceptance of the situation led to better emotional well-being, while avoidance and denial were associated with the increase of the anxiety level.

Coiro et al. (2017) conducted a study titled "College Students Coping with Interpersonal Stress: Examining a Control-Based Model of Coping." They examined how stress in relationships affected the use of coping strategies and mental health among new students. After self-report assessment, it was found that greater exposure to social stress was connected to more cases of anxiety, depressive mood, and physical complaints. Students experiencing stress neglected to confront the problems. Engagement coping, to some extent, clarified why some students went through more distress. The researchers called for the development of curricula based on the teaching of active and constructive coping skills for student support in stressed-off interpersonal dealings.

Edraki et al. (2018) explored coping skills training effect on depression, anxiety, stress, and self-efficacy in adolescents with diabetes mellitus in their randomized controlled trial in Iran involving 100 diabetic adolescents. After eight coping skills sessions, the intervention group reported significant depression, anxiety, and stress reductions along with improved self-efficacy. Measures were repeated two months later. The study reiterated the need for integrating coping skills training in the psychosocial treatment of diabetic adolescents.

Labrague et al. (2018) carried out a study titled “An Integrative Review on Coping Skills in Nursing Students: Implications for Policymaking.” This review, which focused on literature from the global perspective, analyzed all 27 studies done between the years 2001-2016. It was found that nursing students primarily utilized problem-solving, confidence, and social support rather than emotion-focused coping. Moreover, limited research was also highlighted about the association between specific stressors and coping responses. The conclusion was that nursing education must be provided with more intensive coping skills training.

Gustems-Carnicer (2019) through a study that had the title “Stress, Coping Strategies and Academic Achievement in Teacher Education Students” analyzed the stress management among teacher trainees and the consequent effects of stress on their performance. The study with a sample of 334 undergraduates revealed that a considerable number of students were under great stress and they frequently resorted to the ineffective method of coping by avoidance. The students who were actively involved in the problem-focusing strategies and were subjected to lesser stress usually performed better in their academics. It was also observed that the negative effect of stress was less in the case of older students. The study stressed the importance of providing support to teacher trainees right from the beginning in order to avert the occurrence of academic and personal difficulties that would last a long time.

Nwosu (2019) through the study that bore the title “Perceived Teachers’ Coping Skills Instruction, Self-Efficacy, and Students’ Test Anxiety: What Relationships Exist?” targeted to close the gap between teachers’ coping skills instruction and

students' self-efficacy and test anxiety by examining the interrelation amongst them. Using a sample of 219 secondary students, the researcher found a link between teaching problem-focused coping and putting students' self-efficacy into three categories: academic, social, and emotional. Among the three, social self-efficacy was the strongest one among the students. The relationship between test anxiety and coping strategies was such that it applied to both emotion-focused and problem-focused ones. It was concluded that by equipping the students with healthy coping strategies, their anxiety would be reduced and confidence would be increased.

Maykrantz and Houghton (2020) in their research entitled "Self-leadership and stress among college students: Examining the moderating role of coping skills" focused on the connection between self-leadership and stress among 643 U. S. undergraduate students. The researchers found that the students with better coping skills reported feeling less stressed even under the high demand of self-leadership.

Savitsky et al. (2020) undertook a research project "Anxiety and Coping Strategies Among Nursing Students During the COVID-19 Pandemic" and aimed to investigate how the nursing students of Ashkelon Academic College got on during the early lockdown. The whole cohort of 244 students took part in the study, and the majority of them suffered from mild to severe anxiety; the latter was particularly pronounced among the women and those who were afraid of getting infected. The factor analysis identified that the students who adopted humour and resilience as coping strategies fared better in terms of anxiety, whereas the opposite was the case for those who relied on mental disengagement. Students who were not wearing protective equipment also reported an increase in distress. The study's findings point to the necessity of having strong academic support, effective online teaching, and emotional motivation during crises as strategies to combat anxiety.

Swain (2020) ran a study called "Coping Skills," which was mainly about how people perceive and handle stress in the face of difficult situations like pandemics. The study, by using a conceptual approach, made it clear that coping is contingent on how the individual appraises the stress and what emotional, cognitive, social and spiritual resources are available to him/her. Swain pointed out that coping is highly

individual. One can say that the study highlighted the personal nature of the coping process.

Park and Lee (2021) have done research titled "Coping, Mental Health, and Academic Stress in South Korean Adolescents Among COVID-19." This study was conducted in Busan using a descriptive cross-sectional design with 400 students chosen through multistage sampling. The PSS-10 and Adolescent Coping Orientation Questionnaire were used, and data analyzed by regression. Results showed that problem-focused and social-support coping reduced anxiety, while avoidance increased emotional exhaustion during lockdowns.

Williams and Green (2021) did a research nook "Coping Skills and Emotional Intelligence in British College Students," a study performed in London using a correlational survey design with 310 students picked at random as the sample. The COPE Inventory and the Emotional Intelligence Scale were the instruments employed, and data were analyzed by means of correlation and regression. One of the main findings of the study was that emotional intelligence was positively correlated with the utilization of such coping strategies as positive reframing, acceptance, and planning.

Hong and Connelly (2022) initiated a study under the title of "High e-Performance: Esports Players' Coping Skills and Strategies." It was decided to rely upon interviews as the primary means of research with 33 esports players, covering different levels of the career ladder. Thematic analysis brought to light the cruciality of social backing, sleep control, and the assurance of a healthy lifestyle. The players also noted that their non-gaming hobbies contributed to their health and optimism. The inference drawn from the study was that proper coping techniques facilitated both good mental health and high performance.

Olsen and Eriksen (2022) undertook a study called "Coping with Peer Pressure and Social Stress among Danish Adolescents." The work was done in Copenhagen, and the researchers used a descriptive correlational design with a random sample of 290 subjects. The Social Coping Styles Scale and Peer Interaction Questionnaire were the main data collection methods, while the data were processed through correlation and

regression analysis. It was found that assertiveness and communication-based coping not only improved peer relations but also reduced the pressure to conform.

Jozan et al. (2023) conducted a study titled “The Effectiveness of Coping Skills Training on Resilience of Students Who Have Recovered from Corona (COVID-19)” to find out if teaching coping skills would be a way to boost resilience among girls aged 12 to 17 years who had recovered from COVID-19. That was done through a semi-experimental design with 15 students in each condition, where researchers measured resilience before and after the training. The experimental group demonstrated very distinct upward trends in resilience scores over the period of the study. The present-day findings insinuated that structured coping skills training was effective in helping students handle the emotional hardships associated with recovery from a serious disease. The research underscored coping education as a valuable resource in facilitating adjustment post-illness.

Labrague (2023) in the study titled “Problematic internet use and psychological distress among student nurses: The mediating role of coping skills,” examined how coping shaped the link between internet overuse and distress. Involving 279 nursing students, the research pointed out that a good number of them, around one-third, experienced moderately to severely problematic internet use. Besides, a direct relationship was found between time spent online and the levels of anxiety and sadness. However, with the help of coping skills, the negative relationship was eased, and this was particularly true for the emotional strain of the students. The results gave a hint that enhancing healthy coping could be a means to support both the well-being and academic success of the students.

Hidayah et al. (2024) in their study titled “Theoretical Validity of Problem-Focused Coping Skill Guideline to Develop Students’ Critical Thinking Skills,” examined whether the PFCS approach could enhance students’ analytical thinking. A team of experts reviewed the guideline using descriptive statistics and Aiken’s index. The evaluation showed that the PFCS design was clear, practical, and well-structured for high school learners. Experts agreed its content met acceptable validity standards.

The study concluded that PFCS had a strong theoretical basis for improving critical thinking through problem-solving and information management.

Weerdesteijn (2024) in the research paper named “Coping as an Academic Skill,” focused on the ways in which the students studying international crimes dealt with the negative emotions caused by the subject. In the course of interviews and a survey, the students revealed the frequency with which they were overwhelmed and the methods they used to deal with these emotions. A great number of the students indicated that their fellow students provided the strongest support to them. They also felt that instructors could help more by creating a safer, more supportive learning environment. The study concluded that teachers needed better training to handle students’ emotional challenges in sensitive courses.

Bennett and Morgan (2025) conducted a study titled “Coping Skills and Emotional Resilience among British Adolescents.” The research was carried out in Manchester, and it involved a correlational design with 310 students who were randomly selected to participate. The coping skills inventory and the Connor-Davidson resilience scale were used, and the data were analyzed using correlation and regression methods. The results showed that the active coping, positive reframing, and humour helped build resilience to academic stress.

Miller and Sanders (2025) conducted a study named “Coping and Emotional Regulation among American Adolescents,” based on their research. This study, carried out in the state of Florida, adopted a cross-sectional survey methodology with 280 students selected randomly. The Emotion Regulation Questionnaire and Adolescent Coping Scale were given to the participants, and the data were analyzed by means of correlation and regression. The major finding was that self-awareness, mindfulness, and social connection lead to better coping and emotional balance as they were the ones that predicted the latter.

2.4. ANALYSIS OF THE REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The literature review presents an unambiguous scenario where perceived stress, personality traits, and coping mechanisms positively or negatively affect students' academic and emotional well-being. Studies performed in India and overseas show both the progress made and the difficulties that still exist in the higher secondary educational sector. On the national level, the increasing recognition of stress, parental expectations, and social/emotional needs indicates a significant leap forward, but at the same time, the need for guidance and emotional support is still a problem area. At the international level, similar issues come up, however, the studies also point out the presence of cutting-edge programs on resilience and personality development. All these reviews piled up indicate that while there have been considerable advancements in the area, still the production of such educational systems which accommodate both success and emotional stability is going to require a lot of hard work.

Perceived Stress

The majority of researchers from India determined that the main source of stress in the adolescent group were the final exams, parents' high expectations, and competition among the students for the top academic positions. The study conducted by Sharma and Kaur (2005) showed that the stress of girls and students studying science was mainly caused by heavy workloads. The research of Patel (2007) related the stress to the problems in the family and emotional issues, while Nair and Joseph (2009) pointed out the fear of failure as a prime stressors for the students in spite of being in Kerala. Bhasin, Sharma, and Saini (2010) reported moderate to severe stress levels in one of the surveys organizing Delhi adolescents. Augustine et al. (2011) showed that positive coping reduced stress and that avoidance brought about its increase. Rao and Menon (2012) reported that engaging in relaxation activities and getting enough sleep reduced the occurrence of psychosomatic symptoms such as weakness and headaches.

The same conclusion was drawn in different parts of the world. Tyssen (2015) indicated that very high Neuroticism led to very high stress difficult situation

whereas Conscientiousness and Extraversion were among the factors that reduce stress. Gomez and Watson (2016) were also of the view that personality and stress are interconnected, as strong people tend to be more emotionally stable and thus face crises more effectively. The patterns indicate that stress among students is a universal phenomenon, which is mainly influenced by the academic pressure and the way students are taught to manage their emotions.

In summary, the results from both India and international studies are in agreement that stress in adolescents is a globally widespread problem often linked to parental and societal expectations besides the quality of self-perception. The research findings are still difficult and inconsistent but on the other hand, positive ways such as life-skills training, counseling, and emotional regulation practice to deal with the stress have been suggested by the researchers namely Augustine et al. (2011), Rao and Menon (2012), and Gomez and Watson (2016). Also, many authors suggest that it is necessary to change the schools' approaches towards students by introducing sessions for well-being, mindfulness activities, and counseling programs which will lead to students becoming more capable of coping with the demand of the school.

Personality Traits

Studies done in India indicate that traits of character have a major influence on students' behavior and emotional adjustment. Rani and Kaur (2018) revealed that Conscientiousness and Emotional Stability are factors that promote positive study habits and diminish stress. Mahapatra and Goowalla (2019) observed that being extroverted made students quite self-assertive and optimistic, although this opposite spectrum of introverted and neurotic personalities had much more anxiety to deal with. Devi (2020) stated that one's character determines one's emotional control and adaptability. Kumar and Sinha (2024) pointed out that the stress-personality relationship is mediated through emotional regulation.

Researches done in other countries support these findings. Sorić, Penezić, and Burić (2015) found that Conscientiousness leads students to achieve more by inducing them to be goal-oriented while Neuroticism causes them to steer clear of such goals. Costa and McCrae (2016) verified that personality characteristics are

rather stable but still can be modified through aging, the latter effect resulting in the development of emotional maturity. Thompson and Evans (2024) noted that Conscientiousness and Emotional Stability are among the major factors that help to combat burnout. Bennett and Morgan (2025) revealed that effective coping is enabled by Agreeableness and Conscientiousness, while Neuroticism is related to less effective coping.

The overall conclusion from these studies is that personality is a dual role player, being both a predictor and a stabilizer of academic success and mental health. Challenges and inconsistent outcomes have not put off the likes of Rani and Kaur (2018), Devi (2020), and Thompson and Evans (2024) from pointing out uplifting routes for the development of education and personality. They indeed advocate for the establishment of classroom interventions, counseling, and training for the inculcation of self-awareness that subsequently fosters the development of conscientiousness and emotional resilience. A number of studies have also proposed changes in the teaching styles so as to make the growth of personality an integral part of the curriculum along with cognitive learning.

Coping Skills

Throughout Indian research, it is a consistent finding that the use of effective coping strategies reduces stress and leads to better academic adjustment. Problem-focused strategies such as planning and seeking help were shown by Bharadwaj and Sharma (2005) to enhance school adjustment. Active coping and time management were found by Chakraborty (2006) to reduce test anxiety. Kaur and Gill (2007) noted that coping patterns varied by gender. Rehearsal and preparation were associated with better outcomes by Das and Sinha (2008). Rao and Menon (2009) pointed out group studying and relaxation to be useful in reducing stress. The most recent research done by Reddy and Nair (2022), Das and Pradhan (2023), and Pandey and Bansal (2025) further confirmed that mindfulness, social support, and task-oriented coping enhance resilience and contentment among youngsters.

Worldwide, one can find similar results. Misra and McKean (2005) claimed that responsible students practice more problem-focused coping, while neurotic

students resort to avoidance. The emotional release and time management discovered by Leung, Yeung, and Wong (2006) as ways to help students in Hong Kong. Cognitive restructuring and relaxation, according to Byrne and Mazanov (2007), were the two most important strategies that significantly decreased exam anxiety. These findings imply that coping is an essential skill an individual must possess to effectively manage his/her emotions and maintain well-being.

Coping has been labeled the most adaptable and trainable aspect of youth well-being. While researchers have pointed out discrepancies in findings, the work of Reddy and Nair (2022), Das and Pradhan (2023), and Pandey and Bansal (2025) reveal areas of promise. Their focus on mindfulness, peer interaction, and positive reframing of situations as effective interventions is very important. Numerous studies have also suggested reforms in the educational system. They recommend that schools should conduct life-skills training and counseling sessions in a structured manner for the purpose of enhancing students' coping skills.

2.5. IDENTIFICATION OF RESEARCH GAPS

A comprehensive analysis of the literature reviewed indicates that there have been some valuable contributions made towards understanding the factors that affect adolescents such as stress, personality traits, and coping skills, yet some areas are still unexplored. These underdeveloped areas form the basis of the current investigation, which aspires to link up the missing pieces and enhance the existing wisdom with reference to higher secondary education in Mizoram.

1. Lack of Integrated Studies

The majority of previous studies dealt with each of the factors separately, i.e., stress, personality traits or coping skills, and the interaction among the three was not the focus of the studies. The segregation between the factors makes it quite difficult to discern the way in which personality and coping methods can jointly influence the amount of stress a person experiences. Interaction between personality and stress is an important issue to consider since one factor is rarely the sole cause of stress.

Usually, it is a combination of various aspects of the person's life and behavior that causes stress.

2. Limited Regional Research

Only a few research studies have been conducted in the peculiar educational setting of Mizoram. The students in Mizoram have a different set of cultural values, family expectations, and school environments than the other parts of the country. Without region-specific research, it is difficult to understand the actual problems that the students encounter and to develop support systems that are truly matching the students' needs. This gap justifies the independent study of Mizoram rather than depending entirely on results from other regions.

3. Inadequate Comparative Analysis

Gender differences have been a major area of research, and yet only a handful of studies have drawn comparisons between students from different domains such as Science, Arts, and Commerce or across the strata of government and private schools. Such comparisons are crucial because without them, we fail to notice the significant patterns that could disclose the impact of learning contexts and academic choices on the students' stress, personality, and coping. A more thorough comparative analysis would be useful in recognizing which groups require additional support and in elaborating the reasons behind such differences.

4. Scarcity of Qualitative Insights

A focus on quantitative data is characteristic of most of the studies reviewed. Although this gives us useful statistics, it often overlooks the more profound human experiences corresponding to students' lives. The absence of qualitative insights means we will not learn anything about the real feelings of the young people, the daily pressures they undergo, and their ways of coping with problems. The turn of students' voices and the angles of real-life experiences would render a better understanding of their well-being.

5. Neglect of Spiritual and Emotional Dimensions

The literature is replete with coping studies, yet the spiritual or emotional dimensions that are so close to students' understanding and management of stress have received little attention. Spirituality, the state of being in balance with oneself and others, and emotional consciousness are among the key factors that characterize the lives of people in Mizoram and determine how they cope with difficulties. Neglecting these dimensions means that the research would miss a key component of the students' lived experiences, thereby causing a gap in the understanding of the full spectrum of coping strategies that are significant within this cultural context.

6. Lack of Practical Interventions

The research that directly provides practical solutions for schools or policymakers is nevertheless very limited. Consequently, important insights remain locked in research papers instead of being disseminated to the affected classrooms where they can bring about positive changes for the students. There is a great demand for interventions that are well-planned in terms of enhancing students' coping skills, emotional resilience and the corresponding support being given to them based on their real challenges and daily experiences.

These underdeveloped areas indicate the necessity of an integrated approach that integrates psychological insight with educational practice. This inquiry aims to connect up the dots and make a significant contribution to the well-being of adolescents in higher secondary schools in Mizoram.

2.6. CONCLUSION

The review shows that perceived stress, personality traits, and coping skills all affect adolescents' mental health and academic adjustment. Studies conducted in India and other countries have reached a consensus that adolescents experience stress levels of moderate to high. The individual's personality and the way he/she copes with stress are the two main factors that determine how the stress is managed. Even though the researchers are working under different settings, they all agree that the need for emotional education and life skills programs is pronounced. Addressing the

gaps, especially with specific approaches for Mizoram, can enhance students' resilience and contribute to their well-being. Education should lead to acquisition of knowledge, emotional stability, and personal development.

The literature suggests that the understanding of psychological aspects is a matter of support for students as whole persons rather than only measuring stress or behavior. It is a matter of drilling down to the heart of the issue and making the schools places where the minds and hearts of the students are nurtured, thus helping to build confidence, empathy and inner strength in each learner.

The next chapter outlines the research methodologies employed in the present study.

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CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Method of Study

3.2 Population of the Study

3.3 Sample of the Study

3.4 Tools of the Study

3.5 Procedure of Data Collection

3.6 Statistical Techniques used for the Analyses of the Study

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

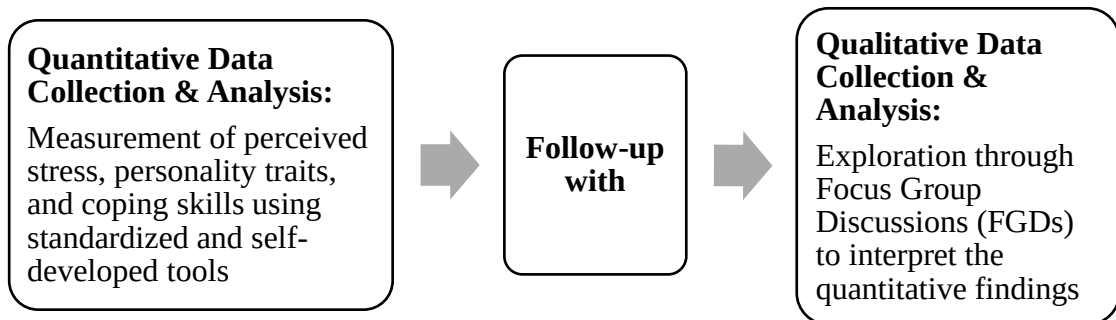
The research methodology describes the steps and procedures that will be used to carry out the study, making it a crucial component of any scholarly research. It clarifies the selection of the study, the definition of research problems, the data type that is relied upon, the methods used and the analysis of the data. It is of equal importance to define the problems the research is going to solve and to choose the appropriate research methodology.

This chapter describes the methodology used in the study titled “Perceived Stress, Personality Traits, and Coping Skills of Higher Secondary School Students in Mizoram.” It explains how the research goals and answers to research questions were addressed systematically. The complexity of human behavior, especially among adolescents, leads this chapter to clearly outline the research strategy, target population, sampling method, instruments, and the ways of collecting and analyzing data.

3.1 METHOD OF STUDY

For this research, a mixed-method approach was used to gain a full understanding of the relationship between perceived stress, personality traits, and coping skills of higher secondary school students in Mizoram. In this framework, a Sequential Explanatory Design was implemented. The design systematically integrated both quantitative and qualitative phases. It was deemed the most appropriate option as it provided the researcher with the opportunity to firstly examine the numerical trends and thereafter use the qualitative insights to clarify the underlying causes for those findings.

QUAN → qual: In this two-phase process, the study first gathered and analysed quantitative data, followed by a qualitative phase designed to explore and clarify the patterns that emerged from the statistical results.

Figure 3.1*Sequential Explanatory Design for the Present Study*

Quantitative data was collected by the researcher in the first phase with the help of three instruments: the PSS-10 (Cohen & Williamson, 1988), the NEO-FFI-3 (Costa & McCrae, 1992; revised 2010), and the Coping Skills Scale developed by the researcher. With the help of these measures, the researcher assessed stress levels in students, pinpointed their primary personality traits, and also examined the kinds of coping strategies they usually resorted to.

The second phase of the study was a qualitative phase that utilized Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with a selection of students from diverse districts, academic streams, and school types. The purpose of this phase was to uncover the underlying causes of the observed patterns in the quantitative data. The researcher aimed to highlight the core causes, individual perceptions, and experiences that are not fully represented by numerical information.

The qualitative phase was designed not to repeat the quantitative analysis but to complement it. It provided a broader view of the individual students in terms of their experience and understanding of stress and coping in their community and cultural context.

The sequential and integrated research design allowed the study to quite successfully combine the objectivity of quantitative analysis with the richness of qualitative understanding. This led to a more complete interpretation of the psychological and behavioural patterns among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.

3.2 POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The population for the current study consisted of all the Higher Secondary School students in Classes XI and XII from five selected districts of Mizoram, namely Aizawl, Champhai, Kolasib, Lunglei, and Serchhip, for the academic year 2023-2024.

According to the Statistics of School Education 2022-2023, these districts had 136 higher secondary schools altogether, where 19,224 students were enrolled. The selected five districts were primarily to have the work done easy in terms of time, travel, and resources. The schools reflect the diverse educational scenario of Mizoram. The distribution of higher secondary schools by districts is depicted in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

Distribution of Higher Secondary Schools in the Selected Districts

Sl. No.	Districts	No. of Schools	No. of Students
1	Aizawl	73	13,647
2	Champhai	10	1,384
3	Kolasib	10	1,473
4	Lunglei	29	2,480
5	Serchhip	14	1,320
	Total	136	19,224

Note. Statistics of School Education 2022–2023, School Education Department, Government of Mizoram

3.3 SAMPLE OF THE STUDY

The current study used a multi-phase sampling approach. In the initial phase, which was quantitative in nature, the researcher implemented a stratified random sampling technique to assure that students from the five districts of Mizoram, namely Aizawl, Champhai, Kolasib, Lunglei, and Serchhip, were properly

represented. The stratification was carried out on the basis of gender, stream of study (Arts, Science, and Commerce), and school management type (Government and Private). The researcher selected schools from each district randomly, maintaining the ratio of the number of schools in each district. After the schools had been decided, students who were willing to take part in the research were chosen randomly.

In the second phase which was qualitative phase, purposive sampling technique was employed to select students for Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). The selection of the students was made on the basis of their willingness, involvement, and capacity to share their stories.

3.3.1 Sample of the Schools

In the quantitative phase, the researcher made a random selection of 37 higher secondary schools across the five districts of Aizawl, Champhai, Kolasib, Lunglei, and Serchhip. This represented approximately 27.2 % of the total number of higher secondary schools in these districts (37 out of 136). The study focused on getting a mix of government and private schools. District-wise distribution of the schools selected for the study is presented in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2

Distribution of Higher Secondary Schools and Sampled Schools by District

Sl. No.	Districts	No. of Schools	No. of Sampled Schools	Percentage of Sampled Schools (%)
1	Aizawl	73	20	27.40
2	Champhai	10	3	30.00
3	Kolasib	10	3	30.00
4	Lunglei	29	7	24.13
5	Serchhip	14	4	28.57
	Total	136	37	27.20 %

3.3.2 Sample of Students

Out of the 37 schools that were selected, a sample of 1,386 students was taken. This was done to have a balanced representation that included boys and girls from both government and private schools, as well as from Arts, Science, and Commerce streams. The student groups sampled accurately reflected the overall population of higher secondary students in the chosen districts of Mizoram.

3.3.3 Sample for Focus Group Discussions

The qualitative phase of the study used Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) as a tool to explore the quantitative results more deeply. From the total number of 1,386 students of the study, 150 students were chosen through purposive sampling.

The students represented the different characteristics seen in the quantitative findings. They had different perceived stress levels, varied personalities, and applied various coping techniques. This selection was made to the extent that the statistical trends could be validated through the students' shared experiences. The researcher made efforts to include participants of both genders, students from various academic streams, and students from government and private schools. This guaranteed that a variety of viewpoints were taken into account.

A total of fifteen Focus Group Discussion sessions were carried out. The groups were organized in a way that the students felt comfortable sharing their thoughts and feelings. The students, through guided conversations, spoke about the difficulties they face, how they deal with pressure, and the role of personality and coping habits in their school life.

The discussions yielded an understanding that was deep and rich and could not have been revealed by numbers alone. By being attentive to students' real-life stories and reflections, the researcher was able to connect the quantitative findings to the adolescent's actual experiences. This method strengthened the interpretation and validity of the study.

3.4 TOOLS OF THE STUDY

As a measurement for the levels of perceived stress, personality traits and coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram and also to find out what they experience in a qualitative way, the study used the following tools:

1. Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10) by Cohen and Williamson (1988)
2. NEO Five-Factor Inventory-3 (NEO-FFI-3) – Form S (Adolescent) by Costa and McCrae (2010)
3. Coping Skills Scale developed by the Researcher
4. Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

3.4.1 Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10) by Cohen and Williamson (1988)

The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10), developed by Cohen and Williamson in 1988, was implemented to measure how students perceive stress in their day-to-day life. This scale has a widespread recognition for being able to delineate the individual experience of stress. The PSS-10 consists of 10 statements that are very carefully worded and inquire about the frequency with which the respondents felt unable to manage important areas of their lives, how much they trusted themselves in handling personal matters, or the extent of panic and stress they experienced. Five-point Likert scale, from 0 (Never) to 4 (Very often), is used for marking the responses. The four items (4, 5, 7, and 8) are phrased positively and their scores are then reversed before summing up to find the total score. The total score could be anywhere from 0 to 40, and the more the score, the more the perceived stress.

A plethora of studies have established the PSS-10 as a reliable measure, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.70 to 0.90 being reported, thus indicating very good internal consistency. The tool was applied in this research as it was, since it has already been shown suitable for adolescents. Its conciseness and simplicity made it convenient for higher secondary school students, thus assuring the validity and reliability of the responses.

3.4.2 NEO Five-Factor Inventory-3 (NEO-FFI-3) – Form S (Adolescent) by Costa and McCrae (2010)

To assess the personality traits of students, the researcher utilized the NEO Five-Factor Inventory-3 (NEO-FFI-3) – Form S (Adolescent) developed by Costa and McCrae in 2010. The NEO-FFI-3 is a revised version of the earlier NEO-FFI (1992) and is based on the five-factor theory model of personality. This inventory assesses five personality traits: Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to Experience, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness. It consists of 60 self-report items, 12 items for each trait, rated on a 5-point Likert scale where 0 denotes 'Strongly Disagree' and 4 means 'Strongly Agree'. A higher score on each trait suggests a stronger inclination towards that personality characteristic.

Since no standardized adolescent norms existed in the Indian context, the researcher calculated separate norms for the current study. Through the Z-score method, the cutoffs separating high, moderate, and low scores for each personality dimension were set with respect to data available for 1,386 higher secondary school students from Mizoram. The design of their own norms lent interpretations of the findings to a context-specific view and its unique sociocultural and educational backgrounds in Mizoram, as opposed to foreign reference values. The final classification of personality traits based on these locally derived norms is shown in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3

Norms for Personality Traits Based on Z-Scores (NEO-FFI-3)

Category	Z-Score Range	Raw-Score Range	Interpretation
High	$Z > +1.00$	33 and above	Students with strong expressions of the Big-Five personality traits.
Moderate	$-1.00 \leq Z \leq +1.00$	23 – 32	Students showing average levels of the personality traits.
Low	$Z < -1.00$	22 and below	Students with comparatively weaker expression of the personality traits.

Note. Z-scores were computed using the sample of 1,386 students in Mizoram to develop localized norms for adolescent populations.

3.4.3 Coping Skills Scale developed by the Researcher

The researcher developed a Coping Skills Scale to assess how higher secondary students in Mizoram manage various academic and emotional challenges. This tool was designed under the guidance of the research supervisor, both as part of methodological training and to create an instrument suited to the local context.

Collection and Refinement of Statements

The present study started with a thorough review of existing standardized scales and theories related to coping skills. The primary objective was to develop a trustworthy instrument that could evaluate coping skills among higher secondary students in Mizoram. Utilizing insights from established frameworks and previous tools, the researcher compiled an initial set of 50 statements covering key areas like emotional and spiritual health, academic concentration, physical wellness, and peer influence.

To ensure that all statements are clear, relevant, and meaningful, the preliminary version of the scale was carefully reviewed by multiple experts from universities outside the state and the Education Department at Mizoram University. Their feedback was instrumental in the process of refining the wording and content through the elimination of the repetitive, unclear, and less relevant statements. They also introduced new perspectives that improved the overall quality of the tool.

The final version of the scale, which incorporated their suggestions, featured expertly crafted statements. Every statement was evaluated on a five-point Likert scale that consisted of: 1 (Not at all true of me), 2 (Not true of me), 3 (Somewhat true of me), 4 (True of me), and 5 (Very true of me). To ensure consistent interpretation, items phrased negatively were scored reverse.

Pilot Study

The preliminary version of the Coping Skills Scale included 50 statements. Researcher first tested it through a pilot study before the final administration. This stage aimed to check the clarity of the items and the reliability of the tool. It also served to identify statements that needed improvement or removal. The pilot study involved 100 higher secondary school students in Mizoram.

The responses were organized in ascending order. The top and bottom 27 percent of the total scores were used to analyze the items. This helped assess how well each statement distinguished between students with high and low coping skills. Items that displayed strong discrimination were retained whereas items that failed to show consistent performance were removed.

After the analysis, 19 items were found to be non-significant from a statistical point of view and were eliminated from the tool. The final Coping Skills Scale consisted of 31 items that were dependable and significant for the comprehension of coping skills of higher secondary school students in Mizoram.

Item Analysis

After the pilot testing, the researcher scored the responses to the Coping Skills Scale using the five-point Likert method. The responses were arranged from all 100 students in ascending order and selected the upper and lower 27 percent of the sample for item analysis. This method helped us find which items effectively distinguished between students with high and low coping skills.

For every assertion, the mean and standard deviation were computed apart for the groups with high and low scores. The researcher then applied a t-test to measure the discriminative effectiveness of each item. Items with a t-value exceeding 2.58 were regarded as statistically significant at the 0.01 level and thus retained. Items that did not reach this standard were discarded due to insufficient discriminating power.

Through this process, the final Coping Skills Scale included 31 effective items that clearly showed differences in coping abilities among higher secondary students. Table 3.4 presents the calculated t-test values and significance levels for each item.

Table 3.4

Item Analysis of the Coping Skills Scale

Item No.	Upper 27%		Lower 27%		t value	Significance level
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
1	2.037	0.854	3.407	1.047	-5.269	**
2	4.531	1.262	6.693	1.261	-2.298	NS
3	2.63	0.926	3.926	0.958	-5.056	**
4	2.296	0.953	3.259	0.903	-3.811	**
5	2.926	1.072	3.704	0.912	-2.872	**
6	4.531	1.262	6.693	1.261	-2.298	NS
7	2.741	1.059	3.889	0.892	-4.308	**
8	2.185	0.736	3.852	0.989	-7.028	**

9	2.889	1.219	4.222	0.892	-4.586	**
10	2.815	1.145	3.704	1.137	-2.862	**
11	2.556	1.368	3.889	0.974	-4.125	**
12	2.593	1.248	3.852	0.818	-4.384	**
13	1.926	0.874	2.778	1.05	-3.24	**
14	2.333	0.961	3.407	1.185	-3.658	**
15	4.531	1.262	6.693	1.261	-2.298	NS
16	2.444	1.311	3.556	1.155	-3.305	**
17	2.37	1.182	3.444	0.974	-3.645	**
18	1.815	0.786	3.111	0.934	-5.518	**
19	2.074	0.997	3.185	1.039	-4.009	**
20	1.704	1.031	3.0	1.074	-4.524	**
21	2.333	0.734	3.148	0.864	-3.735	**
22	1.926	1.035	3.148	1.262	-3.891	**
23	2.556	1.219	3.556	1.086	-3.182	**
24	2.37	1.182	3.704	0.993	-4.489	**
25	4.531	1.262	6.693	1.261	-2.298	NS
26	4.531	1.262	6.693	1.261	-2.298	NS
27	4.531	1.262	6.693	1.261	-2.298	NS
28	4.531	1.262	6.693	1.261	-2.298	NS
29	4.531	1.262	6.693	1.261	-2.298	NS
30	2.222	1.121	3.037	1.055	-2.75	**
31	2.778	0.892	3.667	0.92	-3.606	**
32	75.37	7.816	109.852	9.867	-14.234	**
33	-1.203	0.536	1.163	0.677	-14.234	**
34	4.881	1.278	7.242	1.309	-3.772	**
35	4.531	1.262	6.693	1.261	-2.298	NS
36	4.881	1.278	7.242	1.309	-3.772	**
37	4.531	1.262	6.693	1.261	-2.298	NS
38	4.531	1.262	6.693	1.261	-2.298	NS
39	4.531	1.262	6.693	1.261	-2.298	NS

40	4.531	1.262	6.693	1.261	-2.298	NS
41	4.881	1.278	7.242	1.309	-3.772	**
42	4.531	1.262	6.693	1.261	-2.298	NS
43	4.881	1.278	7.242	1.309	-3.772	**
44	4.881	1.278	7.242	1.309	-3.772	**
45	4.881	1.278	7.242	1.309	-3.772	**
46	4.531	1.262	6.693	1.261	-2.298	NS
47	4.531	1.262	6.693	1.261	-2.298	NS
48	4.531	1.262	6.693	1.261	-2.298	NS
49	4.531	1.262	6.693	1.261	-2.298	NS
50	4.531	1.262	6.693	1.261	-2.298	NS

*NS not significant at 0.01 level, ** significant at 0.01 level*

Table 3.4 displays the obtained t-test statistics and significance levels for the complete set of 50 items in the Coping Skills Scale. The items that exhibited significance at the 0.01 level were deemed valid and kept, and on the other hand, the ones with t-values less than 2.58 were discarded. Consequently, 31 items that played a key role in distinguishing between high and low scorers were included in the final scale, while the rest of 19 items were left out as they did not qualify for the required significance level.

Reliability

Reliability indicates the extent to which the measurement tool provides the same results steadily and consistently over time. To ensure a standardized metric is accepted as accurate and trustworthy, it is crucial that the results show consistent reliability. In this study, the scale was administered again to a group of 100 higher secondary school students in Mizoram to check its stability. The researcher used appropriate methods to assess its reliability, which are detailed in the next section.

Test-retest method

The test-retest technique was used to see how consistently the scale worked over time. First, the scale was given to a group of 100 higher secondary school students in Mizoram. After four weeks, the same students took the scale again. The time gap made it less likely that students would have the same answers as before and thus contributed to the precision of the reliability check.

The correlation coefficient was 0.949, which meant that reliability was extremely high and significant at the 0.01 level. The students' scores from both administrations are shown in Table 3.5, and reliability coefficient calculated using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation is presented in Table 3.5 as well.

Table 3.5

Scores of Students on the Test and Retest

Sl. No.	Scores on first test	Scores on retest	Sl. No.	Scores on first test	Scores on retest
1	147	145	51	99	93
2	124	119	52	95	98
3	124	120	53	89	96
4	119	114	54	94	88
5	112	114	55	89	95
6	115	109	56	91	95
7	105	110	57	93	96
8	114	110	58	94	96
9	112	107	59	92	98
10	109	105	60	90	99
11	105	107	61	87	93
12	112	119	62	86	88
13	109	103	63	86	87
14	107	101	64	88	90

15	101	107	65	92	97
16	105	112	66	87	93
17	97	106	67	90	96
18	103	100	68	79	85
19	103	105	69	89	90
20	102	103	70	90	93
21	105	106	71	85	91
22	113	119	72	85	91
23	105	108	73	94	96
24	98	105	74	94	96
25	94	100	75	78	81
26	100	99	76	74	76
27	102	104	77	79	81
28	98	105	78	86	96
29	104	99	79	86	77
30	101	108	80	88	89
31	103	108	81	83	89
32	93	100	82	84	90
33	97	105	83	76	85
34	99	103	84	75	83
35	97	100	85	78	87
36	102	109	86	69	76
37	96	104	87	80	86
38	93	97	88	80	87
39	92	97	89	72	75
40	91	99	90	78	70
41	98	89	91	63	69
42	89	96	92	76	80
43	97	105	93	76	84
44	104	109	94	80	87
45	101	108	95	76	82

46	95	99	96	73	79
47	101	106	97	69	76
48	93	96	98	69	76
49	92	95	99	56	60
50	94	97	100	56	64

Table 3.5 presents the test and retest scores of high school students, while Table 3.6 reports the reliability coefficient, reflecting the correlation between the two sets of scores.

Table 3.6

Correlation between Test and Retest

Categories	Test	Retest
Test	1	.949**
Retest	.949**	1

*** significant at 0.01 level*

Table 3.6 indicates that the reliability coefficient was 0.949, demonstrating statistical significance at the 0.01 level.

Split Half Method

Using the Split Half Method, 31 items of the original scale were divided into two equal groups. The first half consisted of the odd-numbered items, while the second half consisted of the even-numbered items. This method let the researcher check the internal consistency of the tool in one administration.

The scores of each half were correlated using Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation method. The reliability of the entire scale was estimated by using the Spearman-Brown prophecy formula to correct the calculated coefficient. With a reliability coefficient of 0.745, it demonstrates a substantial degree of internal consistency. This established that the Coping Skills Scale was a trustworthy instrument to assess the coping behavior of higher secondary students in Mizoram.

The split-half scores of the 100 students who participated in the pilot study are presented in Table 3.7.

Table 3.7

Split-Half Scores for Determining the Reliability of the Coping Skills Scale

Sl. No.	Scores on First Half	Scores on Second Half	Sl. No.	Scores on First Half	Scores on Second Half
1	82	70	51	59	44
2	67	60	52	53	45
3	67	61	53	46	45
4	70	64	54	48	48
5	61	55	55	47	45
6	64	55	56	55	40
7	58	51	57	51	45
8	65	54	58	51	46
9	63	53	59	45	50
10	57	54	60	51	42
11	61	48	61	47	44
12	62	53	62	50	40
13	57	54	63	51	38
14	62	49	64	52	39
15	57	48	65	48	45
16	59	49	66	49	42

17	54	48	67	44	48
18	52	53	68	47	35
19	55	51	69	50	42
20	55	50	70	50	43
21	57	52	71	46	41
22	73	45	72	48	39
23	60	50	73	52	46
24	55	47	74	51	46
25	55	42	75	45	36
26	54	49	76	46	31
27	57	48	77	44	36
28	49	51	78	49	39
29	57	51	79	44	44
30	53	51	80	54	38
31	57	50	81	46	40
32	54	42	82	48	38
33	55	46	83	38	40
34	58	45	84	40	37
35	53	48	85	41	40
36	54	51	86	44	28
37	56	45	87	48	35
38	52	44	88	47	36

39	50	46	89	42	34
40	50	44	90	46	36
41	52	49	91	31	33
42	49	43	92	46	33
43	52	48	93	41	37
44	56	51	94	49	34
45	55	50	95	41	37
46	57	42	96	43	34
47	55	50	97	42	31
48	47	49	98	41	31
49	54	42	99	37	23
50	47	49	100	37	23

Table 3.7 presents the split-half scores of 100 students who were divided according to the odd and even-numbered items. The reliability coefficient calculated through the Spearman-Brown formula was 0.745, indicating that the Coping Skills Scale is characterized by internal consistency and hence is very reliable for the measurement of coping behaviours. The value is statistically significant at the 0.01 level, indicating that the scale provides stable and dependable results.

Validity

Validity refers to how well an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure. In this study, the researcher established the content validity of the Coping Skills Scale through expert evaluation. The scale was subjected to a review by experts from different universities as well as the Department of Education at Mizoram University. Each statement was scrutinized for its relevance, clarity, and

representativeness. The experts' comments contributed to the improvement of wording and coverage of the items, making sure that the scale correctly reflected the coping areas of higher secondary school students.

The tool not only demonstrated strong content validity but also a high reliability coefficient ($r = 0.949$). Therefore, it is regarded as credible and appropriate for measuring the coping skills in this context.

Scoring

The Coping Skills Scale consists of a scoring system based on the Likert Method. Each question is assessed through a five-point scale where: 1 (Not at all true of me), 2 (Not true of me), 3 (Somewhat true of me), 4 (True of me), and 5 (Very true of me). For simpler analysis, items 11 and 12, which are negative, are scored in reverse.

To obtain the total score of a respondent, simply add up the scores of all items. The total score may vary from 31 (if all items are rated as 1) to 155 (if all items are rated as 5). A higher total score indicates a better ability to cope with academic, emotional, physical, and peer pressures. Conversely, a lower score indicates less coping capacity. Table 3.8 shows the scoring key for the scale.

Table 3.8

Scoring Key for the Coping Skills Scale

Sl. No.	Response Option	Score Assigned
1	Very true of me	5
2	True of me	4
3	Somewhat true of me	3
4	Rarely true of me	2
5	Not at all true of me	1

Norms and Interpretation of the Scale

Norms for the Coping Skills Scale were developed using z-score conversion based on data collected from 1,386 higher secondary students across five districts of Mizoram. This procedure helped classify students into different levels of coping skills: high, moderate, and low, based on their total scores. The norms serve as a reference for interpreting individual and group scores in relation to the overall sample. Table 3.9 shows the normative categories derived from the distribution of scores.

Table 3.9

Norms and Interpretation of the Coping Skills Scale

Category	Z-Score Range	Range of Scores
High Coping Skills	+0.50 and above	109 and above
Moderate Coping Skills	-0.49 to +0.49	79-108
Low Coping Skills	-0.50 and below	78 and below

Interpretation of the Norms

- A z-score of -0.50 and lower is interpreted as low coping skills, implying that the students in this category have trouble handling stress and are not very good at adapting to new situations.
- The scores from $z = -0.49$ to $+0.49$ correspond to moderate coping skills, indicating that the students are having the same ability as the average person to handle the pressure and keep the mind in a balanced state.
- A z-score of +0.50 and above is an indicator of high coping skills, reflecting that these students are using effective strategies for dealing with stress and are also showing emotional strength in the process.

This classification offers a clear and appropriate method for comprehending the varying levels of coping skills. It helps identify students in need of support and encourages the development of a plan for their future educational and psychological assistance.

3.4.4 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

The interview schedule was developed using particular themes that were derived from the quantitative data analyzed by the researcher. The focus group discussions were held in sessions of 10 students each. Students in these groups included boys and girls from government and private schools, spanning Arts, Science, and Commerce disciplines. Thus, it was possible to have different opinions come up in a very comfortable and open setting. A total of fifteen focus group discussions were conducted. The discussions revolved around the coping skills of students, their emotional and academic well-being, and their experiences in school and the community. The qualitative phase helped to confirm the patterns seen in the quantitative results and provided a more in-depth understanding of how students manage stress in their everyday lives.

3.5 PROCEDURE OF DATA COLLECTION

This research involved collecting data from higher secondary schools across five districts in Mizoram, namely Aizawl, Champhai, Kolasib, Lunglei, and Serchhip. Stratified random sampling was used to select schools, ensuring that each district was sufficiently represented. Following approval from the school authorities and securing informed consent from the participating students, the researcher moved forward with data collection.

During the quantitative phase, three instruments were used: the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10) by Cohen and Williamson (1988), the NEO-FFI-3 - Form S (Adolescent) by Costa and McCrae (2010), and a Coping Skills Scale developed by the researcher. At every school visited, the researcher explained the purpose of the

study in simple terms to the students. In a quiet classroom setting, questionnaires were distributed to help students focus more effectively during the session. Students were assured that their responses would remain confidential and solely used for research purposes. Each session lasted about 50 to 60 minutes, and the filled-up questionnaires were collected right after.

In the qualitative phase, focus group discussions (FGDs) were utilized to gain a deeper insight into the factors that generated the quantitative findings. A total of fifteen FGDs were held via Google Meet, with ten students volunteering to take part in each session. Before the appointment of the discussions, the researcher contacted the selected students to give them a brief of the study. Each student was asked for consent separately and only those who agreed were included. This practice assured that every student was comfortable and was aware of the topic that was going to be discussed. The discussions were based on predetermined themes derived from the quantitative findings and occurred in a friendly atmosphere. Each discussion lasted around one and a half hours, and the researcher ensured that all students could express their views in an open and respectful manner. The schedule of the fifteen focus group discussion sessions is presented in Table 3.10.

Table 3.10

Fifteen Sessions of Focus Group Discussion

Sessions	Date	No. of students	Duration
1 st Session	2/9/25	10	1 hour 30 minutes
2 nd Session	6/9/25	10	1 hour 35 minutes
3 rd Session	10/9/25	10	1 hour 30 minutes
4 th Session	12/9/25	10	1 hour 30 minutes
5 th Session	17/9/25	10	1 hour 40 minutes
6 th Session	20/9/25	10	1 hour 35 minutes
7 th Session	23/9/25	10	1 hour 45 minutes
8 th Session	26/9/25	10	1 hour 40 minutes
9 th Session	2/10/25	10	1 hour 33 minutes
10 th Session	7/10/25	10	1 hour 35 minutes

11 th Session	10/10/25	10	1 hour 45 minutes
12 th Session	14/10/25	10	1 hour 30 minutes
13 th Session	18/10/25	10	1 hour 45 minutes
14 th Session	22/10/25	10	1 hour 40 minutes
15 th Session	28/10/25	10	1 hour 42 minutes
Total		150	

This combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection helped the researcher obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the perceived stress, personality traits, and coping skills of higher secondary school students in Mizoram.

3.6 STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES USED FOR THE ANALYSES OF THE STUDY

In this research, data was analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The research aimed to find out the perception of stress, personality traits, and coping skills among higher secondary students in Mizoram. The researcher carried out statistical tests meticulously, depending on SPSS to make sure the data was correct and dependable.

Standardized measures were used to collect data, such as the Perceived Stress Scale, NEO-FFI-3, and a Coping Skills Scale developed by the researcher. This data was first coded, then organized in tables and finally analyzed statistically. The data from the focus group discussions was transcribed and analyzed thematically. Below, we describe both the descriptive and inferential statistics used.

3.6.1 Descriptive Statistics:

The descriptive statistics were used to summarize, describe, and present the data in a manner that was sensible and comprehensible. Such techniques assisted the researcher to determine the general trends and patterns of the variables considered. The statistical tools that were used were:

- **Mean (M):** To determine the mean of students on the level of their stress, their personality characteristics, and coping skills.
- **Standard Deviation (SD):** This is used to measure the level of evenly distributed scores or difference between the mean score and other scores and determines the level of similarity or variation among pupils.
- **Frequency and Percentage Distribution:** To discuss the demographic features of the sample, such as gender, area of study and type of school administration.

These descriptive statistics were employed in categorizing the students into the different levels of high, moderate and low perceived stress or coping capacity.

3.6.2 Inferential Statistics

Inferential statistical procedures were employed to test hypotheses of the study and generalize on the population analysing the information presented in the sample. These techniques enabled studying the connections between perceived stress, personality characteristics and coping abilities and comparing these variables in different groups. They were done through the following:

- **Independent sample t-test**

Independent sample t-test was also implemented to determine the differences in the mean perceived stress, personality traits, and coping abilities based on the categorical variables such as gender (male and female), stream of study (Arts, Science, and Commerce) and school management type (government and private).

- **Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (r)**

The use of this statistical method was to test the strength and direction of the relationship among the three key variables, which are perceived stress, personality traits and coping skills. The correlation process helped to explain the interconnection between high or low levels of stress and certain personality characters or coping skills.

3.6.3 Qualitative Data Analysis

The qualitative data obtained through FGDs were analysed using the Thematic Analysis Model by Braun and Clarke (2006), adapted to suit the cultural and educational context of Mizoram. The six phases of analysis included:

1. Familiarization with the data
2. Generating initial codes
3. Searching for themes
4. Reviewing themes
5. Defining and naming themes
6. Producing the final report

By adapting the thematic framework, the study ensured that the themes genuinely reflected the authentic lives, opinions, and cultural characteristics of Mizoram's higher secondary students.

The next chapter gives a comprehensive analysis and interpretation of the data collected through the aforementioned research methods.

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CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

- 4.1 Analysis and Interpretation of Objective 1**
- 4.2 Analysis and Interpretation of Objective 2**
- 4.3 Analysis and Interpretation of Objective 3**
- 4.4 Analysis and Interpretation of Objective 4**
- 4.5 Analysis and Interpretation of Objective 5**
- 4.6 Analysis and Interpretation of Objective 6**
- 4.7 Analysis and Interpretation of Objective 7**
- 4.8 Analysis and Interpretation of Objective 8**
- 4.9 Analysis and Interpretation of Objective 9**
- 4.10 Conclusion**

CHAPTER – IV

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE STUDY

The chapter examined captured data on the perception of stress, personality traits, and coping in Higher Secondary School Students in Mizoram. Of these qualitative and quantitative methodologies, the quantitative ones led to a statistical description of patterns and the qualitative-in-depth account of the students. Statistical methods were employed for analyzing these results, linking quantitative descriptions noticed in the study with levels, means, variance, and relationships between variables. By analyzing qualitative information from FGDs and student recordings, the researcher brought emotional richness to the numerical data, giving voice to the students' unspoken concerns.

The coded data was organized into various themes and reasoned with the purpose of ensuring reliability and consistency during analysis. This then allowed the scores to be computed in a standard manner. Each emerging theme was given an interpretation through Braun and Clarke's (2006) degree of thematic analysis as a tool to make sense of the qualitative data.

Data are structured on the basis of the objectives and hypotheses of the study and then given in the form of table(s) and figure(s) followed by interpretations connecting the results to contextual aspects of the target group. By doing so, this chapter suggests how it could be made more accessible for those interested in key interventions (such as stress, personality growth, or other coping-related objectives) and supported students' claims with robust responses from numerical evidence and students' own experiences. Conceptually, this chapter provides a grand view of the adolescent well-being from within the unique social and cultural context of Mizoram.

4.1 Analysis and Interpretation of Objective 1

Objective 1: *Level of Perceived Stress among Higher Secondary School Students in Mizoram.*

The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) was used by the researcher to study the stress perceptions and experiences of the adolescents in Mizoram during the research. The researcher then analyzed scores very carefully by following the standard procedures of the PSS. Depending on the prescribed norms, the students were then divided into three groups - high stress, moderate stress, and low stress. Classification gives a clearer picture of students' stress level, which moves from manageable severity to stronger issues. The classification gives insights into their capability to face challenges, their emotional strength, and overall well-being. Details of the students' stress levels are shown in Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1.

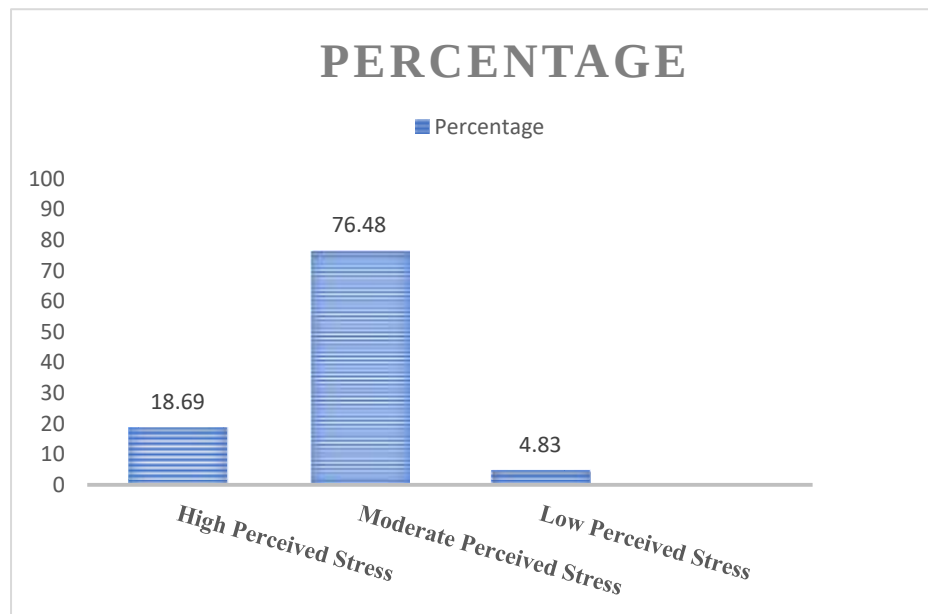
Table 4.1

Level of Perceived Stress among Higher Secondary School Students in Mizoram

Category	Range of Scores	Number of Students	Percentage
High Perceived Stress	27 and above	259	18.69
Moderate perceived Stressed	14 - 26	1060	76.48
Low Perceived Stressed	13 and below	67	4.83
Total		1386	100

Figure 4.1

Percentage showing the level of Perceived Stress among Higher Secondary School Students in Mizoram



In reference to Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1, a study of 1,386 higher secondary students from Mizoram highlights that different levels of stress were prevalent among them. 259 students (18.69%) declared themselves to be majorly stressed with life. This information indicates that about one-fifth of the students believed they regularly encountered major obstacles in handling their school and social duties. A total of 1,060 students, representing 76.48%, indicated experiencing moderate stress, a common experience among most of the adolescents. A very small number, 67 students (4.83%), belonged to the category of low stress, which would suggest that few students could breathe free from stressful conditions. It is therefore established that the stress issue is popular in higher secondary students, with moderation being the order to be encountered with this stress. An appreciable number of students wrestle with high stress, calling for proper intervention for the same.

4.2 Analysis and Interpretation of Objective 2

Objective 2: *Level of Personality Traits among Higher Secondary School Students in Mizoram.*

The study utilized the form NEO-FFI-3 Form S-Adolescent for assessing various personality traits among higher secondary students in Mizoram, with the NEO test measuring five principal domains of personality constructs: Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness. These domains together explain how well each person thinks, feels, and acts in various situations. The students' responses were carefully scored as per the local norms identified specifically by the researcher. Based on the established norms, the scores were classified into three levels - High, Moderate, and Low. Such findings also help in recognizing the general personality schemas found on the adolescent profile. This research will help to understand how they relate with their peers, how they are working on controlling their emotions, and their learning style when all faced with day-to-day challenges. From the responses, a clear picture demonstrates the emotional and behavioral tendencies of the students.

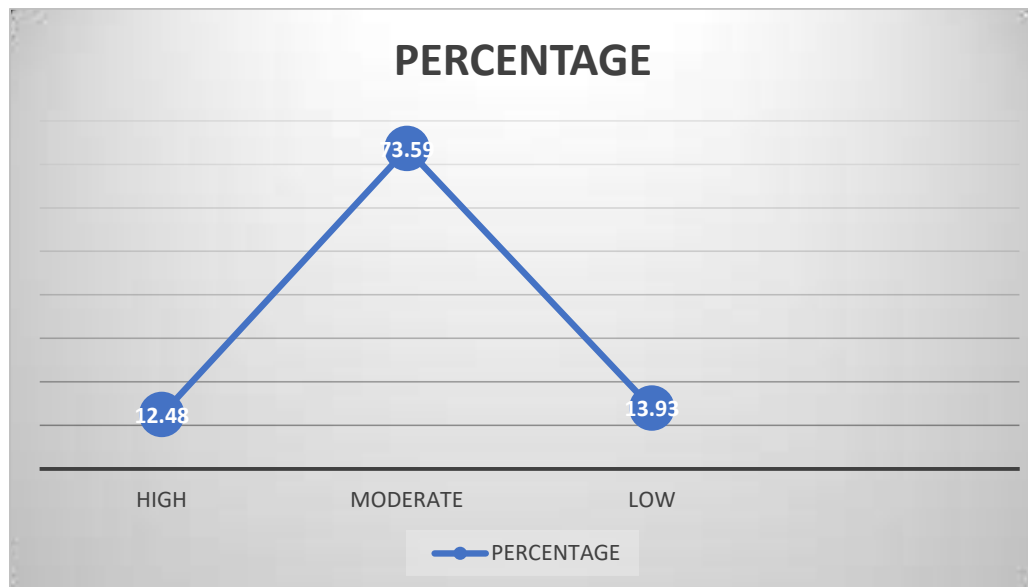
Table 4.2

Level of Personality Traits on the domain of Neuroticism among Higher Secondary School Students in Mizoram

Category	Range of Scores	Number of Students	Percentage
High	33 and above	173	12.48
Moderate	23 - 32	1020	73.59
Low	22 and below	193	13.93
Total		1386	100

Figure 4.2

Percentage showing the level of Personality Traits on the domain of Neuroticism among Higher Secondary School Students in Mizoram



A distinct pattern in the Neuroticism scores of higher secondary students was observed in the sample of 1,386 based on the NEO-FFI-3 (Form S, Adolescent) in Table 4.3 and Figure 4.3. Out of a total of 173 students (12.48%) were reported to have high Neuroticism scores. It is a general opinion that these students possess the traits of being emotionally unstable, nervous, and having severe mood fluctuations. They are likely to find it even more difficult to cope with academic and social pressures than their fellows. Most of the students, 1,020 (73.59%), were in the moderate range in terms of their Neuroticism. It is believed that these students undergo the usual adolescent torment and self-doubt, yet are still more or less emotionally stable. The remaining 193 students (13.93%), scored in the low range, which is characterized by traits like calmness, good emotional control, and ability to cope with stress.

To sum up, most of the higher secondary students in Mizoram are of average emotional stability. Nonetheless, the existence of a small group of highly neurotic individuals in the school points to the necessity of providing emotional support for

the entire school population. Among the kinds of such emotional support are making counseling available, teaching life skills, and implementing stress management programs. This will help the students to deal with the various challenges in life, both emotional and academic, in a more resourceful manner.

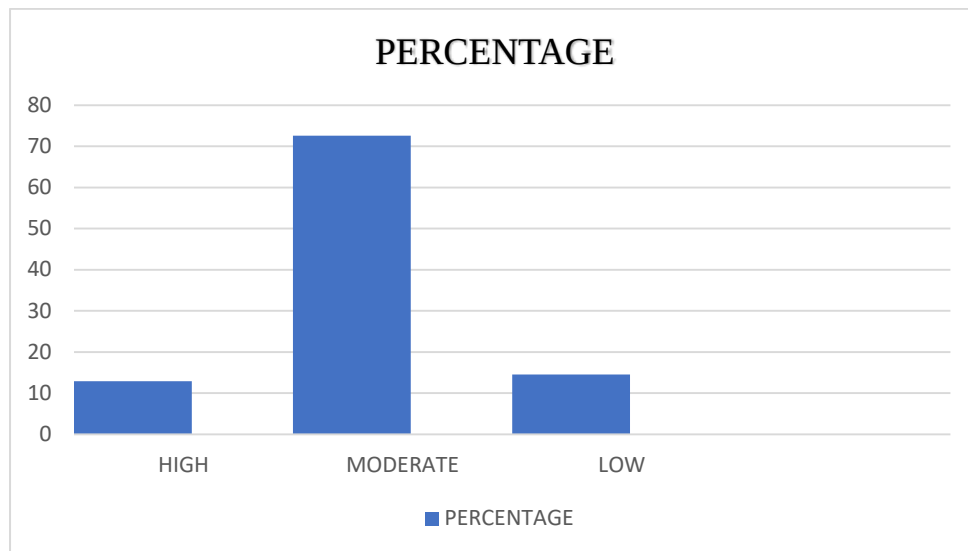
Table 4.3

Level of Personality Traits on the domain of Extraversion among Higher Secondary School Students in Mizoram

Category	Range of Scores	Number of Students	Percentage
High	25 and above	179	12.92
Moderate	16 - 24	1006	72.58
Low	15 and below	201	14.50
Total		1386	100

Figure 4.3

Percentage showing the level of Personality Traits on the domain of Extraversion among Higher Secondary School Students in Mizoram



The data in Table 4.3 and Figure 4.3 indicate how different levels of extraversion are distributed in the higher secondary school going students of Mizoram as shown in NEO-FFI-3 Form S-Adolescent. Out of 1,386 students, most students, 1,006(72.58 %), fell into the moderate range of extraversion. This means that quite a large number of students displayed a moderate social orientation. They might be quite outgoing and sociable leading active lifestyle; and they appreciate some solitude too.

The high extraverted score group comprises 179 students (12.92 %). These students will chat about practically anything, share a lot, and participate in energetic intimate associations. They savor every moment they can interact with somebody in the team and show signs of just a little touch of leadership through confidence. The remainder of the 201 students (14.50 %) fell in the low range; suggesting they might exhibit behavior toward the introvert side. The students in this low range might opt for the quiet and peaceful setting in engaging in different activities and might seem shy and very reflective.

On the other hand, when it comes to Extraversion and type of temperament, the findings suggest that extroverts are overrepresented among students. Introverts are found to be underrepresented in the sample group; it should, therefore, be that teaching displays and instructional styles should be tailored to introverts.

Table 4.4

Level of Personality Traits on the domain of Openness among Higher Secondary School Students in Mizoram

Category	Range of Scores	Number of Students	Percentage
High	25 and above	222	16.02
Moderate	17 - 24	926	66.81
Low	16 and below	238	17.17
Total		1386	100

Figure 4.4

Percentage showing the level of Personality Traits on the domain of Openness among Higher Secondary School Students in Mizoram

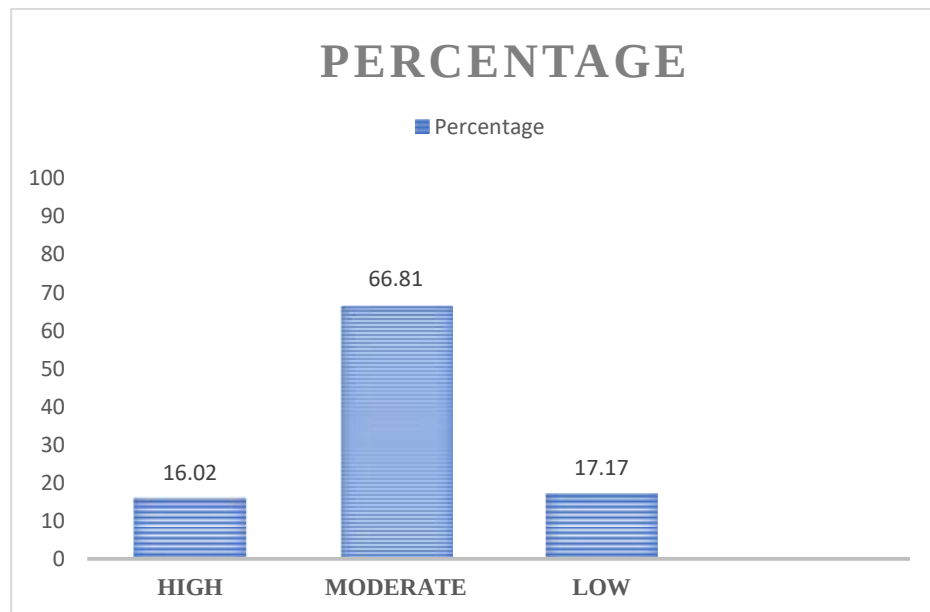


Table 4.4 and Figure 4.4 illustrate the levels of Openness among higher secondary students in Mizoram. The larger group consisted of 926 students (66.81%) who scored in the moderate range; this signifies a state of balanced curiosity alongside openness to new ideas and respects for such major routine activities of the past. With a small high-scoring group of 222 at 16.02%, it can be speculated that they must share a deep quest for creativity, intellectual insight, and experience in newness of thought and action. Out of the total, the remaining students, 238 (17.17%), scored low in Openness showing their preference for order, familiarity, or practical thinking.

Generally, the Openness level among the students is moderate, yet the differences are clearly seen throughout the entire population. This diversity will create the teaching and learning strategies which will be suitable for different personality types.

Table 4.5

Level of Personality Traits on the domain of Agreeableness among Higher Secondary School Students in Mizoram

Category	Range of Scores	Number of Students	Percentage
High	28 and above	193	13.93
Moderate	19 - 27	986	71.13
Low	18 and below	207	14.94
Total		1386	100

Figure 4.5

Percentage showing the level of Personality Traits on the domain of Agreeableness among Higher Secondary School Students in Mizoram

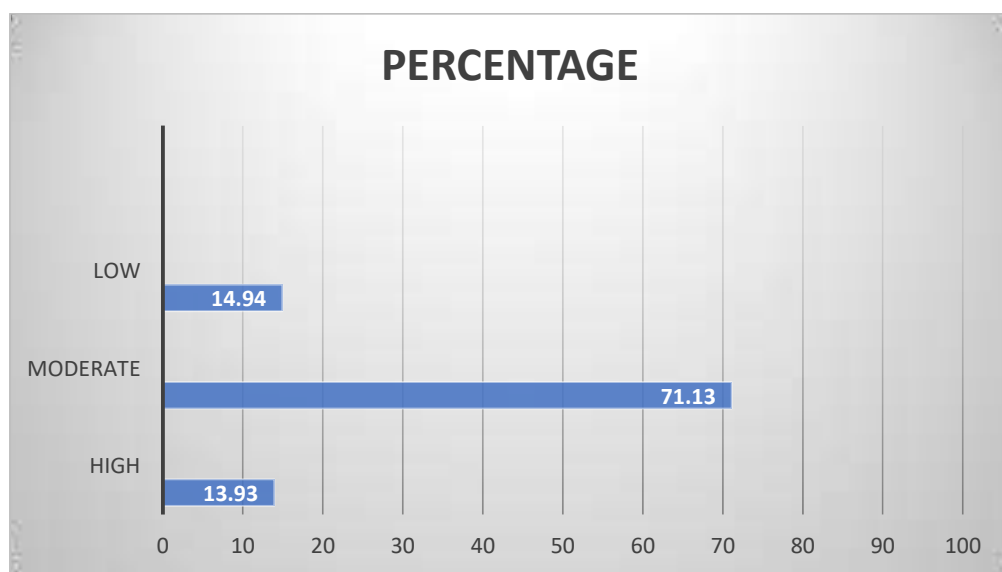


Table 4.5 and Figure 4.5 give a vivid picture of the distribution of Agreeableness scores among the students—the highest number of them, 1,024 (73.88%), belong to the moderate category. This type of personality shows a mix of positive traits like cooperation and empathy along with a bit of assertiveness. These students would form positive relationships, work constructively in groups, and be able to adjust to team situations.

A small fraction of 178 students (12.84%) obtained high scores, the relational attributes kindness, trust, and helpfulness being in full bloom at the topmost beside the ladder of the attributes considered. By contrast, 184 students (13.28%) are in the low category, portraying them as assertive or competitive. They work independently on their individual objectives, yet they have the potential to contribute innovative to team projects.

Summing it up, the findings made it clear that majority of the students were moderately agreeable. But the inclusion of both very agreeable individuals and individuals who were not at all agreeable brings out a spectrum of social attitudes and methods of interaction that might mold classroom co-operation, peer interaction, and conflict resolution strategies.

Table 4.6

Level of Personality Traits on the domain of Conscientiousness among Higher Secondary School Students in Mizoram

Category	Range of Scores	Number of Students	Percentage
High	32 and above	180	12.99
Moderate	24 - 31	1025	73.95
Low	23 and below	181	13.06
Total		1386	100

Figure 4.6

Percentage showing the level of Personality Traits on the domain of Conscientiousness among Higher Secondary School Students in Mizoram

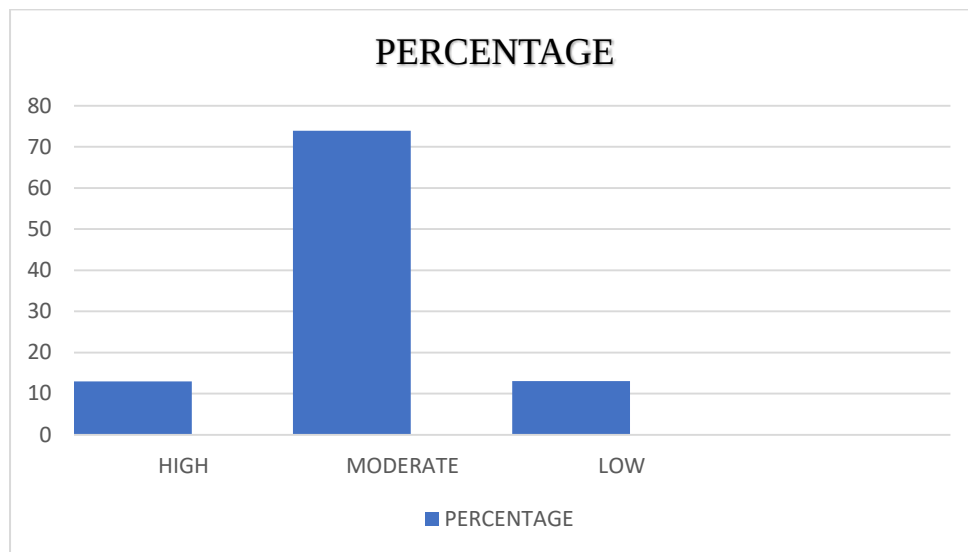


Table 4.6 and Figure 4.6 provide the data regarding Conscientiousness levels of the students. Of all the students, the majority of 1048 students (75.60%) were found in the moderate range; this means that they are mostly responsible, organized, and goal-oriented with a little bit of flexibility. Such students will probably be the ones to get the best out of their teachers, to be able to get the right work done at the right time, and to mix working hard with being adaptable.

A group of 167 students (12.05%) was classified as a few who fall in the high range. They are the ones with the traits of self-discipline, dependability, and patience, to name a few. These high-scorers could achieve academic greatness by being in the strictest rule-following manner, and they would still be seen as the ones who lead. On the flip side, the third group of 171 students (12.34%) scored low. From this it turns out that there is a lack in orderly planning or persistence. Those who have a low level of conscientiousness may need extra assistance through time management and goal setting. However, there are quirky students who would show spontaneousness during their learning.

This study summarizes that while the largest bulk of students is moderately Conscientious, the amount of variability suggests various ways of discharging duties, organizing, and working towards an end. This variability impacts academic performance as well as classroom involvement.

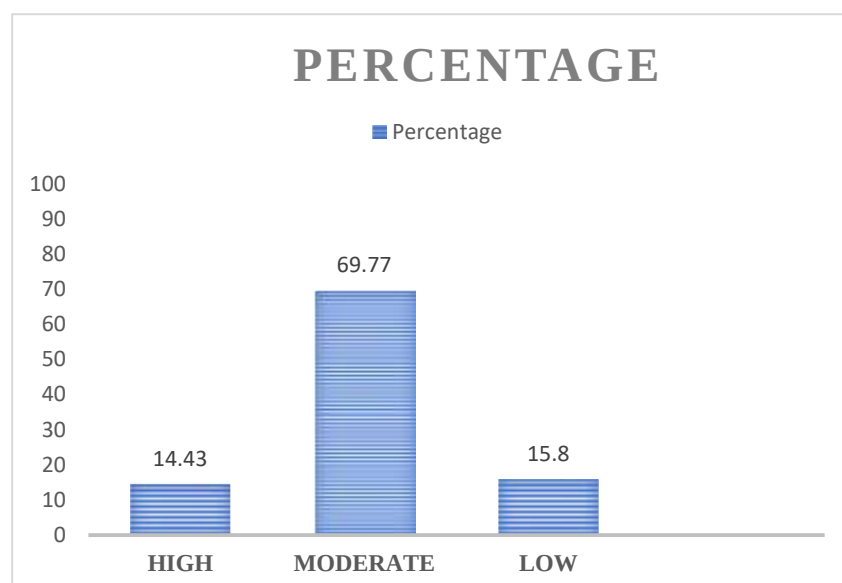
Table 4.7

Level of Overall Personality Traits among Higher Secondary School Students in Mizoram

Category	Range of Scores	Number of Students	Percentage
High	127 and above	200	14.43
Moderate	111 - 126	967	69.77
Low	110 and below	219	15.80
Total		1386	100

Figure 4.7

Percentage showing the level of Overall Personality Traits among Higher Secondary School Students in Mizoram



The above table and figure give overall personality traits of Mizo higher secondary students. The data indicates that 967 students, which is 69.77% of the total count, are in the moderate range of the assessment scale for the higher secondary students. Hence, they may probably possess a balanced personality regarding social, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects. It is possible that such students are quite good at taking stress, easy to deal with, do not mind working in a group, and are even very active in the whole process of teaching and learning.

The high scorers separated from the mass of moderate ones are 200 students (14.43%). Thus, their sociability, creativity, conscientiousness, or emotional resilience might still be considered relatively strong. 219 students (15.80%) were low scorers, implying that their personality traits might not have developed much and could be given a bit of guide or support.

Results show that, in general, mostly the students have moderate personality traits, with different levels of variation seen in the students. Profiles have been reported as high in some cases and low developed in others. This is yet another strong reason why educational strategies, mentoring, and counseling should be tailored to foster positive growth of personalities among adolescents.

4.3 Analysis and Interpretation of Objective 3

Objective 3: Level of Coping Skills among Higher Secondary School Students in Mizoram

The Coping Skills Scale was administered to higher secondary school students in Mizoram. For assessing the diverse aspects of coping, the scale included different aspects of coping including Academic, Physical, Spiritual, Emotional Coping, and Peer Pressure Coping. After the students were given the Scale and their scores were calculated, the student's scores were compared with the scoring keys. Students were grouped according to their performance into three categories: High Coping Skills, Moderate Coping Skills, and Low Coping Skills. This classification

has an overview of the way students can take challenges and adapt to difficult situations and make wise choices when facing difficulties. The results of the assessment are depicted in Table 4.8 and Figure 4.8.

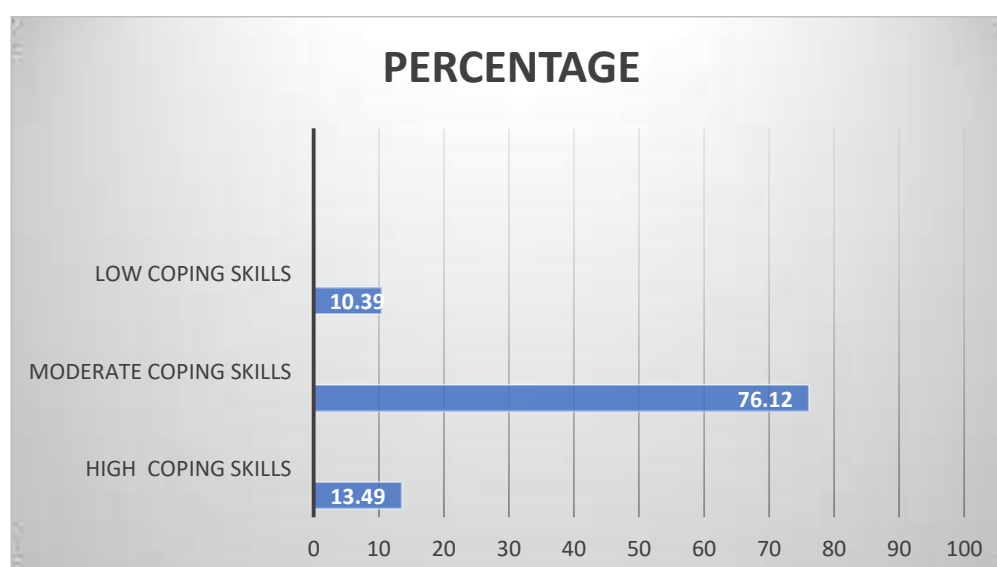
Table 4.8

Level of Coping Skills among Higher Secondary School Students in Mizoram

Category	Range of Scores	Number of Students	Percentage
High Coping Skills	109 and above	187	13.49
Moderate Coping Skills	79 - 108	1055	76.12
Low Coping Skills	78 and below	144	10.39
Total		1386	100

Figure 4.8

Percentage showing the level of Coping Skills among Higher Secondary School Students in Mizoram



The coping skill levels of 1,386 higher secondary school students of Mizoram are illustrated in Table 4.8 and Figure 4.8. The results indicate that 1,055 students (76.12%) possessed a moderate level of coping skills, which implies that the majority of the students are quite good at managing academic demands, emotional control, physical challenges, spiritual well-being, and peer pressure. On the other hand, 187 students (13.49%) were classified as having high coping skills, meaning they could effectively adapt, keep emotional balance, and use positive ways to maintain equilibrium. A total of 144 students (10.39%) exhibited low coping skills, which is indicative of a lack of effective adaptations to various situations or pressures.

Overall, the results suggested that the majority of the students are balanced in their coping skills, and the supply of some support could be a factor in the increase of coping skills, especially in the areas of academic challenges and emotional difficulties.

4.4 Analysis and Interpretation of Objective 4

Objective 4: *Differences in Perceived Stress among Higher Secondary School Students in Mizoram with reference to their gender, stream of study and type of school management*

The study focused on how Mizoram's higher secondary school students perceived stresses of life with respect to gender, study fields, and type of school management. The average and standard deviation were tested within each group. To examine if the differences are a product of chance, several statistical models including t-tests, ANOVA, and post hoc tests were employed. Next are the implications that may become the opportunity for a close investigation. Below, the detailed findings for each variable is presented.

a) Gender

Hypothesis No. 1 states: "There is no significant difference in the level of perceived stress among higher secondary school students in Mizoram with reference

to gender.”

Perceived stress was analyzed in male and female students to study gender-based differences in stress levels. Means, standard deviations, and a t-test are indicators of significant differences in the study variables. The results are displayed in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9

Perceived Stress among Higher Secondary School Students in Mizoram with reference to Gender

Group	N	Mean	SD	SEM	df	Criterion Value	t Value	Significant level
Female	825	22.835	5.070	.176	1384	2.576	9.354	*
Male	561	20.251	5.014					

* significant at 0.01 level

Table 4.9 displayed the perceived stress levels among higher secondary school students in Mizoram, categorized by sex. The disparity between male and female is so pronounced that the t-value of 9.354 is far above 2.576, the critical value at a 0.01 significance level. Female students' mean stress score (22.835) is notably higher than that of male students (20.251), hence the implication that female students are possibly under stress to a greater degree. As a result, the null hypothesis is rejected, and there is a significant confirmation that gender influences students' perception of stress.

The result indicates that female students would likely have to deal with more emotional or social pressures that result in higher stress levels. By first recognizing these differences, teachers and counselors can coordinate a precise approach to assist the students.

b) Stream of Study

Hypothesis No. 1: “There is no significant difference in the level of perceived stress among higher secondary school students in Mizoram with reference to stream of study.”

Perceived stress was analyzed among students in the Arts, Commerce, and Science streams to identify whether academic focus affects stress. Analysis of variance was used to test the significance of differences. Results are shown in Tables 4.10 and 4.11.

Table 4.10

ANOVA of Perceived Stress across Arts, Commerce, and Science Streams

	Sum squares	of <i>df</i>	Mean Square	F	Significant level
Between Group	1276.960	2	638.480	24.384	*
Within groups	36212.942	1383	26.184		
Total	37489.903	1385			

* *significant at 0.01 level*

The ANOVA results, detailed in Table 4.10, illustrate the differences in perceived stress among students belonging to Arts, Commerce, and Science streams. The calculated F-value is 24.384, which is statistically significant at the 0.01 level.

Thus, it seems likely that perceived stress of students may differ according to their stream of study; that is to say, the issue of stream selection is of high significance, as such a decision could determine students’ overall health. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, which claimed that there is no significant difference in perceived stress levels among higher secondary school students in Mizoram based on their study stream.

Table 4.11

Post-Hoc Test of Perceived Stress scores across Arts, Commerce, and Science Streams

Stream of Study		Mean Difference	Significant Level
Arts	Commerce	-.997	**
	Science	-2.252	*
Commerce	Arts	.997	**
	Science	-1.255	*
Science	Arts	2.252	*
	Commerce	1.255	*

**significant at 0.01 level, **significant level at 0.05*

The results of the post-hoc tests are shown in Table 4.11. The contrasts between Perceived Stress levels in students from Arts, Commerce, and Science streams are displayed. The results show that students studying Science faced significantly higher stress levels compared to their counterparts in Arts and Commerce, with mean differences of 2.252 and 1.255, respectively. These differences are significant at the 0.01 level. The difference between the stress levels of the students from the Arts and Commerce students is also significant but with a small mean difference of -0.997 at the 0.05 level.

The findings do not deny that in every noticeable way, students from streams might inherently experience the stress vibe. For example, perhaps science students are particularly prone to stress since they constantly have to deal with a difficult subject matter, higher expectations from all around, and heavy exam schedules. In contrast, the stress levels of Art and Commerce students are thought to be lower due to the relaxing lifestyle they enjoy as a own way to escape accountability and stress levels. Ultimately, the subject of an individual has a close relationship with the

manner they categorize and deal with stress in the course of their daily lives.

c) Type of School Management

Hypothesis No. 1: “There is no significant difference in the level of perceived stress among higher secondary school students in Mizoram with reference to the type of school management.”

Perceived stress levels were examined among government and private school students. Mean scores, standard deviation, and a t-test were calculated to determine whether the differences were significant. Results are presented in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12

Perceived Stress among Higher Secondary School Students in Mizoram with reference to Type of School Management

Group	N	Mean	SD	SEM	Df	Criterion Value	t Value	Sig. level
Government	704	21.629	5.256	.197	1384	1.960	1.169	NS
Private	682	21.956	5.146					

NS not significant at 0.05 level

Table 4.12 showed stress levels for students at higher secondary level schools based on their school types. The mean score for stress among students attending government schools is 21.629; however, the mean for those in private schools is a bit higher, at 21.956. The computed t value is 1.169, which is less than the critical value of 1.960 at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the difference is not statistically significant.

These results have suggested that the sort of school-operational, government or private-has no significant difference on students' perceived stress. The students of both types of schools could generally equally waver on stress levels in their environment. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. From this background, it is estimated that maybe the coping strategies of the students, peer influence, or the

general pressures of life overpower the effects of such school management on students' stress experiences.

4.5 Analysis and Interpretation of Objective 5

Objective 5: Differences in Personality Traits among Higher Secondary School Students in Mizoram with reference to their gender, stream of study and type of school management

This study assessed the personality traits of higher secondary students in in Mizoram. Gender, stream of study, and type of school management were considered in the sample. The researcher then calculated their means and standard deviations and used several statistical techniques (t-test, ANOVA, post hoc test) to test statistical significance of the differences in the data. Knowledge of personality traits seems extremely important since the personality of a student will tell how a student faces the academic challenge, how a student interrelates with his/her classmates, and how students respond to various learning situations. The breakdown of the variables is dealt with in detail in the following sections.

a) Gender

Hypothesis No. 2 states: “There is no significant difference in the level of personality traits among higher secondary school students in Mizoram with reference to gender.”

To test this hypothesis, the personality traits of male and female students were assessed based on five domains: Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness. For males and females, the mean and standard deviation were also calculated, and a t-test was conducted to determine if there was a significant difference between the two groups. Results of this entire procedure are given in Table 4.13.

Table 4.13

Differences in Personality Traits among Higher Secondary School Students in Mizoram with reference to Gender

Domain	Group	N	Mean	SD	SEM	t Value	Sig. level
Neuroticism	Female	825	27.873	4.756	.166	6.753	*
	Male	561	26.052	5.171			
Extraversion	Female	825	19.748	4.171	.184	1.230	NS
	Male	561	20.034	4.362			
Openness	Female	825	20.218	3.972	.175	2.427	**
	Male	561	20.756	4.155			
Agreeableness	Female	825	23.147	4.226	.147	2.657	*
	Male	561	22.529	4.272			
Conscientiousness	Female	825	27.815	3.671	.128	4.681	*
	Male	561	26.772	4.595			

**significant at 0.01 level, ** significant level at 0.05, NS not significant at 0.05 level*

Table 4.13 indicates differences in personality traits among the Higher Secondary School students in Mizoram with respect to gender. The results elucidate vital differences in the behavioral traits. Female scored quite highly in Neuroticism ($t = 6.753$, $p < 0.01$) in most cases. This means females experience a lot more of these emotions like anxiety and worry compared to males. However, the difference with Openness was 0.05 significant ($t = 2.427$), with males inching a little higher. This suggests they might be more receptive to new experiences and ideas.

The differences in the traits of agreeableness ($t = 2.657$, $p < 0.01$) and conscientiousness ($t = 4.681$, $p < 0.01$) were very clear in the case of gender where female students had higher scores. These traits were linked with attributes like cooperation, responsibility, and hard work. The t-value for extraversion was (1.230) which was not significant indicating both male and female students were alike in being extroverted and socially active.

The study revealed that there is gender-based differences in personality traits. The female students appear to be more expressive of their emotions, more agreeable, and more conscientious, whereas the males display a bit more openness. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected for four personality traits (Neuroticism, Openness, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness) and retained for Extraversion. This demonstrates that the gender differences are pronounced in most personality traits but not all.

b) Stream of Study

Hypothesis No. 2 states: “There is no significant difference in the level of personality traits among higher secondary school students in Mizoram with reference to their stream of study.”

The personality traits of students in Arts, Commerce, and Science streams were analyzed to see if their academic orientation is associated with personality characteristics. The mean and standard deviation for each group were calculated while an ANOVA for one factor was performed to see if the differences among the groups were statistically significant. Another, post hoc test was performed to identify appropriate pairs of specific groups which referred to significant differences. The detailed results of these analyses are presented in Tables 4.14 and 4.15, respectively.

Table 4.14*ANOVA of Personality Traits across Arts, Commerce, and Science Streams*

		<i>Sum of Squares</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Mean Square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig. level</i>
<i>Neuroticism</i>	<i>Between Groups</i>	502.129	2	251.065	11.278	*
	<i>Within Groups</i>	30786.396	1383	22.261		
	<i>Total</i>	31288.525	1385			
<i>Extraversion</i>	<i>Between Groups</i>	182.22	2	91.111	5.122	*
	<i>Within Groups</i>	24602.398	1383	17.789		
	<i>Total</i>	24784.620	1385			
<i>Openness</i>	<i>Between Groups</i>	286.805	2	143.403	9.080	*
	<i>Within Groups</i>	21841.637	1383	15.793		
	<i>Total</i>	22128.442	1385			
<i>Agreeableness</i>	<i>Between Groups</i>	149.016	2	74.508	4.262	**
	<i>Within Groups</i>	24176.722	1383	17.481		
	<i>Total</i>	24325.737	1385			
<i>Conscientiousness</i>	<i>Between Groups</i>	120.458	2	60.229	4.305	**
	<i>Within Groups</i>	19349.539	1383	13.991		
	<i>Total</i>	19469.997	1385			

*significant at 0.01 level, **significant level at 0.05

The results of the analysis of variance on the personality traits of Arts, Commerce, and Science students are presented in Table 4.14. The study indicates that all five traits do differ notably one from another. These five traits are Neuroticism ($F = 11.278$, $p < 0.01$), Extraversion ($F = 5.122$, $p < 0.01$), Openness ($F = 9.080$, $p < 0.01$), Agreeableness ($F = 4.262$, $p < 0.05$), and Conscientiousness ($F = 4.305$, $p < 0.05$). It is thus clear that the differences of means are significant among the streams.

The study shows that the academic streams taken by students have affected certain aspects of their personality. It is possible that the differences in course orientation, subject complexity, and learning environment have a direct effect on

students' thoughts, behaviors, and emotional responses. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 4.15

Post-Hoc Test of Personality Traits scores across Arts, Commerce, and Science Streams

Domain	Stream of Study	Mean Difference	Sig. Level
Neuroticism	Arts	-.949	*
	Commerce		
	Arts	-1.344	*
	Science		
	Commerce	-.396	NS
	Science		
Extraversion	Arts	.889	*
	Commerce		
	Arts	.051	NS
	Science		
	Commerce	-.838	*
	Science		
Openness	Arts	-.068	NS
	Commerce		
	Arts	.985	*
	Science		
	Commerce	1.053	NS
	Science		
Agreeableness	Arts	.755	*
	Commerce		
	Arts	.550	**
	Science		
	Commerce	-.205	NS
	Science		

	Science		
	Arts		
	Commerce	-.358	NS
	Arts		
Conscientiousness	Science	-.686	*
	Commerce		
	Science	-.328	NS

**significant at 0.01 level, ** significant level at 0.05, NS not significant at 0.05 level*

The table 4.15 reveals the results of the post hoc testing, showing the exact traits along with the subjects showing statistically significant differences. Arts students scored low in Neuroticism vs. Science and Commerce students, while no significant differences were found for Commerce and Science students. For Extraversion, Arts and Science students scored higher than Commerce, again with no differences between Arts and Science. Following this, Science students scored higher in Openness vs. Arts students, while the comparisons failed to identify statistically aggressive differences between these categories and other comparisons. Nevertheless, Commerce and Science students scored lower on this scale than Arts students.

This finding suggests that areas of study have an impact on the personality of students, most likely due to curriculum differences, academic stress-es, and the learning environment. Science students were higher in conscientiousness and openness compared to Arts students who were more moderate in these dimensions of agreeability. Differences in neuroticism and extraversion levels are linked to the various stresses and lessons encountered within a student's stream of study. The main conclusion of the research is that there are significant personality traits differences among different streams, thus confirming the rejection of the null hypothesis.

c) Type of School Management

Hypothesis No. 2 states: "There is no significant difference in the level of personality traits among higher secondary school students in Mizoram with reference

to type of school management.”

The personality traits of students attending Government and Private schools were assessed, with the mean and standard deviation being computed for each group. A t-test was performed to check if any found variations were of statistical significance. The detailed results are presented in Table 4.16.

Table 4.16

Differences in Personality Traits among Higher Secondary School Students in Mizoram with reference to Type of School Management

Domain	Group	N	Mean	SD	SEM	t Value	Sig. level
Neuroticism	Government	892	27.349	4.570	.228	.902	NS
	Private	494	27.589	5.069			
Extraversion	Government	892	19.960	4.153	.139	.768	NS
	Private	494	19.777	4.368			
Openness	Government	892	20.479	4.123	.138	.411	NS
	Private	494	20.387	3.763			
Agreeableness	Government	892	22.759	4.104	.195	2.399	**
	Private	494	23.322	4.325			
Conscientiousness	Government	892	27.824	3.733	.125	1.445	NS
	Private	494	27.520	3.775			

*** significant level at 0.05, NS not significant at 0.05 level*

Table 4.16 presents the variation in personality traits among students attending Government and Private schools. The analysis indicates that traits like Neuroticism,

Extraversion, Openness and Conscientiousness did not show any significant difference between the two types of school management in terms of their prevalence. The only trait that exemplified the difference was Agreeableness which was found to vary statistically significantly at the 0.05 level. The results revealed that students from Private schools had slightly higher scores than those from Government schools which imply the former having a greater disposition towards qualities like cooperation, warmth and smooth interpersonal relationships.

Based on the results, it can be concluded that the personality traits of the students are not affected by the school's management style except for the trait of Agreeableness. Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted for the other four personality traits and rejected for Agreeableness, which points to the fact that the difference is only in this particular trait.

4.6 Analysis and Interpretation of Objective 6

Objective 6: *Differences in Coping Skills among Higher Secondary School Students in Mizoram with reference to their gender, stream of study and type of school management*

The coping skills of higher secondary school students in Mizoram were studied according to their gender, stream of study, and type of school management. The researcher computed the mean and standard deviation for every group. In addition, appropriate statistical tests like t-tests, ANOVA, and post hoc tests were applied to establish if there were any differences that were statistically significant. The following tables provide a comprehensive account of the results for the respective variables.

a) Gender

Hypothesis No. 3 states: “There is no significant difference in the level of coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram with reference to gender.”

The gender differences in coping skills among students were examined to determine if one’s gender affected the manner in which one dealt with stress, challenges, and daily life. The mean and standard deviation were calculated, and a t-test was conducted to check if the differences were statistically significant. The results can be found in Table 4.17.

Table 4.17

Differences in Coping Skills among Higher Secondary School Students in Mizoram with reference to Gender

Group	N	Mean	SD	SEM	df	Criterion Value	t Value	Significant level
Female	825	93.520	12.923					
				.545	1384	2.576	3.264	*
Male	561	95.825	12.897					

**significant at 0.01 level*

Table 4.17 gives the comparative analysis of male versus female students’ coping skills. The analysis also shows a significant difference at the 0.01 level. Male students (M = 95.825) received a score that was a little higher compared to female students (M = 93.520). This indicates that in Mizoram, males are slightly superior in coping skills than the females. Despite the small difference, it still suggests that gender could possibly be a factor affecting the students’ perception and, consequently, the handling of stress, the use of challenges, and coping mechanisms in their everyday life. Hence, the null hypothesis claiming no significant difference in the level of coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram based on gender is rejected.

b) Stream of Study

Hypothesis No. 3 states: “There is no significant difference in the level of coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram with reference to stream of study.”

The analyzing of the coping skills used by Arts, Commerce and Science students was carried out with the aim of finding out if the academic orientation had any influence on the students' ways of handling stress and everyday problems. The mean values and standard deviations were calculated for every group, and ANOVA was used to determine whether the differences were significant from a statistical point of view. Moreover, a post hoc test was carried out to show the differences between the streams in pairs. The findings are shown in Tables 4.18 and 4.19.

Table 4.18

ANOVA of Coping Skills across Arts, Commerce and Science Streams

	Sum of squares	df	Mean Square	F	Significant level
Between Group	433.703	2	216.852	1.268	NS
Within groups	236594.103	1383	171.073		
Total	237027.807	1385			

**NS not significant at 0.05 level*

Table 4.18 displays the ANOVA results for coping skills of students from the three streams - Arts, Commerce, and Science. The statistical analysis reveals that the mean score differences according to the streams are not significant ($F = 1.268$, $p > 0.05$). In other words, the research indicates that the academic stream does not have a general impact on students' ability to cope. Therefore, the null hypothesis which says that there is no significant difference in coping skills of higher secondary school students in Mizoram based on their stream of study is accepted.

Table 4.19*Post-Hoc Test of Coping Skills scores across Arts, Commerce, and Science Streams*

Stream of Study		Mean Difference	Significant Level
Arts	Commerce	-.681	NS
	Science	.878	NS
Commerce	Arts	.681	NS
	Science	1.559	NS
Science	Arts	-.878	NS
	Commerce	-1.559	NS

NS not significant at 0.05 level

The outcomes of the post hoc test, which compares the differences among the three streams Arts, Commerce, and Science, are shown in Table 4.19. The analysis shows that all the comparisons are not significant (the mean differences are between -1.559 and 1.559, $p > 0.05$). This is in accordance with the ANOVA result that students' coping skills do not differ significantly according to their area of study, thus confirming the null hypothesis acceptance. The findings indicate that the academic focus does not influence the students' perception or application of coping skills in their daily life.

c) Type of School Management

Hypothesis No. 3 states: "There is no significant difference in the level of coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram with reference to type of school management."

The coping skills of students from both Government and Private schools were examined to find out if the management type of school influences the way students cope with stress and daily difficulties. The mean and standard deviation were

computed, and a t-test was conducted to check if any noticeable differences were of a statistically significant nature. The findings can be found in Table 4.20.

Table 4.20

Differences in Coping Skills among Higher Secondary School Students in Mizoram with reference to Type of School Management

Group	N	Mean	SD	SEM	df	Criterion Value	t Value	Significant level
Government	689	94.723	13.238					
Private	697	94.152	12.698	.504	1384	1.960	.819	NS

NS not significant at 0.05 level

The differences in the coping skills of the students from the Government and Private schools were depicted in Table 4.20. The mean difference in scores of both groups revealed that there was no statistically significant difference ($t = 0.819$, $p > 0.05$). Government school students' mean score was a bit more ($M = 94.723$) than that of Private school students ($M = 94.152$), but the difference was so small that it was not considered as a significant variation. It can be concluded from these results that the school management type does not affect the students' perception or the use of coping skills in their daily lives. Consequently, the null hypothesis, "there is no significant difference in the level of coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram with reference to type of school management" is accepted.

4.7 Analysis and Interpretation of Objective 7

Objective 7: Relationship between Perceived Stress, Personality Traits and Coping Skills among Higher Secondary School Students in Mizoram

Exploring how perceived stress, personality traits, and coping skills interact and relate offers a clearer understanding of students' psychological health. This study aims to focus on the very interaction and relationship of these three factors in determining the student's resilience to daily difficulties.

The relationships among the variables were identified in terms of their nature and strength by using Pearson's product-moment correlation. The researcher has intentionally determined the correlations of perceived stress and personality traits (Table 4.21), perceived stress and coping skills (Table 4.22), as well as personality traits and coping skills (Table 4.23). This assessment aims to determine whether higher stress levels among higher secondary school students in Mizoram are linked to specific personality traits or coping skills.

a) Perceived stress and Personality Traits

Hypothesis 4 states: "There is no significant correlation between perceived stress and personality traits among higher secondary school students in Mizoram."

This section explores the relationship between the personality features of students and the stress they undergo in their daily activities. The way individuals see difficulties and deal with stress is influenced by their emotional stability, conscientiousness, and openness. Table 4.21 shows the connection between perceived stress and personality traits that can help in assessing whether certain traits are associated with higher or lower stress in students.

Table 4.21*Correlation between Perceived Stress and Personality Traits*

		PERCEIVED STRESS	PERSONALITY TRAITS
PERCEIVED STRESS	Pearson Correlation	1	.089*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	1386	1386
PERSONALITY TRAITS	Pearson Correlation	.089*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	1386	1386

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level*

The connection between perceived stress and personality traits among higher secondary school students is displayed in Table 4.21 based on a sample of 1,386 students. The analysis results in the detection of a small yet significant positive correlation ($r = 0.089$, $p = 0.001$) at the 0.01 significance level. This indicates that personality traits of the students are associated with their stress experiences. Some traits may lead students to be more conscious of or drawn to the daily pressure. Given that the correlation is significant, the null hypothesis is rejected. This supports the view that a substantial connection is there between perceived stress and personality traits.

b) Perceived Stress and Coping Skills

Hypothesis 5 states: “There is no significant correlation between perceived stress and coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.”

This section explores into the question of the relationship between the way students handle stress and the actual stress they feel. Students' coping skills, comprising different methods such as dealing with problems, controlling feelings, and socializing with others, might either influence or reflect their daily stress perceptions. The correlation between perceived stress and coping skills is illustrated in Table 4.22. It reveals the possibility of less stressful perception in the case of students who possess more effective coping skills.

Table 4.22

Correlation between perceived stress and Coping skills

		PERCEIVED STRESS	COPING SKILLS
PERCEIVED STRESS	Pearson Correlation	1	-.280*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	1386	1386
COPING SKILLS	Pearson Correlation	-.280*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	1386	1386

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level*

The relationship between perceived stress and coping skills for 1,386 students, illustrated in Table 4.22, was evaluated through the Pearson correlation method. The result reveals a moderate negative correlation ($r = -0.280$, $p = 0.001$, sig. at 0.01 level). Hence, it can be inferred that the students with stronger coping skills usually report having less stress. This result implies that coping skills are crucial in the stress management of higher secondary students. By virtue of the fact that the correlation is statistically significant, the null hypothesis is rejected, thus confirming the existence of a significant relationship between perceived stress and coping skills.

c) Personality Traits and coping skills

Hypothesis 6 states: “There is no significant correlation between personality traits and coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.”

The present section of the research investigates the connection between students’ personality traits and the effectiveness of their usage of coping skills in daily life. The relationship between personality traits and coping skills is demonstrated in Table 4.23. It shows if certain traits are associated with more or less effective coping skills.

Table 4.23*Correlation between Personality Traits and Coping Skills*

		PERSONALITY TRAITS	COPING SKILLS
PERSONALITY TRAITS	Pearson	1	-.065*
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.05
	N	1386	1386
COPING SKILLS	Pearson	-.065*	1
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	1386	1386

*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

The Pearson correlation between personality traits and coping skills is presented in Table 4.23. The study reveals a slight negative correlation ($r = -0.065$, $p = 0.001$) that is very weak. The 0.01 level of significance is applied to this correlation as it is considered a statistically important relation between personality traits and coping skills, though only of small magnitude. It seems as if the traits of the personality are to some extent the factors that determine the choice of the coping strategy used by the students to cope with stress. Subsequently, the null hypothesis “there is no significant correlation between personality traits and coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram” is rejected.

4.8 Analysis and Interpretation of Objective 8

Objective 8: Factors contributing to the Psychological and Physiological Stress, Personality Traits, and Coping Skills among Higher Secondary School Students in Mizoram.

In order to substantiate the quantitative results and uncover the main factors affecting students' stress, personality, and coping abilities, fifteen focus group discussions involving male and female students from both government and private higher secondary schools were carried out. The students belonged to Arts, Science, and Commerce streams. The discussions were meant to allow them to voice their opinions and narrate their experiences in the way they liked. This method gave a better understanding of the way they see and deal with stress in their normal lives.

The discussions took place on Google Meet after the researcher obtained permission from the students through phone calls. For the purpose of the study, the researchers organized a series of focus group discussions (FGD) comprising a total of fifteen sessions with groups of ten students each. Each of the conducted discussions lasted for approximately one and a half hours, during which the students were allowed to express their thoughts and feelings freely and comfortably in their mother tongue. The whole process obtained a wide and very significant range of insights through the collaboration of 150 students who gave their inputs and experiences in these sessions. The responses of the students were recorded by the researcher who then transcribed them, and finally analyzed them using an adapted sequel of Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase model of thematic analysis.

Besides the identified areas of stress that were focused on, the group discussions led to a revelation of deeper truths that were beyond the original framework. The students' voices naturally pointed to seven themes. These themes are indicative of both the original field of inquiry and the students' shared experiences, hence giving us a clearer picture of their daily struggles.

The main themes that emerged from the discussion are presented below, where each theme is illustrated with the students' own words and interpreted in the light of the quantitative findings of the study.

4.8.1 Academic, School, and Parental Pressure

The discussion revealed that the students are under the strain of constant academic and parental pressure. They recounted daily routines which commenced early in the morning, running late in the evening, and comprising of classes, assignments, coaching lessons, and revisions. School life seemed to be just a series of lessons and deadlines where students had no time to relax. Besides the exhausting pressure of studying, sometimes even 1 or 2 hours a day, students admitted that they primarily do so not for their own sake but to fulfill the aspirations of the parents and teachers who associate good grades with a bright future. Winning exams appeared to be the only way to acquire one's value, however a tiny drop in performance often resulted in guilt and frustration. As per the students, the sources of the pressure were multiple: home, school, and peers. This scenario made them feel as if they were under an unending evaluation and comparison.

A large part of the students (80%) indicated that their greatest stress was experienced during the examination and submission times, when tests, projects, and assignments coincided. Continuous reminders to get better and no resting at all were the main causes of their tiredness. One student expressed this feeling simply but powerfully:

“A chang hi chuan keima tan ni lovin midang tan lehkha ka zir niber hian ka hre thin. Ka nu leh ka pa hian mark tha tak hmu turin min hrilh reng a, ka hma hun a en theih nan. An rilru tur chu ka hrethiam tho a mahse min tihah vek zel, ka theih tawp ka chhuah ve pawh hian an duhthusam ang mark hi ka hmu phak thin lo (Sometimes I feel like I study for everyone else except myself. My parents always remind me to get high marks because they believe my future depends on it. I understand their concern, but it makes me anxious, and even when I do my best, I still feel like it's not enough).”

These words illustrate that care and pressure are frequently intertwined. At first, parental support can gradually turn into emotional stress. For a considerable number of students, getting good grades is not only an educational objective; it is a means of getting the parents' approval and preserving family honour. The idea

that their value is solely based on school performance makes students nervous, to the point of stress, even if they manage to get good grades.

Another student talked about how school systems can add to this stress:

“Kan school-ah chuan thiam thei ho, rilru chak ho class khatah an dah khawm a, thiam thei lo ho class dangah min dah khawm bawk a, result tha nei thei tura school competition a san lutuk vang a nia. School hmingthatna tur zawk an ti a, mahse tupawh hian thiam theih dan hi kan nei vek a. Zirtirtuten thiam thei ho nen min compare emaw thiam thei vak lo ho hlawhtling ve thei lo tur ang deuh thaw a min sawi thin hi chu rilru a na ve deuh thin (In our school, the fast learners are put in one class and the slow learners in another because the competition to have high results is so strong. They say it helps the school make a good name, but everyone learns at a different speed. It hurts when teachers compare us and look down on the slow learners as if they can't succeed).”

The unequal treatment of students through school practices that focus on high scores is indirectly affecting students' self-confidence. Slowest students are actually getting the feeling of being losers during the let-down comparison of their performances amid others, while top students are also becoming anxious about their position. All these situations show that stress in schools is not only academic but also psychological and emotional as it results from the fear of being judged and the pressure to meet external standards.

The majority of students (75%) pointed out academic workload, continuous assessments, and expectations from parents and teachers as their greatest sources of stress. A smaller group (roughly 25%), mentioned other concerns like time management or strict school rules, which came up less often. Overall, this pattern of stress is intense but manageable. It shows how students navigate ambition and exhaustion while trying to meet expectations and stay hopeful. The tone of their stories reflects ongoing, manageable stress rather than a crisis. Students felt tired and pressured but still motivated to keep trying.

4.8.2 Emotional Strain from Family and Relationships

Emotional stress from family matters and personal relationships was reported by 56% of the students, who faced school pressures as well. They told that even though they were worn out by studies, the mood at home also played a major role in their calming or uneasy feeling. 40% of students brought up the conflicts caused by parents quarrelling, breakdown of communication, or family members not comprehending their pain. Gradually, for some, stress from home became more and more of an issue even in school, which made it harder to focus or keep one's interest up.

A few students (about 15%) came from broken families or homes impacted by alcohol use. They expressed how these situations added to their emotional burden, making it heavier than the usual academic pressure. One student shared:

“Ka pa in zu a in nasa thin a, kan in chhungah hian inhnial buaina a awm thin a. Chutiang chang chuan lehkha zir har ka ti a, ka in concen thei lo thin. School ka kal pawhin kan in chhung boruak kha ka rilruah a awm reng zel a, ka haw hunah enge thil dang thleng leh ang tih ka ngaihtuah reng zel (My father drinks a lot, and sometimes there are arguments at home. When that happens, I can't concentrate on my studies. Even if I go to school, my mind stays at home, thinking about what might happen next).”

The statement illustrates the correlation between family instability and the increase of psychological stress. Thus, students are already emotionally exhausted when they come to the classroom. Another student shared the experience of how challenging it was for them to grow up in a single-parent household. The student explained that financial and emotional duties usually rested on their mother, which made them feel pressured to succeed.

“Ka nu leh ka pa an inthen a, ka nu tan hian tha taka ka tih a ngai tihna rilru ka nei thin. Ka tan rim takin a thawk a, a timangangtu nih ka duh lo. Mahse a chang chuan ka tan pressure hi a sang lutuk a, ka handle zo dawn lova hriatna ka nei thin (Since my parents are separated, I always feel I have to do well for my

mother. She works hard for me, and I don't want to disappoint her. But sometimes the pressure becomes too much, and I feel like I can't handle everything)."

The narratives suggest that the school is not the only place where stress comes from for the teenagers. A considerable part of it is due to their emotional environment, such as family quarrels, lack of communication, or an absent parent which can lead to increased feelings of fear and solitude.

Nevertheless, pressure was not the only aspect of every experience; 44% of students pointed out that their bonds with family and friends were a significant factor in protecting them from stress. They reported that home communication, emotional connection with parents, and mere support from siblings were very crucial in making them calm and driven. One student expressed this clearly:

"Exam chungchanga rilru hahna emaw manganna ka neihin, ka nu hian theih tawp chhuah tur leh midang nena in compare lo turin min hrilh thin a. Exam tura ka kal dawn pawhin min tawngtaisa thlap zel a, chu chuan min tithlamuang thin (Whenever I feel low or worried about exams, my mother always tells me to do my best and not compare myself with others. She prays for me before every exam, and that makes me feel peaceful)."

The statement made above is that the feeling of being loved and accepted by the family can be a great help to a person in dealing with stress. It was found that the students who considered their family to be a supporting factor were also more inclined to keep a positive attitude and to get good grades. Kindheartedness and support from others like teachers and friends were acknowledged as part of the emotional regulation for the person.

In general, the conversations pointed out that emotional stress of higher secondary students is multifaceted—affected by family conditions, interpersonal ties, and the degree of communication at home. Those who experienced family discord or lived in unstable home conditions carried greater emotional weights, whereas the ones who had robust family support were the ones feeling more positive about the situation.

4.8.3 Gender and Stream Differences in Stress Experiences

The students participating in the discussion pointed out that stress was distributed unequally among them. A substantial number, 65%, remarked that both gender and stream of study played a significant role in their feelings and coping with pressure. Female students commonly talked about being more stressed and emotionally affected by stress, whereas male students stated that they were usually trying to cover their concerns or divert themselves with company or playing games. A group of students, 35 %, claimed that girls usually give more thought to problems and responsibilities at school and home, which sometimes makes their stress worse. Boys, on the contrary, were thought to have fewer chores at home and thus more time to relax or recover after a hard day.

One female student reflected on this difference:

“Mipa chuan rilru hahna an nei tlem zawkin ka hria, achhan chu inchhungah tih tur vak an nei ve lova. Thiante nen duh leh an lengchhuak thei a, a nih loh pawhin an ah deuh chuan games te an khel daih thei a, mahse hmeichhia chu a tlangpuiin school banah pawh inchhungah thawh tur a lo awm zel a. Chu chuan a changchuan hahdam ve thei lovin min siam thin (I think boys have less stress because they don't have as many responsibilities at home. They can go out with friends or play games when they feel tired or pressured, but girls usually have housework and other duties after school. Sometimes that makes it harder for us to relax).”

It throws light on the fact that the daily life of students and the social calls are the main factors determining their emotional experiences. Girls believed that the after-school duties deprived them of personal time and thus, male students seemed to have more time to relax. Male students confessed that, even during stressful times, they chose to keep quiet over letting out their problems, thinking that this way they would not be regarded as weak or kidding.

Variation was also there among different academic groups. The science students said that they had to shoulder a much heavier academic load because of the

practical classes, project work, and high expectations from both parents and teachers. One Science student shared:

“A chang chuan Science students hian handle tur kan ngah bik hian ka hre thin. Extra practical work kan nei a, project te leh rei deuh deuh lehkha zir ngai ten kan awm a. Hahdam taka awm a har thin in prepare tur kan ngah thei bik lutuk a (Sometimes I feel like Science students have more to handle. We have extra practical work, projects, and long study hours. It’s hard to rest because there’s always something to prepare for).”

On the contrary, the students from the streams of Arts and Commerce stated that even though their workload was slightly less, they sometimes went through a different kind of pressure— being not worth much or being compared to Science students. Still, one student from Arts had a more positive view who said that one of the classes had imparted useful stress coping methods to the students:

“Arts-ah chuan Education subject kan nei a. Chutah chuan Mental Health chapter hi a awm a. Chu chuan min pui khawp mai. Kan rilru sukthlek te, rilru hah laia awmdan tur te, in control dan tur te ka zir chhuak a. Hemi lesson hian calm taka awm dan te min zirtir a, chuan school-ah emaw inah pawh nise ka rilru a hah apiangin ka hmang a, ka calm phah thin (In Arts stream, we have the Education subject, and there’s a chapter on Mental Health. It really helped me a lot. I learned how the mind works and how to control my thoughts when I feel stressed. Those lessons taught me simple ways to calm myself, and now I use them whenever I feel pressure at school or even at home).”

This situation is a vivid illustration of how enlightening the public about mental health problems and their comprehension could lead to students having better control over their stress. The student was capable of employing the theory taught in school to the everyday case and consequently was reminded that being only informed can act as a support very well.

To sum up, the discussion has brought to light that gender and study stream are both factors that affect stress. The male students and some from other stream seemed less vocal, but not necessarily less affected, while the female students and those from

the Science stream indicated having higher degrees of emotional and academic stress. Such results suggest that besides workload, adolescents' stress is influenced by social roles, gender norms, and the type of academic environment in which they are present.

4.8.4 Physiological Manifestations of Stress

The discussion indicated that 70% of students were experiencing the effects of stress on their physical and mental well-being. They mentioned exhaustion connected with exams, headaches, pains in the body, and insomnia as their principal problems. Furthermore, minor problems like not having enough meals, going to bed late, or worrying too much affected the health of nearly half (45%) of the students, who complained of feeling physically weak or tired the following day. A minority of 20% reported that they had anxiety and restlessness before major exams quite often, to such an extent that their concentration and memory were severely impaired.

One student explained this experience in simple words:

“Exam hma zan hian ka muhil thei lo thin. Ka thin te hi a phu rang a, enge lo chhuak ang tih ngaihtuah reng rengin ka awm thin. Hahdam taka mut ka tum pawhin, ka rilruah a lo lut zel. Zing ka thawhin, exam hma hma atangin ka chau tan nghal der tawh zel (Before exams, I can't sleep well. My heart beats faster, and I keep thinking about the questions that might come. Even if I try to rest, my mind doesn't stop. By morning, I feel tired before the exam even starts).”

Another student expressed a similar experience, describing how prolonged pressure affected appetite and energy:

“Ka rilru a hah lutuk chuan engmah ka ei thei lo thin. Ka hmaah hian eitur awm reng mahse, ka ei peih thlawt lo thin. Ka pum te hi a dik lo a, mut daih mai ka duh thin (When I am too stressed, I lose my appetite. Even if food is in front of me, I don't feel like eating. My stomach feels tight, and I just want to lie down).”

Mild to medium stress levels are manifested through these voices in the physical as well as psychological aspects. The students were often tired due to sleeping problems, changing eating habits and constant anxiety. Some students, who

had long study sessions and poor posture during exam preparation, reported waiting headaches and neck pain. Others mentioned that even when they had studied well, sleepless nights before the exams had become their routine.

Almost 15% of the students admitted that their body reactions were beyond their consciousness of tension level. One of them, told of how her hands trembled while she was speaking to the teachers just before the examination, and another one confessed to having a heavy feeling in his chest as if the inner pressure could no longer be hidden. These narratives are proof that the body of the student is the first to signal the load that the mind is carrying.

The symptoms, however, were not equally evident in all students. Some among them reported that they were feeling better almost instantly after the exams were finished, and they got back to their previous routine right away.

The discussion, painted a picture of stress, a bodily phenomenon, or rather, the body being the first mirror of stress more often than not. Students had the stress of the exams weighed down on them, which then manifested in their bodies as tension, fatigue, loss of appetite and insomnia. The above-mentioned symptoms are clear signs that stress is still a reality for a large number of adolescents in Mizoram who not only consider it but also experience it very vividly in both physical and mental ways. However, they continue to endure with the help of their quiet strength and resilience.

4.8.5 Personality Traits and Individual Differences

The students pointed out the differences very distinctly in their experience, perception, and reaction to stress that really depended on their personality traits. Even considering the same significant challenges of an academic nature, the students' emotional reactions and coping mechanisms were totally different from each other. There were some students (30%) who characterized themselves as very prone to anxiety and very critical of themselves while most of the students (60%) expressed traits like composed and methodical and having control over oneself. All these differences indicated that personality, though not in an obvious way, have a say in determining how to view stress and what method to use to overcome it.

A student shared heightened emotional sensitivity and tendency to overthink:

“Problem chhete pawh hian min ti nervous vek zel. Test pakhat ka tihchhiat chuan zankhuain ka rilruah a cham a, kan zirtirtute leh ka nu leh ka pa te beisei ka pha lo niin ka inhre zel a. A tuk lehah tha taka zir ka tum pawhin a hma test-a ka chhan that loh khan ka rilru a luahkhat tlat zel (Even small problems make me nervous. If I perform badly in one test, I keep thinking about it all night and feel like I disappointed my teachers and parents. I try to study harder the next day, but my mind still replays my mistake).”

This statement reveals several of the traits that are associated with neuroticism—worried, insecure, and emotional feelings, for example. In spite of this, the wish to “study harder” is a sign of perseverance while the eternal feeling of guilt makes the success a burden and turns it into a stressful one. The people with these characteristics usually have high demands, both for themselves and others, and their little bumps are seen as personal defeats. A good number of female students (around 65%) indicated that they experienced similar mood swings and emotional involvement, which suggests that they possess the traits of being neurotic, agreeable, and conscientious to a greater extent than the rest—traits that lead to being loving and diligent but also more prone to getting nervous.

On the other hand, a fellow student portrayed a different, more organized and focused on tasks way of coping with pressure:

“Tih tur ka ngah lutuk chuan, list ka siam a chuan pakhat te te in ka ti thin. Ka tih zawh tawh sa ka zuk hmuh zel theih khan min tihahdam thin. Thil tih tut tut hi ka duh lova achhan chu ka rilru a buai vek zel (When I have too many things to do, I make a list and finish them one by one. I feel calm when I can see what I’ve completed. I don’t like rushing because that makes me confused).”

This statement portrays a mix of conscientiousness and emotional stability, but it also conveys openness—an ability to adapt and to foresee the future without being stressed. Approximately 45% of the male students supported this idea by describing themselves as more open to new experiences, ready to alter their habits, and not

overly influenced by their feelings. They were under stress, still, they preferred to cope with it through fun or outside activities rather than by taking it inside.

Another student expressed creativity and connection as way of handling stress:

“Ka stress chuan ka lehkha zirna hmun ka sawn loh pawhin hla te ka ngaithla thin. Thiante biak pawh hian a eng zawngin thil min thlirtir bawh a. Nitina thil ngai reng tih hi keichu ka ning hma a, chuangchuan in motivate nan ka thil tih ka thlak ka thlak thin (When I feel stressed, I change my study place or listen to music. Talking to friends also helps me think positively. I get bored doing the same thing every day, so I like to make changes to stay motivated).”

This reflects a tendency to fuse experiences and extroversion with a curiosity and social interaction as emotional release valves. During the stressful periods, approximately 35% of the students stated that they would resort to creative or social methods to shift their mindset.

Differences were also apparent among fields of study. Over fifty percent (55%) of the science students considered themselves to be disciplined, analytical and persistent, which are characteristics of conscientiousness, and also they had a certain degree of neuroticism due to their studies being so difficult. The arts students showed up to be more stable and expressive, which can be interpreted as being more agreeable and extroverted. The commerce students revealed a mixture of characteristics; fifty percent (50%) recognized themselves as practical and diligent, however, they also experienced doubts about their careers from time to time, which indicates the coexistence of conscientiousness and neuroticism.

The personalities of the students were one of the major factors influencing the nature of the stress and how it was handled. Neuroticism students take the slightest of setbacks to heart and make them into big emotional troubles; students with high conscientiousness use the method of organizing their work and being determined to overcome stress; on the other hand, students with high levels of openness and extraversion will transform stress into sources of relief through creativity, humour, and socializing.

The identified trends demonstrate that even though a great majority of the adolescents in Mizoram possess moderate and adaptive character traits, the fine variations that are brought in by gender and stream have a direct impact on how every single student undergoes, interprets, and reacts to the stress of the academic journey.

4.8.6 Coping Skills and Emotional Regulation

The students' discussion of stress management revealed their responses that coping was not merely a single act but rather a mix of emotional, social, and spiritual responses that were determined by one's gender, academic stream, and cultural background. A considerable proportion of students (68%) said that their support and strength were not solely due to personal efforts but also from friends, faith, and family. The students did not consider it a matter of emotional suppression; instead, they considered it a case of gaining stability through different ways: such as laughter, prayer, conversation, or even short breaks that allowed them to recharge and regain focus.

One student described how friendship lightens emotional burden:

“Ka hlim loh emaw ka rilru a hah chang chuan ka thiante ka be hmasa ber thin a. Min tinui a, tupawn struggle kan nei vek tih min hrilh thin a, chuan ka rilru hahna a zang sawt thin a, lehkha pawh ka zir leh theih phah thin (When I feel down or stressed, my friends are the first people I talk to. They make me laugh, remind me that everyone struggles sometimes, and after that, I feel lighter and more focused on my studies).”

This situation presents the influence of social connections and compassion to transform stress into resilience. For the adolescents of Mizoram, companionship is, more often than not, the most significant source of support that provides them solace when facing academic and personal challenges.

The talk was an eye-opener with regard to the difference in the gender-based coping styles. About 60% of the students believed that boys cope with stress slightly

better, as they not only have more chances to be in the open, but also to relax and spend time with friends. One student explained:

“Mipa in rilru hah hi an cope thiam zawkin ka hria, achhan chu thiante nen te an lengchhuak thei a, games an khel thei a, emaw an awm mai mai thei a. Mahse hmeichhia chu school ban hnuah pawh inchhung hna thawh a ngai zel a, hahdamna hun tak tak kan nei thei lo (I think boys cope better because they can go out with friends whenever they want, play games, or relax. But girls have to help with housework after school, so their minds never really rest).”

Another student echoed this perspective, adding that boys seemed to recover from pressure more easily:

“Exam zawh veleh hian mipa chu hlim deuh leh free deuh hian an awm thei nghal a. Hmeichhia chu kan tit ha nge tha lo te, result kan nei tha angem tih te kan ngaihtuah nghal a. Mipa hi chu hmeichhia angin an rilru a hah ve vak ngai lo a niang (When exams are over, boys look free and happy right away. But girls keep thinking about results or whether they did well. Maybe boys don’t worry as much as girls do).”

The significance of the statements made by the students is that they point out directly the issue of gender roles and norms as the main factor responsible for the difference in stress management. The academic stress does not discriminate but it has a different status in boys and girls' worlds: boys get rid of stress through sports and other social activities that they can do freely while girls have to juggle between their emotional problems and household responsibilities which are barriers to relaxation.

The most pronounced differences among streams were not very remarkable with the exception of a few students who said that Arts students were somewhat better in the management of stress and their creative, introspective and adaptable methods were the reasons for it. Science students were said to be very organized, disciplined and methodical making the most of the little time left by carefully scheduling their tasks and preparing in advance to be in a position to cope with the stress effectively. As for Commerce students, they seemed to be taking up the middle ground between the practical and the doubtful, in that they used a mixture of

systematic routines and flexible tactics to give the pressure no less than a hard time. These slight differences suggest that even if there are distinct streams in coping methods the learners from every pathway devise approaches that are in line with their character and daily habits.

According to students' perspectives, the primary concept was the importance of faith and spirituality, highlighting the significance of prayer as a key element for their mental peace. Up to 70% of them at least shared the experience of praying together or during family devotions as the way to cope with stress. They stated that being part of the prayer and church activities helped them get back their confidence and mental calmness. For them faith was a kind of a tool that aided them in controlling their emotions—a kind of a guarantee that their struggles were worthwhile and they were not alone in fighting them.

In general, the conversation revealed that the students from Mizoram are equipped with the coping skill—enough to face daily difficulties with resilience but still get affected by the outside pressure, one of which is the academic one, the other academic expectations and the lastly being the gender norms. Having each other, holding onto their faith and practicing self-control were all proved to be support sources but the limitations of their time, the feeling of emotional exhaustion and the social disparities went on to be challenges. These findings portray Mizo youth as thoughtful and resilient people who, just like the other youth around the world, get their strength from their relationships, faith, and disciplined efforts in their struggle against the pressures of learning and growing up.

4.8.7 Interplay of Stress, Personality, and Coping

When the students shared what they had gone through, it was easy to see that stress, personality and coping were not separate elements but connected and interwoven strands in their daily lives. Usually, a student's method of coping with stress was a reflection of the inner self—his/her emotional strength, self-esteem, tolerance and the feeling of being accepted. The majority of the students (70%) saw stress as a positive factor that contributed to their development while a fairly large minority (40%) viewed it as a negative factor that took away their motivation.

However, the dissimilarities were present; nonetheless, each opinion was a variation of the same desire—to remain calm, to be empathetic and to seek tranquility amidst stress.

Students with more sensitive emotional traits took stress in a deep way. They talked about sleeplessness, self-disgust and the habit of going over their mistakes in their mind. One student described this struggle with honesty:

“Ka rilru a hah chuan ka tap hmasa phawt thin a. Chumi zawhah ka thiante ka biak loh pawhin ka tawngtai a chuan ka zia deuh thin. Ka inngaihtuah rilru hah tut tut thin tih chu ka inhre lutuk tho a mahse ka thil tihsual kha ka ngaihtuah lo thei lo thin. Ka thiante hian ngaihtuah hah lutuk lo turin min hrilh thin a chu chuan bei tha leh turin chakna min pe ve thin (When I get stressed, I cry first. But after that, I talk to my friend or pray, and I start feeling better. I know I worry too much, but I can’t stop thinking about my mistakes. My friend always tells me not to overthink, and somehow that gives me courage to try again).”

These statements show that the expression of feelings and the development of social interactions are closely related. The student uses the resources of tears, prayer, and friendship to ease tensions and sharpen the mind, thus turning vulnerability into restoration. 55% of the student group indicated using similar methods of handling tough feelings showing that being emotionally open is not a weakness but a mark of power and self-awareness.

Another student expressed a very different way of dealing with pressure, reflecting a calmer and more structured personality:

“Tih tur tam deuh a awm pawhin ka phili buai chiam ngai lova. Tih tur kha pakhat te tein a indawtin ka ti zel a. Rilru tih hah kha engmah sawtna a awm lo tiin ka inhrilh thin a, vawiina ka tih zawh theih ngei turah khan ka insawrbing thin. Hma ka sawn tih ka hmuh khan min tihahdan thin (When things pile up, I don’t panic. I just start with one thing at a time. I remind myself that stress doesn’t help, so I focus on what I can finish today. Once I see progress, I feel relaxed again).”

The statement shows perseverance and emotional control—the advance of keeping one’s cool by means of organizing and working steadily. 45% of the students said they practiced similar systematic ways of stress management.

In addition, some students used curiosity and imagination to release their tensions. They mentioned that changing their study places, listening to music, or participating in group activities were helpful in regaining their focus and motivation. 50% of the students brought in art or social activities as one of the stress management techniques that contributed to transforming stress into positive energy. The flexibility and openness turned downtimes into opportunities, thus, for growth and learning.

Throughout the discussions, students frequently described instances where stress levels and coping mechanisms fluctuated in unison. When the stress level was up, they unconsciously resorted to prayer, talking, or tiny personal rituals as their means of obtaining peace. One student captured this balance beautifully:

“Ka rilru a hah lutuk chuan ka tih tur engkim kha ka dah tawp a, ka chawl tawp zel. A chang leh pawnah te ka va chhuak a, thawk te ka va la a, van mawi tak te ka thlir a. Chu chuan khawvel nena khaikhin chuan ka buaina tetzia min hriatchhuahtir thin. Chuan rilru fim takin thil ka ngaihtuah leh theih phah thin (When I feel too heavy, I stop everything for a while. I go outside, breathe, and look at the sky. It reminds me that my problems are small compared to the world. After that, I can think clearly again).”

This simple reflection illustrates the concept of mindfulness—the ability to interrupt and restore a state of calm.

The complex relationship between stress, personality traits, and coping skills became obvious to students as they began to speak about all the lawful factors which determined their reaction, or even recovery. In the first instance, those imparting above average on neuroticism and manifesting mood changes would perceive stress first but would go in search of support. Emotional expressiveness would transform their ability to release pressure rather than hold on to old feelings of despair. On the contrary, students scoring low on neuroticism would see stress as a manageable

challenge and so faced by good planning and endurance thereby mitigating the stress. The relationship between friendliness and extraversion made the group that composed it turn stress into an energy source that drove them towards comfort through interaction, laughter, and social ties. The student discussions made it clear that personality is not just a constituent of how different students perceive stress but also influences their choice of coping mechanism! An adept choice for coping minimized stress, thereby forming a flawless loop of stress-to-recognition-stress-reduction-categories.

In a nutshell, these voices tell us that personality subtly determines the coping rhythm. Highly neurotic students felt a lot of stress but healed through emotional and social freedom. The highly conscientious stressed students worked through life's situations in their personal and professional lives, maintaining order and discipline, while the less open and extroverted found support in their artistic, social, and introspective activities. The negotiations surrounding coping express that the action has not been withdrawal but a maturation in evolving ability that is sustained by trust, friendship, and growing resilience that mark adolescents in Mizoram.

4.9 Analysis and Interpretation of Objective 9

Objective 9: Measures for Managing Stress, Development of Personality and Enhancing Coping Skills among Higher Secondary School Students in Mizoram

The results from both quantitative and qualitative study provide a vivid snapshot of adolescent experiences, in Mizoram's higher secondary schools—characterized by moderate yet prevalent stress, evolving identities and coping mechanisms that are adaptive but inconsistent. Drawing from these findings various measures can be proposed to enhance students' well-being, personal development and resilience.

1. Strengthening Stress-Management Programs

Based on the data, it was concluded that 76.48% of students experience stress considering the fact that nearly 20% of them experience severe stress.

The stress mostly comes from the demands, the expectations of the parents, and the societal pressure regarding one's gender. Thus, stress-relief activities like short mindfulness practices, deep breathing, and writing to reflect should be offered by schools either at the start or the end of the day. A teacher who is good at counselling can help a student recognize the early signs of stress and can guide the child to adopt a healthy coping strategy such as not blaming oneself or isolating oneself but rather talking and sharing with others. Introducing silence breaks to the school schedule can be really powerful, as it will allow the students to stop what they are doing, breathe, and regain their concentration when stress is at its peak. Eventually, these practices will lower anxiety. Show to the students that being able to deal with emotions is a critical part of the learning process and also of gaining success.

2. Promoting Emotional Literacy and Counselling Support

The qualitative results pointed out that family quarrels, problems in relationship and peer comparison to each other had a great influence on the students' states. The establishment of student-counseling centers or peer-mentoring groups can assure the adolescents of a safe place where they can openly express their feelings without worrying about being judged. The life-skills education as advocated by NEP-2020, should predominantly focus on the development of understanding, empathy, and problem-solving skills. Parent's guidance sessions are just as important so that families take a supportive approach rather than putting up pressure, thus turning the home into a protective space against stress, rather than a source of it. When the students feel truly recognized and supported, they come to understand that feelings are not signs of weakness but rather signal of the need for attention and bonding. It is these frameworks of empathy that enable them to mature, capable of dealing with or burden of trials in a truly calm wisdom.

3. Gender-Sensitive Interventions

The statistical and thematic evaluations uncovered that female students undergo stress and take care of household chores while male students often suppress their feelings. Schools could organize sessions according to gender in which boys would be taught to express their feelings while girls would be

given the chance for uninterrupted studying. It is essential to implement educational and parental sensitization programs in order to challenge the existing norms which permit both sexes to gain full emotional and coping skills. Opening up conversations about gender roles in class can gradually change the views that restrict emotional growth. When the two sexes are instructed to divide the chores and to speak out their emotions, the school environment turns into a place of equality where each student can learn and live without heavy, unvoiced burdens.

4. Curriculum Integration for Personality Development

Generally, the traits of conscientiousness, agreeableness, and openness were examined regarding their likelihood for growth. The values of discipline, empathy, and assertiveness are the outcome of value-centered and experience-based learning—group work, discussions, leadership retreats, and arts-based activities. The students from the Arts stream, already benefited from the interdisciplinary courses on Education and Mental Health, are making a strong case for the positive impact of academic content on personality. The introduction of ethical aspects in other streams would similarly encourage holistic development across all disciplines. When learning shifts from textbooks to experiences, students start linking comprehension to kindness and introspection. The union of academic and moral aspects does not simply create knowledgeable learners but also thoughtful, understanding, and socially conscious individuals who are equipped and willing to give their precious share to the society.

5. Enhancing Coping Skills through Practical Training

Quantitative findings showed that the vast majority of the students (76.12%) are able to cope successfully but at the same time, qualitative assessment revealed that adolescents are unable to cope without their friendship, music, and prayer as the main sources of their emotional support. The schools could capitalize on those abilities by establishing the peer support systems, providing music or art therapy and organizing recreational activities aimed at promoting emotional release in a constructive manner. Moreover, conducting workshops on coping skills which would include relaxation

methods, time management, and problem-solving techniques would also help the students, in turning the awareness into the application of practical solutions. The students who learn how to control their thoughts and feelings with the help of proper techniques will feel like they are in control and they will feel inner peace. The students after these experiences realize that difficulties are not just a matter of being persistent; it is about keeping a good attitude and staying balanced even in the toughest situations.

6. Incorporating Faith and Community in Resilience Building

In collaboration with schools, churches, and youth groups, an increase in resilience experience of the students comes by in the orthodox roles: prayer, church meetings, and group worshiping-periodical neighbourhood meetings focused on values, understanding, and faith-based contemplation can inculcate in them that self-worth means not only marks and competition but rather simple things like truthfulness and endurance. This approach is appropriated toward the respect for the religious tradition of the state with the transformation of faith into one of the strong positive psychosocial props. They find the isolation of problems, however, and receive for themselves a sweep of guidance but fully realizing that their community supports them. This faith, engraved by meditation and compassion, is no longer a mere belief but a force that is developing all the time and enhances their self-confidence and serenity.

7. Teacher Capacity Building

Teachers are the ones who connect academic learning with emotional development and play an essential role in reducing student stress. It is necessary that professional development regarding behaviour, emotionality and empathy in teaching be very much encouraged so that teachers will be able to detect the symptoms of stress early and respond appropriately. Teachers when communicating with students in such a manner that kindness is present, offering listening that is non-judgmental, and encouraging through praise instead of intimidation, students feel secure and valued. Mentoring programs—whereby teachers are supporting each other—can create a safe space for students to come out with both academic and personal problems. This way teachers go beyond the limits of their profession and become facilitators of

students' holistic development, and of their confidence and resilience as well. A teacher that cares can transform a classroom into a place where learners feel recognized, supported, and motivated to give their best and can thus be called an environment of encouragement.

8. Multi-Level Collaboration

To effectively help adolescents be healthy and be more resilient, it is necessary to joint and adopt a comprehensive approach, which includes teachers, parents, counselors, and the wider community. At schools, well-being committees would have to be formed to manage awareness workshops and peer-support actions and parents could at their side attend orientation sessions to learn how to encourage their children without causing them stress. Cooperation with youth groups in churches and local NGOs would make sure that the support given is based on faith and moral values, which is culturally appropriate in Mizoram. Educational authorities, universities, and mental health specialists may all participate in this process by including mental-health and personality-development training in the academic curriculum. The emotional support provided by each of these layers working together would be a constant factor in the lives of the students, thus making education a source of confidence instead of stress. A united front reassures the kids that their growth is not an isolated fight but rather a shared journey with the backing of understanding adults and a community with a good heart.

4.10 Conclusion

This chapter highlighted that the higher secondary students in Mizoram experience a lot of stress but also show the development of personality traits and cope using good methods. Gender, academic stream and family expectations are some of the factors that determine the trends. The data analysis along with responses from student focus group discussions revealed the continuing significant problems being academic pressure, social issues and the expression of emotions. Companionship, stable family relations, religious beliefs, and guidance from teachers

were mentioned as main factors to help teenagers keep their psychological equilibrium and to uplift their spirits in times of difficulty.

The research findings indicate that adolescence in Mizoram is a time of troubles and opportunities and that emotional education supplemented with supportive interactions in school and family, along with community intervention, can reduce stress and help in socialization of youth that are responsible, resilient, and value-driven, fully fulfilling the holistic vision of education as framed by the National Education Policy (2020).

The subsequent chapter, after the conclusion of analysis and interpretation of the study, will give a detailed discussion of major findings, with interpretations of these findings, implications of the study, and recommendations on future projects and research.

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CHAPTER V

MAJOR FINDINGS, DISCUSSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

5.1 Major Findings

5.2 Discussion on the Findings

5.3 Educational Implications

5.4 Recommendations

5.5 Suggestions for Further Studies

5.6 Conclusion

CHAPTER V

MAJOR FINDINGS, DISCUSSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

This chapter strengthens the main findings of the research and gives a discussion of what is unmasked concerning the academic, personal, and emotional lives of higher secondary school students in Mizoram. The results regarding perceived stress, personality characteristics and coping strategies are considered in the light of the existing literature, taking into account the broader social and cultural contexts that have an influence on the daily life of students. By integrating the quantitative findings with the qualitative insights that have been exchanged during the latter phase, the chapter offers a more comprehensive view of how these aspects impact adolescent's well-being and behavior.

Based on these conclusions, the chapter also points out the educational consequences that should be drawn for teachers, schools, parents, counselors, and policymakers. These consequences highlight the need for supportive practices, sensitive guidance, and well-informed interventions that could positively influence the emotional wellness of students and their overall development. In addition, the chapter not only lists a set of recommendations for future research but also indicates possible future research directions that would likely lead to a deeper or broader understanding of the current study.

5.1 MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The key findings relating to the objectives of the study are detailed in the following section.

5.1.1 Findings of Objective 1: Level of perceived stress

1. Among the 1,386 higher secondary school students who took part in the research, 259 students (18.69%) were identified to have a very high level of

perceived stress ($M = 27.14$), 1,060 students (76.48%) suffered a moderate level ($M = 21.66$), and 67 students (4.83%) complained of a low level ($M = 14.02$).

2. The general mean perceived-stress score was 21.72 showing that the majority of adolescents in Mizoram are under a moderate level of stress.

5.1.2 Findings of Objective 2: Level of Personality traits

3. The analysis of the five personality attributes—Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness—indicates that most of the students are characterized by the moderate level for all traits.
 - With regard to Neuroticism, 1020 students (73.59%) were in the moderate range, 173 (12.48%) were in the high range, and 193 (13.93%) were in the low range.
 - With respect to Extraversion, 106 students (72.58%) were in the moderate range, 179 (12.92%) were in the high range, and 201 (14.50%) were in the low range.
 - Regarding Openness, 926 students (66.81%) were in the moderate range, 222 (16.02%) were in the high range, and 238 (17.17%) were in the low range.
 - With respect to Agreeableness, 986 students (71.13%) were in the moderate range, 193 (13.93%) were in the high range, and 207 (14.94%) were in the low range.
 - In terms of Conscientiousness, 1,025 students (73.95%) were in the moderate range, 180 (12.99%) were in the high range, and 181 (13.06%) were in the low range.
4. The general personality traits level of the 1,386 students was distributed the same way, with 967 students (69.77%) at the moderate level, 200 students (14.43%) at the high level, and 219 students (15.80%) at the low level.
5. The mean personality trait score of the students was 22.78 which indicates a moderate level of personality development.

5.1.3 Findings of Objective 3: Level of coping skills

6. Among the 1,386 higher secondary school students, 187 students (13.49%) were identified with a high level of coping skills, 1,055 students (76.12%) were exhibiting a moderate level, and 144 students (10.39%) were showing a low level of coping skills.

7. The mean coping-skills score of the students was 94.44, which is in the moderate range of the scale thus indicating that the majority of students have a moderate level of coping skills.

5.1.4 Findings of Objective 4: Differences in perceived stress

8. The female students' mean perceived-stress score was 22.835, while the male students' average was 20.251. A t-value of 9.354 was obtained, which was significant at the 0.01 level, confirming the hypothesis of a significant difference in perceived social stress between genders. The female group established a higher mean score which was compatible with the higher perceived stress of female students as compared to males.

9. Perceived-stress scores mean at 22.86 for Science students, 21.60 for Commerce students, and 20.61 for Arts students. The F-value of 24.384 that was found was significant at the 0.01 level and thus, it revealed a large difference among the three streams. The science students were the most stressed in terms of mean weight, then the commerce and lastly the art students.

10. Government school students' mean perceived-stress score was 21.629 and that of private school students was 21.956. A t-value of 1.169 was obtained, and this was not significant, thereby signaling no significant distinction in perceived stress between the two groups. Students from private schools got a slightly higher average, albeit this difference was not statistically significant.

5.1.5 Findings of Objective 5: Differences in personality traits

11. The analysis of personality traits by gender showed significant differences across most domains. Female students scored higher in Neuroticism ($t = 6.753$, $p < 0.01$), Agreeableness ($t = 2.657$, $p < 0.01$), and Conscientiousness ($t = 4.681$, $p < 0.01$). In contrast, male students

scored slightly higher in Openness ($t = 2.427$, $p < 0.05$). No significant difference was found in Extraversion ($t = 1.230$, NS).

12. With regard to stream of study, significant differences were found in all five personality traits: Neuroticism ($F = 11.278$, $p < 0.01$), Extraversion ($F = 5.122$, $p < 0.01$), Openness ($F = 9.080$, $p < 0.01$), Agreeableness ($F = 4.262$, $p < 0.05$), and Conscientiousness ($F = 4.305$, $p < 0.05$). Post-hoc analysis revealed that Science students were generally higher in Openness and Conscientiousness, Arts students scored higher in Agreeableness, and Commerce students showed slightly greater Neuroticism.
13. In terms of type of school management, the analysis showed no significant difference in Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, and Conscientiousness, but a significant difference in Agreeableness ($t = 2.399$, $p < 0.05$). Private-school students scored higher in Agreeableness than those in government schools.

5.1.6 Findings of Objective 6: Differences in coping skills

14. The mean coping-skills score for female students was 93.520, while that of male students was 95.825. The obtained t -value of 3.264 was significant at the 0.01 level, showing a significant difference in coping skills between male and female students. Male students recorded a higher mean score, indicating stronger coping abilities than females.
15. The mean coping-skills scores for students of different streams were Arts = 94.96, Commerce = 94.28, and Science = 95.84. The obtained F -value of 1.268 was not significant, indicating no significant difference in coping skills among the three academic streams. Science-stream students obtained a slightly higher mean, followed by Arts and Commerce students.
16. The mean coping-skills score for government-school students was 94.723, while that for private-school students was 94.152. The obtained t -value of 0.819 was not significant, showing no significant difference in coping skills between students of government and private schools. Government-school students recorded a marginally higher mean than private-school students.

5.1.7 Findings of Objective 7: Relationship between perceived stress, personality traits, and coping skills

17. The correlation between perceived stress and personality traits was found to be $r = 0.089$, which was significant at the 0.01 level. This shows a small but statistically significant positive relationship, indicating that students with higher scores on certain personality dimensions also tended to report slightly higher levels of perceived stress.
18. The correlation between perceived stress and coping skills was $r = -0.280$, which was significant at the 0.01 level. This indicates a moderate negative relationship, showing that students with stronger coping skills experienced lower levels of perceived stress.
19. The correlation between personality traits and coping skills was $r = -0.065$, which was significant at the 0.01 level. This reveals a very weak negative relationship, suggesting that personality traits have a minimal yet statistically significant association with coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.

5.1.8 Findings of Objective 8: Factors Contributing to Stress, Personality, and Coping Skills

20. Focus group discussions evidenced that academic and parental demands were the major contributors to the stress higher secondary students of Mizoram were experiencing. Constant assessments, heavy schedules, and the need to be the best in exams were the main factors of stress that were oftentimes accompanied by anxiety, comparing oneself to others and unwillingness to take part due to lack of confidence.
21. Students indicated that their mental health was significantly influenced by their families. Children from encouraging families reported feeling relaxed and motivated, while, those who had family issues, alcoholism, or financial struggles experienced a lot of emotional stress, which made it even more difficult for them to focus on their schoolwork.
22. There were distinct gender differences in the students' experience of stress. The girls said they were feeling under very strong emotional pressure, and besides that, they were doing most of the housework, which claimed

their available time for relaxation. The boys seemed to be more relaxed. They mostly got rid of stress by going out with friends or doing other activities outdoors, which is a sign of the impact of gender roles on the management of stress. Student groups showed no major differences in coping abilities, only slight variations. Some participants said that Arts students are very good at managing stress while the majority thought that the structured and orderly habits of Science students account for the slightly higher average in coping. Coping, however, is based mainly on routines and support networks, rather than on academic discipline.

23. A large number of students indicated stress through symptoms like fatigue, sleeplessness, and lack of appetite, showing that mental pressure sometimes manifests itself through the body. These signs were most common during exams. They usually decreased afterwards suggesting that stress is of a controllable nature rather than being persistent.

24. The FGD also indicated that personal traits were a factor in students' reactions. More anxious and insecure were those who were high on the neuroticism scale, while those high on conscientiousness and emotional stability dealt with stress by being organized and working consistently. Doing things like being creative, making jokes, and socializing were among the ways students with traits like openness and extroversion used to free themselves from stress.

25. Friendship, prayer, and discipline seemed to be the ways to cope. The learners relied on the presence of their friends, prayer, and short moments of self-reflection to calm themselves and to get their concentration back. Faith was often described as a source of comfort and inner strength that helped them keep hope alive in the midst of stress caused by studies.

26. The results showed a strong connection between stress, personality, and coping. Emotionally sensitive students experienced stress the fastest but sought relief through friendships or prayer. Those students who were conscientious tended to overcome it through their study plan and self-control, while those who were sociable and expressive returned to equilibrium by using their artistic and social connection avenues. This indicates a double

mechanism in which stronger coping skills lead to lower stress and personality being the silent factor affecting student's adaptation. They combined efforts to present the Mizo adolescents as quietly strong, treading through life's challenges with faith, discipline, and emotions in balance.

27. Family atmosphere was stated by the students as a very instrumental factor in determining their psychological health. The children of stable parents would express their feelings as “calm and motivated” whereas those who go through family conflicts, alcoholism or financial pressure, would be more stressed and less focusable.

28. Students' stress experiences reflected noticeable gender differences. Female students reported going through intense emotional pain, on top of that, they had to do more housework, which left them little time for relaxing. Male students appeared to be less stressed, socializing or indulging in sports were their ways of coping, which very much points out the role of gender in stress management. Similarities across streams were minor and presented no significant difference in terms of coping skills. Although some students opined that Arts students were better at managing their stress, the overall discussion suggested that Science students' disciplined and orderly habits were the reasons for their higher average in dealing with stress. But the reality is that coping mainly depends on habits and support networks rather than the academic discipline.

29. Many students marked tiredness, sleeplessness and less appetite as symptoms of stress indicating that mental pressure is often reflected physically. These signs were the most pronounced during exams. However, they usually disappeared after that which means that the stress was temporary rather than chronic.

30. The FGD also revealed that trends of personality traits differed among students' responses. The high neurotics reported more anxiety and insecurity; while the workers of the conscientious and emotionally stable types would resort to organizing and working hard as their means of stress relief. The students who are open and outgoing used to stress reduction techniques like art, humour, and socializing.

31. Connection, faith, and self-control emerged as the main resources to cope with the situation. Students relied on the company of friends, prayer, and short periods of contemplation to calm themselves and regain their focus. The religious belief was often cited as a source of both comfort and strength, which helped them to keep the hope alive even in the face of academic pressure.

32. In the meantime, the research findings indicated that there was a very close relationship among stress, personality and coping. The students who were emotionally very sensitive could not stand stress for long and thus, they always went for the prayer or the presence of friends as their comfort. The conscientious ones, on the other hand, were the masters of stress through their planning and discipline. The extroverted and creative ones, however, would resort to their drawing and socializing for the same purpose of regaining balance. This means that the more powerful the coping skills, the less the stress and the more the personality that gently shaped the way of students adapting. All of them together depict the Mizo adolescents as quietly strong, whose prevailing triad of faith, discipline, and emotion helps them to grow through life's hardships.

5.1.9 Findings of Objective 9: Measures for Managing Stress, Developing Personality, and Enhancing Coping Skills

33. The majority of students face moderate to stress primarily because of academic demands and parental pressures; therefore incorporating daily mindfulness and guided relaxation can assist in reestablishing equilibrium and concentration in their school routine.

34. Intelligence and counseling assistance are crucial since students frequently face challenges related to family or friends; secure counseling environments and compassionate parental support can transform emotional difficulties into development.

35. Programs that are sensitive, to gender issues are necessary—girls bear domestic duties while boys frequently hide their feelings; frank conversations can foster equality and better emotional openness.
36. Personality growth should be incorporated into the curriculum via hands-on learning and values instruction aiding students in becoming compassionate people.
37. Adaptive abilities can be enhanced via channels such, as peer groups, artistic activities and relaxation seminars that provide useful techniques to convert stress into self-discipline and strength.
38. Encouraging faith and community involvement is important as prayer and collective reflection assist students, in discovering peace and meaning while promoting foundation.
39. Teachers require professional training to identify emotional needs promptly and guide students, with kindness and empathy.
40. Collaboration among schools, families, communities, and educational authorities can ensure holistic care, making education in Mizoram not just a pursuit of marks but a path toward emotional strength, resilience, and self-worth.

5.2 DISCUSSION ON THE FINDINGS OF THE PRESENT STUDY

This section discusses the principal findings of the study and considers the factors that contributed to them.

5.2.1 Discussion on the findings related to the Level of Perceived Stress

The study showed that most of the higher secondary students in Mizoram experience a moderate level of stress, while a smaller portion face more intense pressure and only a few feels very little stress.

Discussion:

The outcomes of this study are in line with those put forth by researchers in India and abroad who observed that the moderate stress is the most common condition for teenagers. Patel (2007) et al. along with Watode, Kishore, and Kohli (2015) pointed out that the students usually face academic stress frequently due to the examination requirements and parents' expectations. Keerthi et al. (2024) have also pointed out similar findings. The Indian Nursing Journal (2025) asserts that most of the adolescents go through moderate but steady stress in their daily academic activities. Research from different parts of the world has been conducted, for instance, Leung et al. (2007) In Hong Kong, and Yusoff et al. (2010) In Malaysia, and Li and Chow (2018) In China also have come to the same conclusion that the students of these countries are at moderate stress levels because of cutting academic competition and limited leisure time.

On the other hand, there have been some studies that reported different results. Bhasin, Sharma, and Saini (2010) who studied Rao and Menon (2012) mentioned high stress levels in adolescents living in the metro cities like Delhi and Bengaluru where they Cited constant evaluations and exam pressures connected to psychosomatic problems like fatigue, sleeplessness, and anxiety. Nair and Joseph (2009) found that competition and comparison with peers were among the stress factors while this research points to study load and parents' pressure as the main causes. These differences could be talking about the particular schooling environment in Mizoram that is more communal in nature with teachers, classmates, and family members giving more emotional support which in turn helps to alleviate the stress problem.

Notwithstanding, the results of this research correspond with the findings of both national and international research that moderate stress is a typical experience of adolescents. Comparable conclusions have been reached by Singh and Kaur (2017) Andersson and Hansson (2020) and Wright and Johnson (2023) who indicate that students often cope with demands by developing their coping skills, social support, and nurturing relationships.

Kumari and Ghosh (2015), Nagle and Sharma (2018), and Rao and Menon (2012) are among the researchers who have pointed out mindfulness, breathing techniques, and life-skills training as stress reduce and resilience enhancers. In the State of Mizoram, these techniques can be easily complemented by the inclusion of community and faith-based activities like guided reflection, prayer, and peer-support groups—activities that are very much part of the culture. When the educators and parents create an atmosphere of understanding and compassion, schools turn into places that are safe for students to learn how to turn stress into self-discipline and emotional maturity.

5.2.2 Discussion on the findings related to the Level of Personality Traits

The study found that most of the higher secondary students in Mizoram scored at a moderate level in all five personality traits—Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness. Only a small number of students were found at the high or low levels for each trait.

Discussion:

The recognition of this as a universal adolescent phenomenon seems to be supported by most studies carried out in India and other countries. The studies by Bharadwaj and Sharma (2005), Das and Sinha (2008), and Singh and Arora (2010) have indicated that the tweeners usually depict moderate and changing personal traits. The whole adolescent process is one of gaining control on one's self, socializing, and taking up responsibilities. Moreover, pioneering researchers such as Soto and Tackett (2013), Costa and McCrae (2016) have marked these personality features as being the main ones in the transition period and hence their growth development especially in terms of Conscientiousness and Emotional Stability.

Nonetheless some of the literature reported opposite results. Bayram and Bilgel (2009) and Thompson and Evans (2024) observed the phenomenon of high neuroticism associated in academic competition and the latter study also found that students who scored high on conscientiousness showed signs of less academic burnout. In contrast to this, students from Mizoram appear to be emotionally secure manifesting qualities such as co-operation, sympathy and responsibility—traits that

are recommendable for adjustment and mental well-being. Additionally studies similar to this one by Das and Choudhary (2015), Rani and Bhatnagar (2016), Sharma and Kumari (2021), and Pandey and Bansal (2025) associated Agreeableness and Conscientiousness with characteristics of toughness and resilience.

Earlier studies also pointed out that personality traits are not fixed; they can mature through life experiences (Hudson & Fraley 2015). It is the responsibility of teachers and institutions in Mizoram to use such knowledge by introducing activities that develop good character traits and empathy such as group discussions, assuming leadership, and doing creative things together. Research carried out by Vohra and Kaur (2013), Thomas and Joseph (2020), Kumar and Sinha (2024) indicated that positive experiences lead to both stability and resilience in students. It is very important that teachers give a little support and care to those students who are emotionally unstable or lack self-confidence so as to create the strong awareness, resilience, and responsibility by students (Cheng & Zhang, 2017; Williams & Green, 2021).

5.2.3 Discussion on the findings related to the Level of Coping Skills

The study showed that most of the higher secondary students in Mizoram possess a moderate level of coping skills, while a smaller group demonstrate stronger abilities and some continue to face difficulties in managing stress.

Discussion:

The observation of various students showing good coping skills is in line with the findings of several surveys done not only in India but also worldwide. According to Bharadwaj and Sharma (2005), Kumari and Singh (2011) and Vohra and Kaur (2013), Indian adolescents commonly use a combination of coping through problem-solving, brainstorming and getting help from others to cope with the pressure. On the other hand, Evans and Steiger (2010) and Leung et al. (2006) pointed out that overseas students also treated control, communication skills and time management as the main ways for coping. Besides, these discoveries show that youths, irrespective of their base, are moderately skilled in coping and are still learning to control their emotions and responsibilities.

Yet, some research found opposite patterns. Byrne and Mazanov (2007) and Chen and Huang (2012) reported that the reliance on release or evasion caused anxiety and burnout. Conversely, the students from Mizoram showed positive ways of handling stress, most likely with the help of strong community ties, spiritual beliefs and close friends to whom they can speak and be open with emotionally.

At the same time, the average scores obtained in the present study correlate with the results of Rani and Bhatnagar (2016) Kaur and Thakur (2023) and Pandey and Bansal (2025) who asserted that the use of coping mechanisms that not only incorporate the emotional aspect but affect the tasks as well results in greater resilience and academic adjustment. This shows that students in Mizoram are developing coping strategies but still need more formal support to boost their assurance and emotional resilience during difficult situations, like exams.

In the context of Mizoram, schools can facilitate the development of coping skills by conducting stress management courses, life skills training and peer-support groups focusing on communication and self-reflection. The researchers Thomas and Joseph (2020) as well as Das and Pradhan (2023) bring up the practices of mindfulness, prayer and positive thinking as those that help in the process of developing well-being and resilience. Such culturally rooted, school-based programs should be encouraged as they would help the youths in Mizoram to efficiently deal with stress and become emotionally resilient and balanced individuals.

5.2.4 Discussion on the findings related to Differences in the Level of Perceived Stress

1. The findings revealed a significant difference in perceived stress between male and female higher secondary students in Mizoram, with girls reporting noticeably higher stress levels.

This result corresponds with the results of both Indian and international research studies. Researchers from India namely Sharma and Kaur (2005), Bhasin et al. (2010), Rani and Chand (2018), and Keerthi et al. (2024) found out that girls are typically subjected to greater stress than boys. At the same time, the international studies, conducted by Evans and Steiger (2013) in Canada, Yusoff et al. (2010) in

Malaysia, and Davis and Lee (2025) in the USA, also concluded that female students generally experience more stress than their male counterparts. The studies point to the fact that girls often go through considerable emotional and social stress that is related to their academic pressure, teachers' and parents' expectations, and personal evaluations.

Notably, different studies have brought up varying conclusions. For instance, Andersson and Hansson (2020) in Sweden reported that there were no differences in levels of stress associated with gender among high school students. So did Thaker and Verma (2014), except that the stress scores were higher for boys than for girls, though the difference was not statistically significant. The disparity may have its roots in the ongoing organizational differences that affect revealing or handling of stress.

On the other hand, the scenario of stress levels in female students in Mizoram largely coincides with the major part of world research. A lot of studies find out that females, because of their emotional expressiveness and social sensitivity, are more prone to recognizing and disclosing stress.

The introduction of life skills training, emotional understanding workshops, and counseling strategies has been proposed by researchers as the means to facilitate the handling of both academic and emotional stress efficiently, particularly for girls (Watode et al., 2015; Nagle & Sharma 2018; Keerthi et al., 2024). Moreover, they underlined the importance of peer support, relaxation techniques, and mindfulness activities in the process of self-regulation and attaining emotional balance.

In Mizoram, schools might schedule brief daily relaxation and reflection sessions for students, which will allow children to calm down and express their feelings in a non-threatening way. Teacher-supervised counseling corners could be set up to provide girls with the opportunity to express their concerns and get support. Workshops for parents might also be necessary to bring about a change of mindset so that they won't inadvertently put pressure on children through exams or grades. The establishment of faith- or community-centered dialogues around the concept of self-

worth may further students' emotional stability and thus, shrink stress differences between boys and girls.

2. The findings indicated a significant difference in perceived stress across the Arts, Commerce, and Science streams, with Science students reporting noticeably higher stress levels than the others.

The results are similar to those of studies done in India and other parts of the world. Apart from these also Sharma and Kaur (2005), Watode et al. (2015) and Kaur and Singh (2015) have said that science students suffer from stress because of the difficult syllabi, long hours of studying and frequent tests. Similar conditions are reported by Leung et al. (2007) in Hong Kong and by Khan and Abid (2014) in Pakistan whereby science students experienced more academic pressure than arts or commerce students. This similarity shows that heavy academic load and high parental expectations cause stress in science teaching across different places.

A number of research studies like Agarwal and Chakraborty (2023) have found no differences in stress levels for the different disciplines when individual coping mechanisms were taken into account. Thaker and Verma (2014) also reported that stress levels were the same for different school categories suggesting that personal mindset and coping methods might sometimes outweigh the influence of the subject stream.

The finding however still corresponds with the main current trend in the literature—students taking up difficult academic courses being the ones who suffer from stress due to increased expectations and heavier workloads.

The academia recommended to switch over science education to a student-oriented one, where in breaks would be incorporated, and also to have workshops on study techniques for the purpose of relieving the students of extremely heavy burden (Indian Journal of Pediatrics 2023; Rao and Menon 2012). Besides, they further suggested through group learning and peer support, to make available the ambience of cooperation and lessen isolation.

Science students in Mizoram can take advantage from sessions on the integration of stress management by referring to time management and self-care. Schools can insert a short pause for well-being or mindfulness in the timetable as a way of balancing it out. Teachers can give priority to understanding rather than rote learning, while career-guidance sessions can help students to set realistic goals. Encouraging mixed-stream activities where students from science, arts and commerce groups cooperate will not only lead to the formation of friendship but also the elimination of the performance gap that causes stress.

3. The study found that the difference in perceived stress between students from government and private schools was minimal, and the variation was not statistically significant among higher secondary students in Mizoram.

This finding is consistent with the results of Agarwal and Chakraborty (2023) who found that stress did not vary between students in government and private schools. According to their findings, the individual coping mechanisms, social contacts, and the home environment have a more significant effect on stress than the school's administration. In a similar study, Rani and Chand (2018) found that emotional and academic stresses were impacting students equally regardless of the school type. Even in the international studies, such as Pérez and Navarro (2021) in Latin America, it was revealed that fostering teacher-student bonds rather than the institution type was the main contributor to the reduction of stress.

Nandhini and Kumar (2014) posited that students in private schools experienced more stress compared to their peers in public schools due to increased expectations and constant digital distractions. However, these differences seem to be a product of social-class-disparities and school environment rather than only management-type.

In general, the current situation matches with the majority of research which states that the stress levels in adolescents are influenced less by the type of school (public or private) and more by personal factors such as self-esteem, motivation, and coping strategies. Support from teachers and peer relationships are perceived to have a larger effect than school system type.

Previous researches suggested to enhance the school atmosphere by means of empathy-centered instruction, transparent communication, and periodic mental health programs for all students of every management style (Pérez & Navarro 2021; Rao & Menon 2012). They also advocated incorporating stress-awareness lessons into the curriculum as a way to build resilience in educational settings (Indian Nursing Journal, 2025).

In Mizoram, where the academic standards of government and private schools are more or less the same, joint programs can be arranged among the schools to share their best practices. It is possible for teachers to be educated about early stress symptoms and how to use gentle interventions. A support system could be established through community counseling involving parents, teachers, and local NGOs. Empathy, equitable distribution of work, and open discussions in schools could make the education system in Mizoram a melding ground that not only endows students of the various management types with emotional well-being but also reinforces the emotional strength of students in each management type.

5.2.5 Discussion on the findings related to differences in Personality Traits

1. The study found that there were significant gender differences in several personality traits among higher secondary students in Mizoram. Female students scored higher in neuroticism, agreeableness, and conscientiousness, while male students showed a slight but significant advantage in openness, and both groups displayed similar levels of extraversion.

The study's results indicated that the girls were found to have a higher level of neuroticism, agreeableness, and conscientiousness, while the boys had a slightly superior score in the dimension of openness. The difference in extraversion was, however, not very large. An extensive majority of these results coincide with the outcomes of previous research. For instance, Kaur and Gill (2007), Rani and Bhatnagar (2016), and Sharma and Verma (2015) reported that girls are emotionally more expressive, more willing to cooperate and more responsible than boys who still mainly show a slight preference in terms of curiosity and openness. Similar conclusions were reached in researches like Das and Sinha (2008) and Sahoo and

Pradhan (2021) which pointed out that Conscientiousness and Agreeableness are the most important traits for determining resilience and adaptation in adolescents, with these traits being more pronounced in the present study's students. Hence, they suggest that the emotional warmth, accountability and empathy typically associated with girls, are not limited to Mizoram alone but rather, represent adolescent patterns across different cultures.

Nonetheless, several studies from various contexts revealed opposite results. One such example is the case of Evans and Steiger (2010) who reported that Canadian male students scored higher on Extraversion and Conscientiousness while Kim and Park (2009), on the other hand, in Korea, claimed that boys were more Emotionally Stable. Some cross-cultural studies like Tucker and McHale (2019) have suggested that parenting styles and household tasks might be the factors responsible for the gender-related personality differences. On the one hand, the Mizo culture expects girls to take care of both academic and household responsibilities; on the other hand, the girls' emotionality (Neuroticism) may be raised along with their diligence (Conscientiousness) at the same time. Therefore, the dissimilarities between contexts might mirror the social norms rather than the natural biological traits.

With these disparities, the current tendency aligns with the personality studies' widely accepted results worldwide: women are usually characterized by higher emotional sensitivity, social warmth and a stronger sense of duty, while men are perceived as being more open to new experiences, though not necessarily as a major trait. The non-existence of gender differences in Extraversion also backs the research findings which have pointed out that the impact of changing social roles has led to the blurring of the previously clear-cut distinctions in behavior.

Proponents like Sood and Gupta (2012) and Thomas and Joseph (2020) have recommended that life-skills and emotional-intelligence education should be incorporated into school curricula so as to facilitate personality development across genders. Group activities designed to foster self-awareness, empathy and confidence, may help reduce the disparities in gender-related stress.

In the context of Mizoram, similar programmes could be tailored through weekly “Peace and Plan” periods where students practise relaxation, planning and sharing. Peer-support groups exclusively for girls can be set up for the purpose of emotional stress relief, while co-educational leadership projects can bring about respect and equal participation. Along with the support of parents and teachers, the process of sexual differentiation can be shortened through the recognition of efforts instead of conformity thus the young people gaining the ideal combination of emotional and intellectual strengths.

2. The study showed significant differences in personality traits across the Arts, Commerce, and Science streams. Arts students displayed lower neuroticism and higher agreeableness, Commerce students scored lower in extraversion, and Science students showed greater openness and conscientiousness than their peers.

According to the findings, there were notable differences among the streams. Science students received higher scores for Openness and Conscientiousness as compared to Arts students who were higher in Agreeableness and Commerce students who showed a slight increase in Neuroticism. Such that research supports these outcomes. For instance, Das and Sinha (2008) and Sorić, Penezić, and Burić (2015) noted that rigorous and well-structured disciplines like Science promote hard work and curiosity while Arts settings, which are more relaxed and encourage interaction, develop cooperation and empathy. School research and learning area of the time have even indicated that children doing and learning in groups generally have the highest scores, in terms of Agreeableness. Such a similar situation occurred in Lee and Kim’s (2019) study where they found that among other personality traits, Conscientiousness and Extraversion were also related to problem-focused coping, which reinforces the idea that educational quality supports the development of characters related to persistence and intent behavior.

In some cases, different results were noted. Sorić et al. (2015) And Reddy and Nair (2022) claimed that the differences in personality traits could be attributed more to the difference in teaching methods and students' motivation than to the subject stream. The same conclusion was made by Tay and Huang (2008) in Singapore who

found no link between subject area and Openness, which implies that individual traits such as curiosity and goal orientation might be more powerful. Thus, these differences show that subject stream affects personality traits to some extent; however, effective teaching methods and a supportive school environment can mitigate the difference.

On the other hand, the trend of the study resembles the one that has been frequently and commonly found in the research on teens. The educational environment where practice and critical thinking are required is usually the main factor for the growth of Conscientiousness and Openness, while the latter scenario is the case with Agreeableness. The slight rise in Neuroticism among Commerce students can be associated with the stress of performance and concerns about the future which has already been noticed in Indian research in relation to economics.

Besides Lee and Kim (2019) and Williams and Green (2021), many other researchers support similar personality development through use of primarily task-centered coaching, self-regulation techniques, and teamwork as well as among classmates. Feedback and reflection activities were helpful in building resilience and emotional management.

In Mizoram, the aforementioned methods can be adopted through conducting brief study-skills workshops at the beginning of each term. Stress-management and breathing exercises can be taught to Commerce students in order to reduce their anxiety, reflective journaling can be introduced to the Science students to link their curiosity with empathy, and finally, Arts students can be assigned milestone-based project rubrics in order to integrate their creativity with focus. Through these practices, Mizo adolescents will be nurtured to become learners who are flexible and who blend emotional maturity with disciplined effort.

3. The study showed that most personality traits were similar among students from government and private schools, with no significant differences in neuroticism, extraversion, openness, or conscientiousness. Only agreeableness differed meaningfully, with private school students scoring slightly higher than government school students.

The analysis revealed that no differences existed in terms of Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, or Conscientiousness when looking at students from government and private schools, but the level of Agreeableness was somewhat higher among students from private schools. This finding is in line with the research of Agarwal and Chakraborty (2023), who similarly found different personality traits in the various management styles. Their study pointed out that the type of school does not mainly affect personality development, family and peer influence do. In that regard, Olsen and Eriksen (2022) identified that fostering teacher–student relationships, rather than the kind of institution, predicts positive engagement and empathy in adolescents. Such parallels indicate that in Mizoram like in other areas, the social and emotional environments exert a greater influence on personality traits than the distinction between public and private schools.

On the contrary, some research has still been done which indicates the opposite. For example, Kato and Shinoda (2022) together with Bayram and Bilgel (2009) noted high levels of stress and emotional volatility in competitive private schools and attributed them to the high-stakes assessments and the use of advanced technology. These inversions point to the fact that there are differences in culture rather than simply the type of management. In the Mizo socio-cultural context, where government and private schools are very comparable in terms of academic standards and community values, such differences remain quite subtle.

Nonetheless, the established pattern concurs with the predominant trend in psychology indicating that the social experiences of teenagers, such as teacher support, peer acceptance, and parental guidance, are relatively more important than administrative management. This finding backs up the claim that the school environment, especially resilience and empathy, plays a bigger role in determining the quality of interpersonal relationships than the administration style.

School-climate initiatives that promote emotional safety through communication, empathy-based teaching methods, and well-being programs are supported by researchers like Pérez and Navarro (2021) and Rao and Menon (2012). Indian Nursing Journal (2025) has also pointed out that including stress-management

modules in the curriculum will be beneficial for students in the process of developing resilience as a skill.

For example, in Mizoram, staff development through collaborative activities in government and private schools can be a good way to exchange ideas for building caring and respectful classrooms. The early signs of distress can be spotted by teachers who have received training and they can then respond with empathy rather than punishment. Parent-teacher-community counseling networks that are supported by NGOs and church youth groups could extend the emotional support beyond school premises. By all means, through the creation of compassion, reasonable workloads, and open communication in all schools in Mizoram, the country could not only enhance the character of its youth but also continue to promote its cultural heritage of togetherness and care.

5.2.6 Discussion on the findings related to differences in Coping Skills

1. The study indicated a significant gender difference in coping skills, with male students showing stronger skills than female students.

Several researches have reported the same thing, that boys use more often to employ task-focused and problem-solving coping strategies. Kaur and Gill (2007) had it that boys participated more in the planning, organizing, and correcting than girls did. And, Das and Choudhary (2015) had it that boys' foremost choice of pre-exam activities was problem-solving and rehearsing the schedule. This behavior is well-known in previous studies. Taylor and Stanton (2007) noted that male students tended to rely on task-oriented coping whereas Khan and Abid (2010) reported that boys frequently employed humor and practical approaches to manage stress. Collectively these studies indicate that boys typically achieve higher scores, in coping techniques involving planning and active responses.

Nevertheless some research presents contrasting findings. Several studies detected no gender disparities. Indicated that girls handle social and emotional challenges more effectively. Kumari and Sahu (2016) demonstrated that numerous girls relied on support, optimism and faith to navigate stress while Williams and Green (2021) identified that girls' elevated emotional intelligence correlated with

adaptive coping strategies, like acceptance and cognitive reframing. Additionally certain Indian studies indicated that despite girls reporting stress their tendency to share emotions and embrace acceptance enabled them to stay resilient.

The slight variation observed in this research is reasonable. In Mizoram boys usually enjoy liberty to be outdoors and discuss issues with their friends, which might aid them in cultivating more proactive coping mechanisms. Conversely girls typically rely on spiritual support from relatives and companions which is beneficial but may seem less "task-oriented" in standardized assessments. This renders the result both plausible and typical in comparison, with related research.

Numerous scholars propose measures to develop coping mechanisms in individuals of both sexes. These encompass life-skills training that focuses on planning and managing time brief mindfulness or breathing exercises to alleviate stress, instructor support, via dialogue and collaborative study gatherings that promote cooperation and accountability (Rao & Menon 2009; Patel & Mehta 2018; Das & Pradhan 2023).

Within Mizoram setting schools might implement these concepts in manners of the local culture. Weekly "coping circles" held during class hours could provide pupils an environment to express minor struggles and collectively develop stress management techniques. Educators might incorporate planning exercises and moments for reflection within lessons to assist learners, in structuring their academics and handling their feelings. Collaboration with youth groups from the church and community organizations can lead to group therapy or basic mindfulness activities conducted after school. Such programs would facilitate the adoption of healthy coping habits among the students: boys through better emotion expression and girls through gaining problem-solving confidence—thus all students being able to tackle academic and personal difficulties with tranquility and self-trust.

- a. The study showed that coping skills were similar across the Arts, Commerce, and Science streams, with no significant differences between the groups.*

The discovery that coping abilities do not significantly vary between Arts, Commerce and Science students aligns with prior studies that identified comparable trends. Tay and Huang (2008) and Reddy and Nair (2022) found that when educational institutions offer uniform learning conditions and instructional support differences in coping skills based on streams tend to vanish. These researches indicated that elements like study routines encouraging teachers and students' capacity to handle difficulties have a more substantial impact on coping mechanisms, than the specific subject area.

However, some studies have shown different results. Kaur and Singh (2015) found that Science students, even under academic pressure, used more efficient coping methods such as planning, asking for help and time management. On the other hand, Vohra and Kaur (2013) and Frydenberg and Lewis (2008) equated perseverance and task-centered behavior with better performance especially in areas that require systematic problem-solving. Such discrepancies usually occur when there is a difference in the difficulty of the curriculum or when the teaching methods and support systems differ significantly across different academic streams.

In opposition to these studies, the present findings from Mizoram suggest that the academic strain may be more or less the same across different streams with teacher expectation and student responsibility being equal, thereby, leading to a more uniform coping response among students.

The absence of variation in the coping mechanisms used by the three streams is quite reasonable in light of the educational situation in Mizoram. Most secondary schools follow a common time-table, give similar exam formats and have similar teacher-student ratios. These similarities probably make it easier for all the students, whether they are from Arts, Commerce or Science, to face difficulties in the same way. Among the factors contributing to the equalizing of coping reactions, are the cultural peer influence like strong friendships in class, joint study sessions and

community support. Therefore, this finding shows a trend that is becoming more common in settings where schools provide access to counseling and educational resources.

The integration of universal coping-skill programs for all students, irrespective of their discipline, has been supported by several authors. Goal-setting, time management, relaxation techniques and peer cooperation are all proven to be effective in building up people's resistance and facilitating their adjustment. Patel and Mehta (2018) advocating for incorporating stress-management training in classroom activities so as to give students an opportunity to use coping strategies in real-life scenarios. Similarly, it was revealed by Gomez and Watson (2016) together with Cheng and Zhang (2017) referring to the same source that reframing, collaboration, and structured reflection incorporated into the course design led to the different yet equally good coping skills by the learners in the different disciplines which resulted in stress reduction and increased self-assurance.

In the case of Mizoram, where the schools are influenced by the same academic calendar and cultural practices to a great extent, the introduction of a joint program aimed at the skilful handling of stress would work wonders. The life-skills teaching period of one hour weekly may be allotted in every school where, no matter what the profession, students would be taught and made to practice such techniques as planning, relaxation, and self-reflection. During the examination months, senior–junior mentoring sessions can be arranged in such a way that the elder students convey their personal coping experiences and give younger ones time-management tips.

b. The study showed that coping skills were almost the same among students from government and private schools, with no significant difference between the two groups.

Numerous researches back this conclusion indicating that coping abilities are influenced more by the school environment and interpersonal connections than by the type of institution whether public or private. Bhattacharya (2010) discovered that

family encouragement and consistent routines enhanced students coping mechanisms whereas Sood and Gupta (2012) observed that proactive coping along with teacher or peer backing boosted health. Olsen and Eriksen (2022) further demonstrated that confidence and transparent communication safeguarded students, against stress stemming from peers. These research findings imply that the crucial factor is not the administration of the school but the backing, compassion and interaction provided to the students.

Certain studies identified distinctions related to the management setting due to differences in academic pressure or discipline. Kato and Shinoda (2022) pointed out that rigorous private institutions sometimes induced stress via competition whereas public schools at times suffered from a lack of organized direction. Nonetheless these discrepancies seem to hinge on factors instead of the type of school ownership per se. When instructional methods and community backing are alike in both kinds of schools as observed in Mizoram, the variations, in coping tend to diminish.

In Mizoram both government and private schools adhere to curricula, assessments and cultural norms. Educators encounter workloads while students have overlapping peer circles and family support systems that offer emotional support. This common setting balances chances to develop coping mechanisms, which explains why both sets display alike trends. The observation highlights a pattern wherein emotional atmosphere and social connections hold greater significance, than the school category.

Experts advise implementing a school-wide strategy for mental health. Rao and Menon (2012) alongside Pérez and Navarro (2021) highlighted the importance of development, transparent dialogue and stress awareness, in every school. The Indian Nursing Journal (2025) additionally recommended integrating health classes and resilience-building workshops into the curriculum to equip all students with effective stress management techniques.

For Mizoram, shared programs can strengthen coping across all schools. Teachers from both management types could join workshops on identifying stress

and guiding relaxation activities. Schools might create short “calm start” routines each morning for breathing or reflection. Partnerships with churches, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and parents would go a long way in providing assistance that is not limited to classrooms only. The connection of these community-based initiatives would make it a point for every student to have coping and emotional balance as a daily learning experience—irrespective of the school he/she goes to.

5.2.7 Discussion on the findings related to the relationship between Perceived Stress, Personality Traits, and Coping Skills

1. The findings revealed a small but statistically significant positive correlation between perceived stress and personality traits.

Discussion:

The result validates research findings both in India and abroad very closely. Misra and McKean (2005) found that neurotic students often reported higher levels of stress and emotional exhaustion while students with higher levels of conscientiousness were better able to adapt to the academic environment. This was echoed by Sahoo and Pradhan (2021) who stated that adolescents with a high degree of conscientiousness and emotional stability are generally the ones who use good coping strategies and feel less stressed. On the other hand Gomez and Watson (2016) reported that organized and task-focused students faced stress more or less due to their proper management of the schedule and study environment. The collective evidence from these studies suggests that personality impacts the interpretation of situations and coping styles similar to the current research results.

Meanwhile, some scientists pointed out certain trends. Das and Sinha (2008) mentioned that students with a mix of personality traits sometimes experience a lot of stress during exams owing to heavy academic requirements. Likewise, Leung et al. (2006) revealed that personality alone could not make adolescents stress-proof when they have to deal with the workload and perform up to the mark. The divergent

results draw the conclusion that personality may determine the extent to which the stress is perceived. However, it does not take away external factors. Stress levels mostly rise when students come across expectations no matter how tough their character is.

All the same, the current data supports the main trend seen in adolescent studies worldwide: those who are emotionally sensitive or anxious tend to be the most stressed amongst students. The slight yet important link uncovered in this research suggests that personality is an influencing factor—it determines to a certain extent how one reacts to stress but does not totally command it. Such a result is every way reasonable and expected among youngsters, as their self-control and emotional regulation are still growing.

Rao and Menon (2009) and Patel and Mehta (2018) in their earlier works have indicated that the introduction of life-skills education in the schools serves students not only to be aware of their personality traits but also to gain confidence in managing stress through organized routines. Das and Pradhan (2023) have pointed out the same by stressing the role of mindfulness and reflective practices in the lives of adolescents helping them to attain balance.

In Mizoram, this may require the incorporation of classroom activities that help the students to attain a braver self-awareness—for instance, the use of the reflection sheets that help them to identify their aptitudes, triggers, and ways to calm themselves down. Teachers could facilitate personality and stress conversations "aiding students to comprehend that caution or anxiety is not a defect but a signal to apply proper coping techniques. In both public and private educational institutions, community therapists or youth interns may arrange workshops on self-awareness and positive thinking. These socially conscious, small-scale initiatives could help Mizo youth gain emotional intelligence and resilience.

2. *The study found a moderate and significant negative correlation between perceived stress and coping skills.*

Discussion:

The finding is consistent with the earlier study. Vohra and Kaur (2013) reported that students with higher grades were more involved in overseeing and controlling their time, thus experiencing less stress in the process. Likewise, Thomas and Joseph (2020) remarked that the students who practiced spirituality and relaxation techniques were the ones who felt stressed academically. Along the same lines, Rani and Bhatnagar (2016) indicated that students using assertive communication and working with peers were managing peer pressure more efficiently. Worldwide studies like Park and Lee (2021) indicated that problem-focused and social-support coping strategies significantly reduced anxiety levels in teenagers. All these studies together point out that using effective coping mechanisms one can defend against stress, which is exactly what the present study has found.

On the other hand, Chakraborty (2006) and Das and Sinha (2008) reported that students who viewed tests as either frightening or unmanageable generally resorted to avoidance or denial coping strategies that were linked to increased stress. Some of the students relied on trickery such as procrastinating, spending too much time online, or detaching emotionally that only augmented their anxiousness. The discrepancies argue that it is not only the frequency of coping but its effectiveness that really matters. Thus, the current findings portray a clear message that the attaining and applying of positive coping techniques can be very helpful in reducing the stress perceived by the young people.

The inverse correlation that was found in this research is a characteristic trend of studies done on adolescents: better coping abilities correspond to less stress. This is rational as coping strategies turn out to be the behavioral means that young people resort to for overcoming their academic and emotional difficulties. Teens that distribute their work, take breaks, and ask for help are likely to come through the

stress in a more effective way. The other way around applies to the individuals who do not use these practices, as they are more likely to be under stress. Therefore, this finding supports the universal observation that coping is the mediator between stress and wellness.

Patel and Mehta (2018), Das and Pradhan (2023), and Rao and Menon (2012) are among the researchers who have proposed strategies for classroom implementations that involved planning, relaxation, and peer support. They recommended that life-skills education, time management, and emotional expression should be included in the school curriculum. Studies conducted by Cheng and Zhang (2017) and Gomez and Watson (2016) further supported the idea that peer interaction and cognitive restructuring come to the aid of students in regaining concentration and emotional control.

In Mizoram, these notions could be realized as a "Life Skills Hour" for learners from all backgrounds and various kinds of schools. Teachers could apply methods like relaxation exercises, reflective journaling practices, or group conversations about managing exam pressure and stress from peers. Mixed-gender and mixed-stream study and support groups could be formed by students, which would enable them to exchange tactics and give each other motivation. These methods are quite complementary to the Mizo culture, which places a high value on collaboration and seeking help from others. By making the coping practice a part of their daily learning routine, the schools not only manage to reduce the students' stress levels but also help the students to regain their composure and face the challenges.

3. The study found a very weak but significant negative correlation between personality traits and coping skills was found.

Discussion:

This result aligns with the conclusions of researchers such as Kumar and Sinha (2024) and Bennett and Morgan (2025), who stated that personality underpins behavior, although coping skills can be developed and enhanced. Roy and Banerjee

(2009), along with Joshi and Chauhan (2017), further pointed out that the students with emotional intelligence are presented with better coping mechanisms but these skills can be mastered through interaction in both educational and social settings. On the other hand, Hudson and Fraley (2014) concluded that the deliberate efforts to increase resilience also lead to the long-term increase in coping flexibility. These findings lend support to the idea that coping is not a set quality, rather it grows with guidance and self-examination.

Certain studies, including Nofle and Robins (2011) and Sorić et al. (2015), Found strong links between Conscientiousness, Openness and active coping. Nonetheless, the extent of the research involved older students. The adolescents, who are developing their character, frequently present less strong links between traits and coping. Consequently, the minor correlation detected in this study is reasonable. It is in line with developmental trends.

The small but significant connection found here reflects a realistic pattern: personality is a factor in coping; however, the major part is played by the environment, experience, and education. Although students' temperaments may differ, all of them can develop their coping skills through supportive experiences. This makes the finding important in the context of school education, as teachers have equal access to all personality types.

Das and Pradhan's (2023) previous research, as well as Bennett and Morgan's (2025) publication, all pointed out the importance of conducting coping training tailored to the individual's personality, combining self-reflection with stress management strategies. Counseling in the classroom, peer mentoring, and mindfulness practices were suggested as the best ways to help students move from self-awareness to coping strategies.

In Mizoram these concepts can be realized in an ingenious and community-oriented way. The schools could organize team-building activities where students would not only reflect on their personalities but also compete. The teachers would be the ones helping children to see their good sides - some might be quiet but great at

planning while others could be very active and good at public speaking - and would also demonstrate how each character can be very useful when facing a challenge. Involvement of parents, churches, and youth clubs can serve as a supporting network to carry on the learning beyond the school. Schools will be the place where kids learn to communicate about feelings, beliefs, and problem-solving techniques, thus creating a shared space where every child, regardless of their personality, will feel empowered to handle stress in a good way.

5.2.8 Discussion on the findings related to factors contributing to the psychological and physiological stress, personality traits, and coping skills

1. Academic, School, and Parental Pressure

The findings indicated that the students undergo both academic and parental pressure. They have a tight schedule filled with constant studying, regular tests, and comparisons that turn learning into a competition rather than an experience. To many students, this stress was mainly of the "normal" category or even inspiring but it still brought with it tiredness, anxiety, and emotional exhaustion especially during the periods of the tests. These qualitative insights add depth to the statistics, revealing elements that the survey figures alone fail to capture. Although the numerical data showed that the majority of students endure stress and a considerable portion encounter severe stress discussions with students uncovered the actual challenges behind these statistics—extended study periods, continuous testing, and the burden of parental demands. These accounts enable us to grasp not the quantity of students, under stress but also the impact this stress has on their everyday experiences, feelings, and health. Combined, the research outcomes and students' personal perspectives create a more compassionate understanding emphasizing the necessity for tangible assistance that tackles both educational challenges and mental well-being in Mizoram's educational institutions.

This trend coincides with researches that had already pointed out similar situations among Indian adolescents . Kaur (2005) and Watode et al. (2015). Noted that ongoing examinations and parental demands resulted in sustained stress for

secondary school pupils. Similarly Nair and Joseph (2009) and Rani and Chand (2018) identified competition and familial pressure as the sources of stress in Kerala and Delhi reflecting the current findings, from Mizoram. Extensive nationwide surveys, including those featured in the *Indian Journal of Pediatrics* (2023) likewise verified that a heavy academic workload and insufficient recreation are the factors contributing to perceived stress in high school students.

Global studies reveal trends. Leung et al. (2007) In Hong Kong, Evans and Steiger (2013) in Canada and Andersson and Hansson (2020), in Sweden all found that teenagers frequently experience "yet exhausting" academic pressure stemming from exam-focused education and peer comparison. However numerous studies emphasize that encouraging teaching methods and understanding parents can alleviate stress despite workloads. Rao and Menon (2012) and Perez and Navarro (2021) for example showed that students' physiological and emotional stress decreased significantly when teachers offered instructions, relaxation intervals and ongoing feedback. The difference does not invalidate the finding; on the contrary, it clarifies that stress is a common phenomenon but the extent of it is dependent on the situation—on the definitions of success given by schools, teachers, and parents.

Scholars in settings have suggested effective solutions. Numerous experts, such as Patel & Mehta (2018), Gomez & Watson (2016), and Cheng & Zhang (2017), advocate for the development of time-management skills, practicing relaxation techniques briefly, having pre-exams and feedback focused on mastery that points out the ranking improvement (e.g. Patel & Mehta 2018; Gomez & Watson 2016; Cheng & Zhang 2017). Culturally appropriate interventions, such as "calm-start" moments before classes, teacher-led activities for dividing big projects into smaller tasks, and parent-teacher conferences with language supporting rather than comparing could be created from these recommendations in the context of Mizoram.

Keeping in mind Mizoram's strong community values and faith-based support, the implementation of these soft, human-centric practices could gradually build up the motivation of the students and at the same time ease the emotional burden of

academic and parental expectations. The same curriculum could be viewed as a less heavy burden and more as a chance for growing on different levels through such small but steady changes.

2. Emotional Strain from Family and Relationships

Study findings showed that apart from the academic commitments, a significant part of the stress students experienced was due to the emotional and family situation surrounding them. A number of students cited home situations as their main sources of stress, for instance, parents conflict, lack of communication or financial issues, which at times, even eclipsed their school problems. For some, the environment at home was a very important factor that determined how well they could focus and keep a sound mind. Those experiencing instability, such as divorce or struggle with alcohol, felt quite often anxiety and powerlessness. In contrast, students from families that were understanding and loving felt more relaxed and more motivated to cope with the stress of studying. The quantitative results demonstrated that the majority of students suffer from stress every now and then while a substantial number are exposed to high stress levels. The qualitative data uncovers and thus brings to light that a considerable part of this stress is due to emotional tension at home and problems in relationships. The combined data and students' accounts together affirm that students in Mizoram are equally affected by academic pressure and family troubles when it comes to stress.

Indian researchers Sharma and Kaur (2005) and Patel (2007) found out that the youth are under stress not only due to exams but also due to parents' pressures and difficult family relations. Nair and Joseph (2009) as well as Rani and Chand (2018) also noted the same and reported that family conflicts and lack of emotional support caused stress in secondary school children which resulted in problems related to concentration and fatigue. The psychological influence of the family setting was also pointed out in Bhattacharya's (2010) study which revealed that teenagers from loving and united families had better adjustment and applied more efficient coping strategies. These earlier observations are almost identical to the study's findings

about the students whose motivation was lost in the absence of family support but got back when they were provided with encouragement and love.

This opinion is supported by international research as well. Studies conducted by Lee and Larson (2012) in Korea and Pérez and Navarro (2021) in Latin America indirectly relied on teenagers' family connection and harmony for their emotional well-being rather than financial assets only. In the same manner, Hernández and Rivera (2020) found that humor, honest speaking, and family interaction were some of the factors that shielded people from mental health issues while Olsen and Eriksen (2022) said that assertive communication and sympathy in relationships enabled adolescents to withstand peer and family pressures more easily. These different views from across the world emphasize that family safety feeling is a common element that gives support to adolescents in stress situations.

There were some studies—like Bayram and Bilgel (2009)—that displayed the educational aspects as the reason, but the consistency throughout different contexts suggests that emotional distress caused by family problems is a constant and legitimate source of perceived stress. So, the present finding is in agreement with a global viewpoint that adolescents' mental health is closely linked to both emotional security and academic performance.

Scholars frequently advocate for measures that improve understanding provide counselling availability and promote family involvement within educational settings. Rao and Menon (2012) along with Patel and Mehta (2018) proposed organized relaxation techniques, facilitated communication activities and teacher intervention to minimize the transfer of stress into school environments. Applying these concepts to Mizoram educational institutions might partner with parent-teacher groups, church youth organizations and local counsellors to establish environments, for open discussion. Short “family reflection” activities during parent meetings, home-visit mentoring by teachers, and culturally sensitive counselling that integrates prayer and empathy could all help. In a society where kinship and faith remain strong, nurturing warm communication within families may be the most powerful and sustainable protection against the emotional strain that burdens many adolescents.

3. *Gender and Stream Differences in Stress Experiences*

The results showed that stress was not felt evenly among genders and academic fields. Female students reported emotional burden and increased household duties whereas male students often concealed their stress or distracted themselves with social events. Science students indicated academic pressure due to lab work and elevated expectations while Arts and Commerce students faced social comparisons and viewed their status as lower but occasionally displayed more emotional insight and toughness. The survey indicated that female students and those, in the Science stream face stress with school type having minimal impact. The students' narratives highlight that girls tend to manage domestic tasks, and Science students encounter significant academic pressure. The survey results and personal experiences of the students combined provide a more compassionate understanding of how gender and the choice of field affect student stress in Mizoram.

The trend we see here matches the results of researchers. The authors Sharma and Kaur (2005) and Patel (2007) concluded that adolescent girls mostly internalize stress due to their upheaval of emotions and dealing with the home's multiple tasks efficiently while, on the contrary, boys usually release stress through socializing with friends or occupying themselves with leisure activities. Similarly, Watode et al. (2015) revealed that female students were the ones with the most stress levels and gave the reason of their overthinking and family expectations pressure. The international work of Taylor and Stanton (2007) and Khan and Abid (2010) also supported the conclusion that women are more prone to using emotion-focused coping while men are more into task-oriented - indicating a gender-related influence on conditioning. As for streams, the findings of Kaur and Singh (2015) and Vohra and Kaur (2013) that indicated Science students being under stress because of the rigorous competition and the demand for good performance were similar to the present one. Thus, the result of this study is a reflection of both the local and global datasets that stress adolescents depending on gender and academic environment concurrently.

Still, some conflicting findings have been reported. According to Kumari and Sahu (2016), girls display social and spiritual coping methods most of the time even at the high stress level, which leads to their being emotionally more adaptable than expected. Likewise, Williams and Green (2021) indicated that women's greater emotional intelligence occasionally allows them to manage stress in an effective manner. These variations do not dispute the findings of the study but instead imply that coping and stress engage interactively influenced by emotional insight and accessible support networks. The slight variations emphasize that gender distinctions are not constant but shaped by environment, culture and access.

Previous research advised implementing life-skill programs that enhance regulation for males and females alike. According to the studies conducted by Rao and Menon (2012) as well as Patel and Mehta (2018), the interventions of mindfulness, problem-solving skills training, and teacher-guidance can be very effective in minimizing gender-based stress. It is possible that the adoption of the mentioned strategies in Mizoram may turn out to be advantageous. Educational institutions could begin weekly "coping circles" during which students discuss and exchange simple techniques, for managing stress giving both boys and girls an open platform to voice their worries. Teachers might receive training in emotional awareness and gender-sensitive support. Bringing health education into the curriculum—with some of the Arts students presently engaged in it through Education courses—might be a way of getting emotional awareness to all the subjects taught in the school.

In the part of Mizoram that has a collectivist view and is strongly directed by religion, the use of community and church youth groups to conduct workshops on communication, empathy, and shared responsibility can be a great help. Moreover, it might be helpful to coerce parents into lessening the differences in the expectations they have for their daughters and sons in the home, through the allocation of equal time for leisure and study, gender-based tensions might gradually be dispersed. To put it another way, these little but persistent acts could create a culture in which both

boys and girls would feel academic life as a challenge that they could face with confidence, equilibrium and empathy.

4. Physiological Manifestations of Stress

The stress was both mental and physical most of the time among the students as revealed by the results. Typical symptoms during the exam periods included insomnia, headaches, muscle pains, tiredness and loss of appetite. Many students noted that their heartbeat sped up prior, to exams their stomachs clenched or their hands shook when addressing teachers. Others reported feelings of unease, muscle stiffness or overall fatigue resulting from study sessions and inconsistent eating habits. The majority of symptoms diminished after tests suggesting that the stress was short-lived but sufficiently intense to impact living. These instances demonstrate how the body quietly reflects the burden borne by teenagers.

The present result reiterates the observations made by the researchers who already did studies, Sharma and Kaur (2005) and Watode et al. (2015) suggested the phenomenon of students showing stress-related symptoms, which mainly surface as tiredness, disturbed sleep habits, and sudden loss of appetite. Similarly, Nair and Joseph (2009) as well as Rani and Chand (2018) noted that adolescents under examination pressure frequently suffer from headaches, muscle pains, and even exhaustion. The studies, conducted by Leung et al. (2007) and Evans and Steiger (2013) on the other hand, confirmed the fact that the constant state of academic stress of the students directly leads them to the unhealthy situation of sleep deprivation and lack of proper nutrition. The former is also valid in the case of students as the psychological symptoms—like insomnia and fatigue—are the clear bodily signs of mental pressure.

The conflicting findings in the literature, however, are certain to exist, e.g. Bayram and Bilgel (2009) reported that not every student experiencing stress showed symptoms; in some cases, the emotional resilience and effective coping strategies were preventive against illnesses. In a similar way, Andersson and Hansson (2020) reported that the students within strong social support groups usually indicated less

physical symptoms, even though they were going through a psychological stress level similar to the other students. Such differences do not deny the already existing results. Rather, they put an accent that although physiological responses are common, not only their strength but also the coping mechanisms and the social context is what varies.

Rao and Menon (2012) and Patel and Mehta (2018) suggested that schools should apply relaxation practices, breath control techniques and mindfulness programs to patients with psychosomatic tension. Pérez and Navarro (2021) went further and proposed the addition of health education that will train students to recognize and properly manage the physical symptoms of stress. The Mizoram context might adapt the implementation of the aforementioned recommendations in such a way that the schools will conduct morning "calm sessions" with stretching, breathing, and guided meditation. To help students manage long study periods, teachers will remind them to take brief breaks and promote balanced sleep and nutrition habits according to exam timelines. In addition, the partnership with medical experts and nearby religious institutions could play a big part in the organization of well-being workshops where the physical self-care would be linked to emotional and spiritual health of the community. Community-centered and culturally-informed initiatives like these can help adolescents to understand that taking care their body is equal to taking care their mind—this is a lesson that would not only be in line with the values of Mizoram but also with the everyday lives of its students.

5. Personality Traits and Individual Differences

The findings pointed out a significant manifestation of students' personalities in their different stress responses. A few were treading the middle path of the Neuroticism dimension with self-criticism and anxiety; others were showing their traits of Conscientiousness through being composed, organized, and disciplined while still under pressure. Some, more than others, resorted to social interactions as a way of stress relief which was common with openness and extrovertedness.

Students of the female gender generally manifested emotional sensitivity, empathy, and the over-analyzing of situations whereas those of the male gender were more likely to exhibit the flexibility of approach and pragmatic strategizing. Among the students, those in Science sought stricter discipline despite dealing with high levels of anxiety; Arts students tended to be more open and emotionally balanced, whereas Commerce students were somewhat in the middle but uncertain about their decision-making skills.

The qualitative insights into sensitivity, self-control, and social behavior resonated with the quantitative trends perfectly, where most of the students were allocated to the average range for almost all of the traits, with some small but significant clusters indicating higher levels of Neuroticism, Openness or Conscientiousness. The gender and stream variations - such as higher levels of Neuroticism in girls and greater discipline in Science students - were also present in the students' personal stories of excessive rumination, stress, and organized study routines. Together, these two lines of evidence reinforce each other and thus produce a comprehensive and well-founded insight into the way personality influences the perception and coping of stress by adolescents in Mizoram in their everyday lives.

The originators of the Five-Factor Model, Costa and McCrae (1992), noted that neuroticism, conscientiousness, and openness were major traits that largely determined the stress response and coping process. Purohit (2016) and Sahin and Hepsöğütü (2018) similarly reported that a student exhibiting neuroticism would definitely be emotionally drained the most, but those with high and open personalities would be the most equipped and motivated to cope effectively with the situation. Likewise, Banerjee and Das (2024) found that problem-focused coping and resilience were positively associated with emotionally stable traits in adolescents. The current results align closely with these outcomes the association between emotional sensitivity and neuroticism, in female students and the determined perseverance observed in Science students.

The literature also revealed some differing perspectives. Lalengzama and Fanai (2022) observed that community backing and religious belief might alter the impact

of neuroticism indicating that environmental influences can temper personality characteristics. Similarly, Sailo (2020) noted that adolescents with anxiety but in nurturing family or peer settings handled stress better suggesting that personality works in conjunction, with surrounding circumstances rather than solely dictating results. These viewpoints do not conflict with the existing results, makes clear that the character operates amidst the connections, values and emotional supports.

The earlier studies have often suggested the methods of students' emotional intelligence enhancement and the flexibility to change the inherited personality traits as the two areas of focus or the main avenues in the case of personality traits. Rao and Menon (2012) along with Patel and Mehta (2018) pointed out that the students should be engaged in activities, mindfulness practices and problem-solving workshops that would help them in gaining better control over their emotional responses. Sahin and Hepsöğütü (2018) went a step further and suggested that the self-awareness and emotional control initiatives should be incorporated in the schools and thus the students' coping skills would be improved irrespective of their personality types.

The latter suggestions can be applied in the case of Mizoram by first identifying the community's strengths in terms of faith and close personal relationships and then designing the concepts accordingly. The educators of the schools might set up self-reflection sessions every week wherein the students will be required to talk about their strengths and emotional patterns facilitated by the teachers. Moreover, personality insight tools may be brought into use by the teachers to help students get an idea about their common reactions to stress whether they are the ones who tend to overanalyze, over-plan or withdraw. The emotional expressions of the students who are more sensitive such as writing, playing music or discussing with peers can be encouraged through the art-based projects. On the other hand, the planned goal-setting activity can be assigned to the diligent student to help him/her in preventing burnout. Moreover, the faith-oriented and community mentorship programs may provide the teenagers with support in overcoming the misconception

that personality traits are limits; in fact, they are the roads leading to deeper self-knowledge.

In outline, the research findings indicate that the adolescents of Mizoram, despite their differences in personalities, actually possess a common latent power to adapt. When students at school and home are taught self-awareness and empathy, these traits can change from being weaknesses to strengths that will support their growth and resilience throughout their lives.

6. Coping Skills and Emotional Regulation

The findings showed that the process of coping in Mizo adolescents was not an isolated action but rather a mix of approaches comprised of emotional, social and spiritual coping's ways that were affected by the gender, level of education and the cultural context. The students indicated that they took comfort by talking to their friends, listening to music, praying and spending time with their families. The companionship was recognized as emotional support, and faith was considered the spiritual guide while self-control was perceived as an individual asset. Boys probably coped better as they were allowed more social interactions while girls who were often given extra chores had less time left for relaxation and having fun. Nevertheless, both girls and boys showed toughness in coping—girls by being empathetic and feeling responsible and boys by being socially active and keeping positive expectations. Generally, coping was moderate yet flexible; it was characteristic of Mizoram's insistence on peace and relations.

The students' stories of relying on friends, prayer, humor and small habits not only matched but also supported the idea that youth mostly have moderately strong but steady coping skills. Their separate stories of dealing with feelings, responsibilities and belief also echoed the gender differences found in the data where boys had a slight edge. Therefore, if the two findings are combined, they will support each other and show that adolescent coping in Mizoram happens through the interaction of relationships and cultural roots accompanied by the community's effort to find the balance.

Such patterns are in a close proximity to research. Das and Choudhary (2015) reported that Indian girls were more willing to employ social coping techniques, while boys would rather engage in solving the problems and going for recreational activities. Kaur and Singh (2015) pointed out that science scholars do undergo academic pressure but at the same time they adopt a well-organized way of coping like planning and taking advice which mirrors the systematic approach of Science students seen in this study. Likewise, Kumari and Sahu (2016) found that adolescent girls often turn to spiritual practices—especially prayer and hopefulness—to restore emotional equilibrium. On a continuum, Taylor and Stanton (2007) found out that women are more inclined towards emotional and social support while men adopt a more task-oriented approach, thus reflecting the gender differences among the current research participants. Evans and Steiger (2010) and Miller and Sanders (2025) contended that emotional regulation and mindfulness significantly enhance teenagers' ability to deal with stress—once again coinciding with the importance of faith, humor and reflection among Mizo students.

Conflicting research outcomes such as those of Byrne and Mazanov (2007) pointed out that heavy reliance on emotion-focused coping would result in the individual becoming more anxious unless it was balanced by cognitive restructuring. However, this does not go against the present findings. Rather this indicates that emotion expression is helpful when it comes with insight and reflection—one of the elements of prayer, friendship, and laughter that Mizo youths use as their coping methods. Similarly, Leung et al. (2006) pointed to student-peer interactions and smart time management as the main coping strategies, which closely correspond to the students' reports of leaning on their classmates and having specific times for different activities as a way to come back to a calm state.

Several researchers have proposed methods that are consistent with the cultural and educational background of Mizoram. Bennett and Morgan (2025) and Ahmed and Mustafa (2023) pointed out that mindfulness and reframing build up coping resilience whereas Rao and Menon (2012) and Pandey and Bansal (2025) supported

the introduction of organized life-skill and emotional-regulation sessions into school programs.

Putting these ideas into practice at the level of Mizoram's schools could involve daily meditation or relaxing exercises, peer support groups and short creative breaks during tests. Faith and community initiatives that are inseparable from Mizo culture can continue to be a source of hope, love, and collective responsibility. Teachers can also become mentors who foster stress discussions and help students realize that controlling stress is not about escaping but achieving balance—the deliberate effort to bring back peace through connection, prayer, and patience.

The results confirm what has been found in both Indian and international studies: the best way for adolescents to cope is when emotional, social, and spiritual support exist simultaneously. However, at the same time, they also present a local aspect by demonstrating how Mizoram's religion-influenced and community-oriented culture turns coping from a solitary battle into a shared path of comprehension and resilience.

7. Interplay of Stress, Personality, and Coping

The research results revealed that stress, personality factors, and coping abilities are interrelated and affect the emotional and behavioral responses of the students. The teenagers in Mizoram perceived this relationship as a cycle - stress came mainly from academics and social pressure but the personality traits and coping methods available determined their reactions mostly. The students who were emotionally sensitive and often characterized by neuroticism went through more anxiety but at the same time, they were more inclined to use emotional outlets like praying, spending time with friends, or meditating alone. Conversely, the diligent students practiced stress management through organizing their time and setting goals while the free-minded and sociable ones expressed their stress through creativity, humor, or mingling. These cases illustrate that personality is the factor that decides not only the perception of stress but also the choice and effectiveness of the coping techniques, which in turn control the stress situation.

The qualitative findings and quantitative trends reinforce one another suggesting that students' stress experiences are heavily influenced by their personality traits and the coping strategies they apply. The topics the students brought up—concern, habits, humour, faith and fellowship—are identical to the trends that appeared in the data. Both types of proof point to coping mechanisms as a buffer that reduces stress while personality discreetly manages the outlook on the problems. They form a whole and realistic picture of how the youth in Mizoram deal with stress in their daily lives.

This pattern fits very well with the outcomes of earlier studies. Costa and McCrae (1992), the pioneers of the Five-Factor Model have pointed out that neuroticism generally amplifies perceived stress while conscientiousness and extraversion put up a stronger barrier against it by means of control and problem-oriented coping. Banerjee and Das (2024) along with Sahin and Hepsöğütü (2018) similarly reported that the conscientious and emotionally stable individuals resort to the use of effective coping strategies like planning and cognitive restructuring that eventually result in less stress. Similarly, Purohit (2016) found that personality plays a big role in the way secondary school students cope with stress by revealing that those with traits of openness and agreeableness have an easier time dealing with academic problems. Worldwide research, among which are the studies of Taylor and Stanton (2007) and Evans and Steiger (2013), has confirmed that emotional intelligence and mindfulness - virtues accompanying equanimity - facilitate the recovery from stress and thus help to preserve mental health.

However, the studies of Khan and Abid (2010) and Bayram and Bilgel (2009) revealed that personality is not the only determinant of coping effectiveness; the social environment, including friendships, parental guidance, and the educational context, can also affect how the personality-stress relationship unfolds. Similarly, Lalengzama and Fanai (2022) observed that even very neurotic students could handle stress well if they had community and religious support systems available. These variations do not invalidate the findings but instead assert that personality

operates amid broader social and cultural contexts—most clearly illustrated, in Mizoram, where religion and community ties provide extra emotional support.

It is common among the researchers to suggest to employ techniques that take into consideration both personality-related and contextual factors in coping with stress. Rao and Menon (2012) and Patel and Mehta (2018) suggested a combination of regulation, mindfulness, and self-awareness exercises as part of the educational curriculum. Pérez and Navarro (2021) suggested that the teachers should first of all prepare for the discussions and encourage empathy among the peers in order to increase the flexibility of coping for the different personalities. The strategies imply that managing stress does not mean getting rid of the stressors but rather developing one's coping skills.

For Mizoram, these results highlight the necessity of creating and supporting communities that will develop the emotional skills and resilience of the people. The schools may incorporate "stress and self" units into their life-skills curricular enabling students to know how their own traits are influencing their stress management. Short weekly group meetings may help pupils articulate emotions, spot stressors and share coping tips. Teachers trained in counseling methods could assist students in making sophisticated academic schedules that entail not only studies but also relaxation, spiritual and social activities. Partnering with churches and local youth clubs—who are significant components of Mizo society—would help set up safe and comfortable places where teens can talk about their problems and practice relaxation techniques. Such community-driven methods would recognize both the diversity of individuals and the strengths of the culture, thereby allowing students to view stress not as a failure but rather an opportunity to grow through being aware, loving, and social.

5.2.9 Discussion on the findings related to Measures for Managing Stress, Developing Personality, and Enhancing Coping Skills

The findings from this research provide an in-depth insight into the lives of adolescents in the higher secondary schools of Mizoram, with the main characteristics of the lives being moderate but persistent stress, changing identities and coping strategies which are adaptable yet unpredictable. The students' emotional problems which are in turn affecting their motivation, self-esteem and educational experience are the factors contributing their overall great academic achievement. The combined use of both data and descriptive analysis lead to linking the results, by previous studies and exploring the suggested culturally based interventions to increase students' well-being, personal development and resilience.

1. Strengthening Stress-Management Programs

The findings showed that seventy-five percent of students undergo moderate stress while almost twenty percent endure severe stress owing to academic demands, exam pressure and expectations from parents. This pattern is in accordance with the studies done by Patel (2007) and Watode et al. (2015) who discovered that Indian adolescents often suffer from competition and evaluation-related stress at school. Likewise, Keerthi et al. (2024) confirmed that the implementation of relaxation practices and mindfulness techniques in organized manners considerably alleviates stress among high school students.

In Mizoram, teachers may incorporate mindfulness or breathing exercises at the beginning of lessons, brief moments of reflection before tests, or guided relaxation sessions at the end of the school day. Certified teachers or counselors may also detect signs of exhaustion and guide students toward positive coping mechanisms instead of retreat. In addition, group debriefs after exams and classroom discussions on test anxiety can provide a common ground for discussing stress. Gradually but consistently, these practices are transforming the school environment, showing teenagers that calmness and concentration are skills that they can develop just like any other academic subject.

2. Promoting Emotional Literacy and Counselling Support

The qualitative findings showed that a large part of students' stress was due to home environments where there were misunderstandings or fights. Adolescents, who had parents or teachers with whom they could talk openly and who provided support, were less stressed and more motivated. These findings are in line with those of Kumari and Sahu (2016) and Sailo (2020) who pointed out that having strong family and peer ties reduces the pressure and increases the resilience.

Therefore, schools may set up "student-support corners" or peer-mentoring groups where the students can freely share their feelings and thoughts without the fear of being judged. Life-skills education as recommended by the National Education Policy (2020) should be directed to the development of empathy, self-expression and resolving conflicts. Regular parental orientation sessions can support parents in changing criticism into encouragement thus turning homes into places of trust instead of stress. Additionally, counsellors skilled, in psychology might arrange "emotional literacy weeks" during which students acquire terms to express their emotions engage in role-playing supportive conversations and develop problem-solving skills. In Mizoram's connected community these shared discussions have the potential to turn schools into emotionally welcoming environments.

3. Gender-Sensitive Interventions

Distinct gender disparities emerged in both the qualitative stages—female students experienced more intense emotional strain and domestic responsibilities while male students were inclined to suppress their emotions. Comparable results were reported by Kaur and Gill (2007) and Das and Choudhary (2015) who found that girls frequently internalize stress whereas boys tend to express it through activity or humour. Green (2021) additionally associated gender roles, with styles of emotional display and coping success.

4. Curriculum Integration for Personality Development

The students were generally found to be conscientious, agreeable and open, which are the traits usually associated with success, but also, they could improve. According to the study conducted by Sahin and Hepsöğütü (2018), value-centered experiential education increases in teenagers the self-discipline, empathy and self-awareness. In the same way, the authors Banerjee and Das (2024) have noted that introducing health and ethics topics leads to better emotional regulation and social awareness in students.

In Mizoram, personality development can be achieved by introducing a more diverse curriculum which would include, for instance, group projects, debates, arts, and leadership camps that would all promote and teach the skills of accountability and teamwork. Building on the already established health and value education sessions that have proved effective, the Arts stream could be expanded to include Science and Commerce students thus promoting well-rounded development in all areas. Moreover, schools might also implement journaling or short group discussions after important lectures in order to facilitate students' understanding of the practical ethical issues based on the academic materials. When students are regularly educated that understanding goes hand in hand with kindness and self-reflection, they will slowly start to see education as a road to their individual development and to the community's participation.

5. Enhancing Coping Skills through Practical Training

The study revealed that the great number of students are using primarily friends, prayer and music to get through the tough times. The results obtained are very similar to those highlighted by Taylor and Stanton (2007) and Kaur and Singh (2015) who stated that coping through laughter, creativity, and socializing not only assists but also fastens the healing process. In addition to this, Bennett and Morgan (2025) discovered that relaxation techniques along with peer support raised the confidence level of adolescents.

With these points in mind, it would be the right thing for schools to promote peer-support groups, art or music therapy sessions, and workshops on time management as among their lines of action. Students can be taught techniques- such as goal setting, writing in a journal, relaxation, and positive reframing, that will make it easier for them to deal with everyday problems on their own. Besides, having artists or youth leaders come for a short motivational talk can make the coping skills seem relevant and culturally important. Over the long haul, these programs demonstrate to the students that emotional resilience is developed through small daily actions- such as listening, sharing, creating, and reflecting, rather than through isolation or denial.

6. Incorporating Faith and Community in Resilience Building

Faith appeared as a protection. Several students reported finding peace through praying, church's company or family religious service. This is in accordance with Lalengzama & Fanai (2022) and Evans & Steiger (2010) who found that strengthening the ties with God brings about resilience and positivity in the adolescents.

The way of living in the state of Mizoram from the very beginning has been promoting this method. Schools can make a coalition with the churches, youth organizations, and NGOs in order to set aside one day in the week for reflections or community dialogues based on the themes of kindness, honesty, and perseverance. Activities like praying, storytelling, music, and serving others are all ways outside of worship that the students can enact their faith. Having awareness in the school setting creates and strengthens the qualities of being patient, grateful, and confident. Faith transforms the power thus becoming a very subtle assurance that there is an entire community made up of ethical resilience supporting the students through the hard times.

7. *Teacher Capacity Building*

Studies have shown that teachers provide emotional support and are the ones who help students to succeed academically and emotionally. Those students who experienced teacher's understanding and kindness were more able to deal with the stress and adjustment to the situation. The results of Rao and Menon (2012), Pérez and Navarro (2021), and Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) support this; they said that teacher empathy and positive communication not only diminished the tension in the classroom but also increased the feeling of belonging among the students.

In order to acquire this skill, the professional development must be done continuously and must include psychology, classroom empathy and mental health awareness. Besides, the teachers can physically and emotionally develop the whole group by taking up the role of a mentor. Moreover, the mentorship logs or monthly reflection meetings might assist the tutors in monitoring their students' mental and emotional health. The minute things—acknowledging effort, being present without offering judgment and cheering on success—can change the teacher-student relationship into one that is built on trust and motivation. If teachers are calm and caring, students develop their ability to manage their emotions by following the teachers' example rather than through direct instruction.

8. *Multi-Level Collaboration*

The study has verified that the existence of the student cannot only be counted on the schools; the collaboration of the families, educators and community groups is a must. The aforementioned type of cooperation was suggested by Freire et al. (2020), who also mentioned the contribution of school-community collaboration in creating quality learning environments.

In Mizoram, health committees could organize health education programs in schools, while churches and non-profit organizations might offer counseling and mentorship to students. All the stakeholders, including the parents and teachers, should collaborate on the students' emotional intelligence and coping skills

development. Moreover, inter-school platforms for the exchange of practices that are conducive to the well-being of students could be established by the education boards of the various regions. This kind of partnership makes it possible for the young people to get help not only from their homes but also from their school setting. When the whole community gets involved, education becomes the support of cooperation—one that makes students ready not only for the tests but also for life, with the characteristics of being tough, honest, and positive.

To conclude, the discourse above shows that the proposed measures covering stress reduction, emotional awareness, gender equity, personality growth coping skill enhancement, faith incorporation, teacher capacity building, and layered cooperation are not tactics but a collaborative effort aimed at comprehensive education. The suggested programs based on research as well as Mizoram's cultural values have the potential to make schools a place where students can succeed intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually. The partnership among parents, teachers, and communities will lead to the young learners perceiving stress as not a defeat but a chance for growth, empathy, and resilience.

5.3 EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The educational implications encompass the transformation of research outcomes into practices that provide advantages to the entire spectrum of education stakeholders, such as students, teachers, parents, and the educational community. The present study that has been directed on perceived stress, personality traits, and coping strategies of secondary students in Mizoram highlights the places where the most effective interaction between schools and communities can take place. Adolescents, who are undergoing an age of stress and academic pressure, will find the results pointing to the fact that a supportive environment will help them to acquire the quality of being stable and strong. The following implications serve as a tool for compliance with NEP-2020's ideal of holistic and inclusive education by improving student status.

1. Creating Emotionally Safe Classrooms

One of the major findings from the studies is that moderate stress is experienced by most students, which means that teachers must prove their acceptance and recognition of the students. Simple gestures like friendly greetings, short conversations, or even a small moment of silence for reflection at the start or end of the class can greatly support the students in coping with their feelings and in lessening their stress levels. When teachers recognize the effort of students who are focusing solely on the results, the students are gradually disposed to relax and be more receptive to learning. These tiny supportive actions can change the classroom atmosphere from one filled with distrust and anxiety to one which encourages and soothes students gradually over a period of time.

2. Enhancing Personality Development Opportunities

As far as personality traits are concerned, they are still under transformation and thereby educational systems should resort to actions that nurture qualities like responsibility, kindness, and emotional durability. Schools can provide various ways for learners to recognize their capacities and get to know themselves more deeply for instance through leadership teams, teamwork projects, journaling, and community work. With this method, the youth get to learn the skills of arranging, trusting oneself, and being aware of others. This personal development acts as a catalyst for academic accomplishment and at the same time, provides the students with enduring positive traits.

3. Integrating Life-Skills and Emotional Learning

Emotional expression is a common way for students to cope with stress through music, prayer, friendship, and so on. Schools may cater this by introducing life skills and socio-emotional education in their already existing curriculum. Mindfulness, deep breathing and stress coping methods classes together with a positive mindset would be very good for students' emotional

learning and building up. When adolescents are able to identify and understand their feelings, they are able to master stress and uncertainty which gives them a sense of control.

4. Implementing Gender-Responsive Support Systems

The gender differences in stress management and coping strategies which have been noticed call for a gender-specific approach in the application of support measures. Usually, girls deal with stress by sharing their emotions with others while boys might struggle more with handling their feelings. A school can offer the opportunity for both sexes to either come together or have separate discussions and get help in their emotional maturation process and all the people involved will be taught to express their feelings in a positive way. These settings help students understand that being emotionally open is strength instead of a flaw.

5. Strengthening Parent Awareness and Support

According to the study, the expectations set by parents are among the primary aspects that influence the amount of stress experienced by students. Consequently, it is the school's responsibility to spearhead and set up a sequence of parent-orientation sessions that spotlight the interaction between academic pressure and emotional support. If parents actively listen, set reasonable expectations, and acknowledge their child's efforts, young people will perceive more support and less pressure. If home communication is enhanced, trust develops and anxiety diminishes, hence, students are less likely to be scared and more likely to engage in their academic work.

6. Expanding Counselling and Wellness Services

Many adolescents endure pain and suffering without letting anyone know since they believe that there is no one who can help them. Schools should increase the number of counselors and wellness centers and thus offer

emotional support which is very accessible. A therapist, a kind instructor, or a designated spot for meditation can be very influential in the pupil's process. The assurance of support is a tremendous release from the isolation feeling. It is also the beginning of a more open and caring school community based on empathy and support.

7. Encouraging Empathetic, Student-Centered Teaching

In most cases, teachers interpret student behavior as either lack of interest or lack of responsibility. The findings of a research study pointed out that emotional stress could be the root cause of the problem. Teachers cooperating with the students emotionally can comprehend the behavioral signs of silence, agitation or unwillingness to communicate. When students perceive that their instructors are trying to know their issues, trust is produced between them. They become involved in the class more and this closeness turns into a factor of their motivation and emotional health.

8. Providing Creative and Recreational Outlets

Research indicates that music and creative activities are the foremost ways of coping with stress. Consequently, it is advised that schools begin to integrate such activities in their weekly program by providing music, art, dance, sports, and cultural events. These activities give students the opportunity to stress out, communicate, and be happy during school life. Participation in arts also helps students to build self-esteem. In addition to academic strengths, students can also unveil their talents which in turn contributes to their well-rounded identity formation.

9. Promoting Peer Mentorship and Support Networks

Taking into account that peer interaction has been recognized as one of the coping strategies, educational institutions might, for instance, start peer mentoring or buddy schemes. Such initiatives will allow the students to

support one another and, in doing so, to exchange their experiences and grow emotionally together. Students who develop bonds with their peers generally suffer from less loneliness and, at the same time, they feel more empowered to deal with the difficulties. A strong community of peers in school brings about kindness, collaboration and sharing of power in the entire school environment.

10. Aligning School Practices with NEP-2020's Holistic Vision

The findings reinforce the recognition of NEP-2020's attention on socio-learning, experiential education and values-based teaching. Schools can nurture adolescents in becoming emotionally, morally and intellectually ready through not only the organization of wellness programs but also the activities geared towards the professional development of teachers, the empowerment and involvement of students. When the education centers are, on the development of the offspring, the pupils become emotionally strong, considerate and self-confident people who are ready to take on life's trials.

All the differing opinions come to a similar conclusion that adolescents grow up when the adults around them understand not only their educational needs but also their unexpressed problems and dreams. Schools in Mizoram can be of great help to adolescents if they manage to create a more understanding, loving, and emotionally intelligent atmosphere, as most of the adolescents are in great need of such support and security during their development process. The unity of teachers, parents, and institutions marked by compassion and transparency transforms education into more than mere knowledge transfer; it becomes a source of power that produces adolescents who are confident, strong, and complete.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

The results of this research emphasize the contributions of teachers, parents, counselors, curriculum developers and policymakers in influencing the emotional lives of higher secondary students. Adolescence is a phase marked by hopes, uncertainty, discovery and silent challenges that frequently remain unnoticed by adults. The suggestions provided below aim to assist schools and families, in establishing settings where students feel valued, comprehended and motivated to develop. Through collaboration every stakeholder has the potential to ensure that school life is both intellectually rewarding and emotionally supportive, for all teenagers.

1. Strengthening Stress-Management Practices in Schools

Daily classes could include even a moment of silence before every lecture and stress-reduction methods applied by educational institutions or morning breathing as well as meditation and even light stretching or smoking nightlife. These activities could help students prepare mentally before diving into their lessons. Besides, on the one hand, students getting used to such routines might expect the calming effect just like the calming effect of anxiety on their school day. On the other hand, these easy and small routines will go on to convince adolescents that their health is important and needs to be taken care of.

2. Incorporating Life-Skills and Emotional Literacy in the Curriculum

The introduction of life skills training in the curriculum could be done by teachers using the above-mentioned skills of planning, time management, setting goals, and feeling awareness. Students will experience huge growth in their self-awareness while doing various activities such as journaling, group discussions, or problem-solving. These uncomplicated pedagogical practices are really effective in making the youth acquire the aforementioned qualities as the teaching methods of patience, self-control, and mental clarity in a

stressful situation. The infusion of life skills in education allows students to build resilience slowly which is needed for overcoming their educational and personal challenges.

3. Expanding Counselling and Student Support Services

It is essential that educational establishments develop their counselling services to guarantee that they are not the only ones that are able to offer skilled professionals. Discussion of concerns or uncertainties is often avoided by adolescents, nevertheless, the presence of a supportive counselor can give them the courage to open up. Regular counseling sessions, rules, or a specific wellness area can help students to feel comfortable enough to come forward for help. In case the youngsters feel that there is one person who would listen to them without judging then their emotional challenge posed by the school life will be handled better.

4. Encouraging Supportive and Patient Parenting Practices

Programs that help parents comprehend their children's emotional problems could be of great assistance to them. Open communication, family support, and acknowledging the child's effort can reduce students' pressure to a great extent. If parents are patient and take the time to listen, the kids will either feel appreciated or judged. This approach of empathy fosters trust between parents and teenagers, which in turn, permits students to share their problems without any worry and remain emotionally stable even with the stress of school.

5. Building Gender-Sensitive Well-Being Programs

Since boys and girls have different reactions to stress and different ways to cope with it, schools can set up programs to promote mental health that will cater to these differences. Safe spaces such as group discussions, sharing circles, or fun activities let students demonstrate their feelings without fear.

Boys might need support in getting their points across while girls might find it useful to have restrictions in support, in feeling and handling emotional hardships. Gender-sensitive programs recognize that every student's experience is important and deserves attention.

6. Providing Opportunities for Personality Development

Schools may facilitate personality-development activities that promote the emotional, social, and intellectual growth of students. Various activities, such as taking up leadership roles, working on group projects, expressing themselves creatively, and participating in reflection sessions, provide adolescents with chances to discover who they are. These encounters lead to the building of confidence, the development of empathy, and the strengthening of resilience among the adolescents. Also, by giving them the opportunity to think about their strengths, it helps them to realize their exceptional skills, thus leading to the formation of a better self-image.

7. Promoting Collaboration Between Teachers, Parents, and Counsellors

Enhancing communication between teachers, parents and counsellors guarantees that students obtain well-rounded emotional support. Frequent meetings or common communication platforms enable adults to grasp the difficulties a student might encounter at home or, at school. When adults work together with empathy and attentiveness interventions become more impactful and nurturing. This united method demonstrates to students that they are surrounded by individuals who sincerely wish for their success and well-being.

8. Creating a Positive and Inclusive School Climate

Educational institutions should put effort in making places where each and every student is accepted and appreciated. Programs that promote unity, cultural appreciation, creativity, and kindness help students to feel they

belong to the school community. By providing a positive environment, feelings of isolation are reduced and students' spirits are lifted. When children are made to feel that they are part of the group and that their presence is important, they become confident, secure, and emotionally healthy individuals.

9. Encouraging Teachers to Adopt Empathetic and Student-Centered Approaches

Educators might address classroom conduct recognizing that emotional distress frequently lies beneath quietness or frustration. By reacting with calmness and kind direction educators enable students to feel secure enough to express their difficulties. Showing empathy, during exchanges comforts students by affirming they are not isolated in their hardships. When educators demonstrate compassion students are taught to approach themselves and others with warmth.

10. Aligning School Practices with NEP-2020's Vision for Holistic Education

By incorporating emotional learning, hands-on learning, and wellness programs into the daily schedule, schools can adopt NEP-2020's vision. This includes creating time slots for self-reflection, discussing ethics, and conducting various learning activities that promote the students' strengths. Adhering to NEP-2020's directives fosters kids' growth not only in knowledge but also in their social and moral aspects. A child that gets the backing changes into a curious, confident, and capable learner.

11. Encouraging Curriculum Planners to Integrate Socio-Emotional Learning

Educational designers might integrate intelligence, mindfulness practices and coping strategy training, within upper secondary curricula. A program that incorporates health as a component of education guarantees that educators

receive organized resources to aid learners. When life-skill concepts are incorporated throughout disciplines learners consistently face chances to gain deeper self-awareness. This steady ongoing involvement assists teenagers in developing coping mechanisms gradually.

12. Guiding Policymakers to Prioritize Adolescent Mental Health

Policymakers can enhance mental-health systems in schools by implementing directives that focus on counselling offerings, wellness evaluations and training educators in psychological principles. Developing policies that emphasize well-being guarantees that emotional care is considered an element of school operations instead of an optional program. Once emotional support is standardized students throughout Mizoram—no the district or kind of school—receive equitable access, to assistance. All these factors combined let the birth of a generation that knows how to handle their emotions, is tough and has the necessary tools to fight against life’s challenges.

These recommendations assist in fostering teamwork between educators, guardians, school counselors, curriculum planners, and decision-makers to develop safe, encouraging, and respectful spaces for adolescents. When the education system is able to understand and balance the emotional needs of the students, the latter will be able to develop the inner power that will conquer the challenges with confidence and kindness. In such settings, it is not just about the marks that one gets but rather becoming a healthier, happier and more resilient person that learning is understood as a path to be taken.

5.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

Each research investigation invites inquiries and this current study follows suit. While this research examined perceived stress, personality characteristics and coping strategies among secondary students in Mizoram the emotional landscape of teenagers is intricate and constantly influenced by cultural, social and educational factors. Continued studies will deepen insights into these elements. Assist educators, parents and policymakers in creating more nurturing settings, for young students. The following recommendations are provided to assist researchers interested, in further exploring, broadening or enhancing the understanding derived from this study.

1. Conducting Studies in Rural and Remote Areas

Future investigations might focus on students from the isolated areas of Mizoram to gain a deeper insight into the variety of adolescent experiences. This study concentrated on districts yet youths in rural regions might face distinct challenges connected to resources, family duties or community frameworks. Investigating these environments could uncover coping strategies and assist in making well-being initiatives comprehensive and attuned, to the needs of every student.

2. Undertaking Longitudinal Research

A longitudinal study conducted on a cohort of students over several years would provide a thorough comprehension of the process of maturing regarding the change in stress, the development of personality traits, and the usage of coping mechanisms. The impact of exams, transitions, and growth phases can be disclosed through the monitoring of the shifts from Class XI to Class XII, or even further into education. This way of studying would give a picture of the gradual rise or fall of emotional reactions through the passage of time.

3. Including Additional Psychological or Social Variables

Upcoming research may include factors like intelligence, self-worth, motivation, peer pressure, family environment or social media usage. Existing studies indicate that these elements significantly interplay with stress and coping. Integrating these variables in investigations could reveal novel connections and provide a richer more complex view of adolescent health. These studies might also pinpoint the contributors to resilience among students, in Mizoram.

4. Conducting Qualitative Studies with Teachers, Parents, and Counsellors

Although this research involved focus-group discussions with students upcoming studies might investigate the viewpoints of teachers, parents and counsellors. These adults view adolescents from standpoints and might uncover emotional trends or school-related experiences that students might not express. Detailed interviews or case studies, with adults could offer understanding of the environmental and relational elements that affect stress and coping.

5. Conducting Deeper Comparative Studies Across School Types

Although this study distinguished between government and private schools future research may conduct a thorough comparison of government, private and aided schools. Such studies may investigate variables such as the school environment, the interaction between teachers and students, availability of counseling services, socio-economic status, and parental aspirations. Understanding the reasons for the differences will provide insights into the effect of school culture on adolescents' emotional wellbeing and coping strategies.

6. Testing the Effectiveness of Intervention Programs

The study provides researchers with the chance to examine different intervention approaches like mindfulness practices, life skills seminars, peer support groups, or learning experiences conducted during classes. Monitoring the changes before and after participation would be helpful in discovering the real methods that reduce stress or build up coping skills. These research works will give a list of suggestions for schools which want to help students in a more proactive way.

7. Exploring Gender Differences More Deeply

Further research could focus more on the issue of gender inequalities by examining the impact of social norms, communication styles or gender roles on the stress and coping of boys and girls. Since the present study has revealed gender differences, a focused investigation could provide the necessary information for the development of well-being projects that are specifically aimed at adolescents based on their gender, which would be an advantage.

8. Using Larger and More Randomized Samples

Researchers may increase sample sizes. Incorporate additional schools, from various districts through randomized sampling techniques. A bigger representative sample would enable more robust generalizations and advanced statistical analyses. This method could also assist in confirming or adjusting the trends identified in the study.

9. Examining the Role of Digital Life and Online Learning

Upcoming research may investigate the impact of behaviors—like social media engagement, e-learning, gaming and chatting—, on teenagers' stress and ways of managing it. Contemporary students allocate a portion of their

emotional and social experiences to the online sphere and grasping this effect might reveal novel stress factors alongside new coping possibilities.

10. Studying the Influence of Cultural and Community Factors

Researches could delve into the roles of convictions, religious practices, public pressure and social norms in Mizoram in the corresponding emotional experiences of the adolescent. The culture decides the ways the young people show their feelings, how they look at stress and what coping mechanism they choose. Understanding these factors would probably make school-based programs more effective and better suited to the daily realities of Mizo adolescents.

These suggestions highlight the rich possibilities for future exploration in understanding adolescent well-being. By widening the scope of inquiry, deepening the variables studied, and embracing diverse perspectives, future researchers can build on the foundations laid by this study. Such efforts will contribute to creating educational environments that not only enhance learning but also support the emotional strength and resilience of young people in Mizoram.

5.6 CONCLUSION

The present chapter summed up the results of the study and looked into their implications concerning the perceived stress, personality traits, and coping skills of higher secondary students in Mizoram. The discussion put a spotlight on the trends that were shaped by gender, academic stream, and personal traits, which in turn helped in the illustration of how the emotional and educational experiences of students differ among the groups. The outcomes clarified more the links among stress, personality, and coping and consequently helped to comprehend the difficulties and the resources that students utilize.

The chapter, after these findings, suggested various educational implications addressed to teachers, schools, parents, counselors, and policymakers. The recommendations comprised actions for enhancing emotional health, developing healthier coping methods, and setting more realistic academic demands. Moreover, the chapter pointed to the need for more research that could be done so as to clarify the issues that are still too obscure. In this way, the contributors to the study are highlighting the necessity for supportive climates wherein adolescents are able to cope with stress, become resilient, and interpret their growth as confidence.

SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Stress is a mental condition that arises when the demands of everyday life surpass an individual's perceived capacity to manage. In adolescence this pressure intensifies as young individuals deal with bodily development, emotional changes, schoolwork and changing social roles (Compas et al., 2001). In the evolving environment—characterized by heightened academic rivalry, technological impacts and altering family dynamics—numerous adolescents find it challenging to preserve emotional stability. If these stresses are not managed promptly they can cause decreased focus heightened anxiety and lowered involvement, in activities (Suldo et al., 2008).

Within environments scholastic success frequently stands as a primary indicator of achievement especially in areas where educational results influence future prospects. In Mizoram competitive tests and scarce opportunities, for studies amplify academic stress leading numerous students to experience exhaustion, anxiety and stress-related issues (Laldikpuii, 2023). Elevated parental. Societal norms that highly value education add to these difficulties influencing the manner in which youth understand and cope with stress (Sarma & Ralte 2025).

Adolescents vary greatly in their perceptions of circumstances with these variations frequently arising from fundamental personality characteristics. Attributes like conscientiousness, optimism and sociability promote adjustment and perseverance while inclinations toward anxiety, emotional sensitivity and self-doubt can intensify stress and obstruct effective coping (Pronk, 2024). Consequently students sharing the educational setting may encounter and react to stress, in uniquely personal manners.

Coping is essential for assisting students in managing emotions addressing issues and sustaining health amidst difficulties. Abilities, like planning, controlling emotions organizing time and seeking assistance promote adaptation and resilience.

When these skills are firmly established teenagers tend to handle personal challenges more efficiently (Afanasyeva & Gurieva 2021).

Together, perceived stress, personality traits, and coping skills form an interrelated framework that shapes students' emotional health, academic performance, and long-term development. Understanding these factors in the cultural context of Mizoram is essential for designing meaningful interventions that support resilience, strengthen life skills, and nurture well-rounded growth among adolescents.

Perceived Stress

Perceived stress refers to the subjective interpretation of how overwhelming, unpredictable, or uncontrollable life events feel to an individual. Two people may experience the same situation yet differ greatly in how stressful they find it, depending on past experiences, beliefs, emotional maturity, and perceived control (Cohen & Williamson, 1988). Rooted in cognitive appraisal theory, perceived stress emphasizes that stress arises not simply from difficult events but from the meaning and significance attached to them (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Adolescence is a developmental stage where perceived stress often intensifies. Academic workloads, examination pressure, shifting peer relationships, and the desire to meet family expectations all influence how young people evaluate stressors (Ursache et al., 2015). Local studies show that many students in Mizoram struggle with anxiety, disrupted sleep, and mental fatigue during exam seasons, revealing how subjective stress affects overall functioning (Laldikpuii, 2023). Because perceived stress shapes emotional well-being, motivation, and academic performance, understanding its sources and patterns is essential for supporting adolescent mental health.

Personality Traits

Personality traits refer to qualities that affect how people perceive difficulties manage their feelings and select methods to cope. In the Five-Factor Model—openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism—each characteristic plays a role in how stress is handled (Costa & McCrae 2010). Adolescents high, in conscientiousness typically depend on organization, self-control and foresight which enhance their ability to withstand pressures. Extraverts typically gain energy from engagement and positive outlooks whereas agreeable teenagers foster nurturing connections that help shield them from relational stress (Matthews et al., 2003). Conversely elevated neuroticism is linked to volatility, anxiety and increased stress reactivity.

Throughout adolescence personality characteristics engage significantly with stresses serving as key indicators of either resilience or susceptibility. Students who exhibit conscientiousness might view tests as obstacles while individuals, with elevated neuroticism might feel daunted by even standard academic activities (Connor-Smith & Flachsbart 2007). These variations affect not stress perception but also the probability of selecting constructive or harmful coping strategies. Recognizing these traits can assist teachers and counselors in providing assistance to encourage better adaptation.

Coping Skills

Coping skills encompass the emotional and action-oriented capacities that individuals employ to handle stress and sustain equilibrium during challenging circumstances. According to the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping coping is considered a process where individuals assess the demands and resources they have, at hand before deciding on an appropriate response (Lazarus & Folkman 1984). Emotional regulation, problem-solving, time management, relaxation techniques, and effective communication form the foundation of adaptive coping, enabling adolescents to navigate challenges with greater clarity and resilience (Compas et al., 2017).

Students who consistently apply coping strategies—such as organizing their tasks seeking assistance reframing pessimistic thoughts or engaging in spiritual activities—generally report improved mental well-being heightened academic involvement and increased self-assurance (Afanasyeva & Gurieva 2021). Conversely behaviors, like evasion, isolation or repetitive worrying might offer short-term comfort. Frequently extend discomfort and raise susceptibility to anxiety and depression (Furman et al., 2018). In Mizoram, a region where cultural norms highlight assistance and spiritual life managing difficulties also embodies common convictions and group endurance. Enhancing these abilities throughout adolescence aids in readying students, for the educational and social obstacles of adult life.

Interrelationship Between Stress, Personality, and Coping

Stress, personality and coping are interconnected elements that collectively influence the being of adolescents. Personality characteristics affect the perceived intensity of stress while coping mechanisms decide if these challenges are handled effectively or become overpowering (Karimzade & Besharat 2011). Adolescents with neuroticism frequently use avoidant or emotion-centered coping, which exacerbates their distress whereas those, with higher conscientiousness or extraversion are more likely to engage in problem-solving approaches or pursue social support (Semmer, 2006). Effective coping serves as a defense mechanism lessening the impact of stress and enhancing mental toughness (Carver & Connor-Smith, 2010). Research consistently demonstrates that coping plays a mediating role in the link, between personality and stress in adolescence when emotional and educational demands are high (Connor-Smith & Flachsbart 2007; Hampel & Petermann 2006; Ebstrup et al., 2011).

Adolescent Mental Health and Educational Context in Mizoram

The socio-cultural environment of Mizoram offers a perspective for comprehending adolescent stress. Despite the state boasting one of India's literacy rates and valuing education highly restricted higher education opportunities, financial difficulties and the necessity for many students to relocate for advanced

studies heighten stress levels (Zohmingliani). Groups, like the Young Mizo Association (YMA) offer support and foster a collective identity but availability of professional mental health resources is still scarce. Adolescents frequently experience anxiety disrupted sleep diminished self-confidence and school-related exhaustion, in rural or under-resourced areas (Sznitman et al., 2011; Hopkins, 2014). Increasing stressors—such as struggles, with identity, social comparison and online harassment—further complicate their emotional challenges. These realities highlight the urgent need for culturally sensitive psychological research and school-based interventions that strengthen coping abilities, build resilience, and promote emotional well-being among Mizo adolescents (Hoover & Bostic, 2021; Zainah et al., 2019).

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Adolescence constitutes a phase characterized by swift physical, emotional and social transformations rendering youth simultaneously resilient and susceptible. While striving to establish their identity and autonomy they encounter demands, familial expectations and peer pressures which frequently result in stress that may impact their well-being if not managed properly (Compas et al. 2017). Adolescents' interpretation of stress is influenced by their styles, emotional development and the support they receive (Lazarus & Folkman 1984) with elevated stress associated with anxiety diminished self-worth reduced achievement and various other challenges (Cohen et al., 1983).

Personality characteristics influence how students deal with difficulties—qualities such as conscientiousness and extraversion typically assist them in maintaining an outlook and reaching out for help whereas traits like neuroticism can intensify feelings of stress and complicate coping (McCrae & Costa 2008). Coping mechanisms thus serve as the link, between personality and stress effects, where effective approaches foster resilience and ineffective ones escalate distress (Carver et al., 1989).

These challenges become more significant in Mizoram, where intense academic demands, scarce local prospects and increasing social-media influences heighten stress levels, among young people (Government of Mizoram 2023). Meanwhile counselling resources are scarce. Stigma frequently prevents students from pursuing assistance.

A further significant motivation for this research is the scarcity of studies exploring perceived stress, personality traits and coping mechanisms collectively among teenagers in North-East India. While numerous investigations address these topics individually students face them as intertwined aspects, in their experiences. Analyzing them within a framework can provide deeper understanding and assist educational institutions in creating support systems that effectively address students' requirements.

Responding to these gaps, the present study examines the levels of perceived stress, the personality traits adolescents display, and the coping strategies they use. The findings are expected to support schools, teachers, counsellors, parents, and policymakers in strengthening life-skills education, building supportive environments, and promoting healthier, more resilient pathways for young people in Mizoram.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study aims to understand how higher secondary students in Mizoram experience stress, develop their personality traits, and use different coping strategies in their daily lives. To gain a clearer picture, the research explores their levels of stress, the traits they commonly display, and the ways they manage challenges. It also examines how these factors differ across groups of students and how they relate to one another. Guided by this purpose, the study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of perceived stress among higher secondary school students in Mizoram?
2. Which personality traits are most commonly observed among higher secondary school students in Mizoram?
3. To what extent do higher secondary school students in Mizoram demonstrate effective coping skills?
4. Are there noticeable differences in perceived stress among students based on their gender, chosen stream of study, or type of school management?
5. How do personality traits vary among students according to their gender, academic stream, and school management type?
6. In what ways do coping skills differ among students in relation to their gender, stream of study, and type of school management?
7. What is the relationship between perceived stress and personality traits among higher secondary school students in Mizoram?
8. How are perceived stress levels related to coping skills among these students?
9. What connection exists between personality traits and coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram?
10. Which factors appear to influence students' stress levels, personality development, and ability to cope with challenges in the higher secondary school context of Mizoram?

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem of the study has been stated as **“Perceived Stress, Personality Traits and Coping Skills of Higher Secondary School Students in Mizoram”**.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following objectives have been framed to guide the study on stress, personality traits, and coping skills among higher secondary students in Mizoram.

1. To find out the level of perceived stress among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.
2. To find out the level of personality traits among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.
3. To find out the level of coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.
4. To examine the differences in perceived stress among higher secondary school students in Mizoram with reference to their:
 - a) Gender
 - b) Stream of study
 - c) Type of school management
5. To examine the differences in personality traits among higher secondary school students in Mizoram with reference to their:
 - a) Gender
 - b) Stream of study
 - c) Type of school management
6. To examine the differences in coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram with reference to their:
 - a) Gender
 - b) Stream of study
 - c) Type of school management
7. To examine the relationship between:
 - a) Perceived stress and personality traits among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.
 - b) Perceived stress and coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.
 - c) Personality traits and coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.
8. To explore the factors contributing to the psychological and physiological stress, personality traits and coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.
9. To suggest measures for managing stress, development of personality and

enhancing coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.

HYPOTHESES

The following null hypotheses are framed to test the objectives of the proposed study:

1. There is no significant difference in the level of perceived stress among higher secondary school students in Mizoram with reference to their gender, stream of study and type of school management.
2. There is no significant difference in the level of personality traits among higher secondary school students in Mizoram with reference to their gender, stream of study and type of school management.
3. There is no significant difference in the level of coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram with reference to their gender, stream of study and type of school management.
4. There is no significant correlation between perceived stress and personality traits among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.
5. There is no significant correlation between perceived stress and coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.
6. There is no significant correlation between personality traits and coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.

DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The present study is confined to higher secondary school students (enrolled in Classes XI and XII) from five selected districts of Mizoram, namely Aizawl, Champhai, Lunglei, Serchhip, and Kolasib. Although Mizoram comprises a total of eleven districts, the study focuses only on these five districts to provide a manageable and representative sample for the research.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A total of 198 related studies were reviewed across the three major variables of the study. Of these, 95 studies were conducted in India, while 103 studies were carried out abroad, reflecting a balanced blend of national and international perspectives. The reviewed works span a broad period from 2005 to 2025, capturing two decades of theoretical development and empirical findings on perceived stress, personality traits, and coping skills among adolescents.

METHODOLOGY

The present study followed a mixed-method approach using a Sequential Explanatory Design (QUAN → qual) to examine perceived stress, personality traits, and coping skills among higher secondary students in Mizoram. This structure allowed the research to begin with a quantitative phase to identify overall patterns and then move into a qualitative phase to understand the reasons behind those patterns more deeply.

Population

In the present study, the population consisted of all Higher Secondary School students enrolled in Classes XI and XII in the five selected districts of Mizoram—Aizawl, Champhai, Kolasib, Lunglei, and Serchhip—during the academic session 2023–2024. As per the Statistics of School Education 2022–2023, these five districts together had 136 higher secondary schools with a total enrolment of 19,224 students.

Sample

The study employed a multi-phase sampling approach. In the first phase (quantitative), stratified random sampling was implemented to guarantee representation of students across different genders, academic streams and types of school management within the five districts chosen for the study. Schools were randomly picked in proportion to the number of schools in each district followed by random student selection. In total 37 higher secondary schools, accounting for 27.2%

of schools, in the chosen districts were part of the sample. The selection covered both government and private institutions and to ensure representation. From these schools, 1,386 students were selected, including males and females across the Arts, Science, and Commerce streams, providing a balanced and realistic overview of the higher secondary student population in the region. The distribution of sampled schools by district is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Distribution of Higher Secondary Schools and Sampled Schools by District

Sl. No.	Districts	No. of Schools	No. of Sampled Schools	Percentage of Sampled Schools (%)
1	Aizawl	73	20	27.40
2	Champhai	10	3	30.00
3	Kolasib	10	3	30.00
4	Lunglei	29	7	24.13
5	Serchhip	14	4	28.57
	Total	136	37	27.20 %

For the second phase (qualitative), 150 students were purposively selected for Focus Group Discussions to provide deeper insights that complemented the quantitative findings. Altogether, fifteen FGD sessions were conducted, allowing students to share their experiences openly, each session consisting of ten students. Table 2 presents the fifteen sessions of focus group discussions.

Table 2

Fifteen Sessions of Focus Group Discussions

Sessions	Date	No. of students	Duration
1 st Session	2/9/25	10	1 hour 30 minutes
2 nd Session	6/9/25	10	1 hour 35 minutes

3 rd Session	10/9/25	10	1 hour 30 minutes
4 th Session	12/9/25	10	1 hour 30 minutes
5 th Session	17/9/25	10	1 hour 40 minutes
6 th Session	20/9/25	10	1 hour 35 minutes
7 th Session	23/9/25	10	1 hour 45 minutes
8 th Session	26/9/25	10	1 hour 40 minutes
9 th Session	2/10/25	10	1 hour 33 minutes
10 th Session	7/10/25	10	1 hour 35 minutes
11 th Session	10/10/25	10	1 hour 45 minutes
12 th Session	14/10/25	10	1 hour 30 minutes
13 th Session	18/10/25	10	1 hour 45 minutes
14 th Session	22/10/25	10	1 hour 40 minutes
15 th Session	28/10/25	10	1 hour 42 minutes
Total		150	

TOOLS OF THE STUDY

To assess perceived stress, personality traits, coping skills, and students' lived experiences, the study made use of the following tools:

1. Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10) by Cohen and Williamson (1988)
2. NEO Five-Factor Inventory-3 (NEO-FFI-3) – Form S (Adolescent) by Costa and McCrae (2010)
3. Coping Skills Scale developed by the Researcher
4. Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

Coping Skills Scale developed by the Researcher

The researcher developed a Coping Skills Scale to evaluate how higher secondary students, in Mizoram handle academic and emotional difficulties. This scale was formulated with the supervision serving both as training and to guarantee the tool suited the local environment.

Collection and Refinement of Statements

The research started with an examination of current coping skills assessments and theoretical frameworks to create a dependable instrument tailored for higher secondary learners in Mizoram. Based on this the investigator composed items addressing spiritual wellness, educational focus, physical condition and peer influence. Experts, from other institutions and the Department of Education Mizoram University evaluated the draft recommending modifications to refine language eliminate repetition and improve pertinence. Following the integration of their suggestions the completed scale consisted of 50 questions rated using a five-point Likert scale: 1 (Not all true of me) 2 (Not true of me) 3 (Somewhat true of me) 4 (True of me) and 5 (Very true of me), with negatively phrased items scored inversely to maintain uniformity.

Pilot Study

The Coping Skills Scale, comprising 50 well-structured items, was administered to a sample of 100 higher secondary school students in Mizoram.

Item Discrimination

Once the scale was given to 100 students their answers were arranged from lowest to highest and the highest and lowest 27% of participants were chosen for item examination. A t-test was performed to assess the power of each of the 50 items. Items that had a t-value exceeding 2.58 indicating significance at the 0.01 confidence level were kept. Consequently the completed Coping Skills Scale included 31 statements.

Reliability

To determine the reliability of the Coping Skills Scale, test-retest method and split-half method was employed.

For the test-retest procedure, the scale was first administered to 100 higher secondary students and then re-administered to the same group after four weeks. The resulting correlation coefficient of 0.949 demonstrated strong reliability, with significance at the 0.01 level.

In the split-half approach the questions were separated into two groups—items with numbers formed one set while those, with even numbers comprised the other. Applying Spearman–Brown’s formula the reliability coefficient was found to be 0.745 reflecting a degree of reliability.

Validity

In this study the content validity of the Coping Skills Scale was determined via expert assessment. Experts from universities beyond Mizoram and the Department of Education, at Mizoram University evaluated the relevance, clarity and representativeness of every item. Their input contributed to refining both the phrasing and scope of the statements guaranteeing the scale effectively captured the aspects of coping among higher secondary school students.

Scoring

The Coping Skills Scale is scored using the Likert approach with each statement rated on a five-level scale: 1 (Not all true of me) 2 (Not true of me) 3 (Somewhat true of me) 4 (True of me) and 5 (Very true of me). To maintain understanding, two negatively worded items (Items 11 and 12) were scored in reverse.

The total score for a respondent is obtained by summing all item scores, resulting in a possible range from 31(31 x 1) to 155 (31 x 5). A higher total score reflects a stronger ability to cope effectively with academic, emotional, physical, and peer pressures, while a lower score indicates limited coping capacity. Table 3 presents the scoring key used for the scale.

Table 3*Scoring Key for the Coping Skills Scale*

Sl. No.	Response Option	Score Assigned
1	Very true of me	5
2	True of me	4
3	Somewhat true of me	3
4	Rarely true of me	2
5	Not at all true of me	1

Norms and Interpretation of the Scale

Norms for the Coping Skills Scale were developed using z-score conversion based on data collected from 1,386 higher secondary students across five districts of Mizoram. This procedure helped to classify students into different levels of coping skills — high, moderate, and low — based on their total scores. The norms serve as a reference for interpreting individual and group scores in relation to the overall sample. Table 4 shows the normative categories derived from the distribution of scores.

Table 4*Norms and Interpretation of the Coping Skills Scale*

Category	Z-Score Range	Range of Scores
High Coping Skills	+0.50 and above	109 and above
Moderate Coping Skills	−0.49 to +0.49	79-108
Low Coping Skills	−0.50 and below	78 and below

Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

The researcher developed a custom interview guide featuring predefined themes derived from the students' data. Focus group discussions included student groups, each comprising 10 students to promote open and relaxed communication. In total fifteen FGDs took place. The themes concentrated on students' coping skills, academic health along with their experiences, in the school setting and community environment. These conversations aided in revealing the causes behind the numerical findings and offered a more profound understanding of the students' actual coping strategies, in real life.

PROCEDURE OF DATA COLLECTION

Data for the research was collected from secondary schools in the five chosen districts of Mizoram after securing approval from school officials and agreement from the students. During the quantitative phase, the researcher went to every school and distributed the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10) the NEO-FFI-3 (Adolescent) and the Coping Skills Scale within a calm classroom environment to ensure students could answer easily and, without interruptions. Each session lasted one hour and the filled questionnaires were gathered immediately.

In the qualitative phase, fifteen focus group sessions were conducted via Google Meet, each comprising ten students who willingly shared their experiences. The researcher contacted each selected student individually by phone in advance to clarify the purpose of the discussion and request their consent to participate. Only those who voluntarily consented were involved, guaranteeing that all participants joined with awareness and sincere comfort. These online discussions followed themes drawn from the quantitative findings and were conducted in a relaxed atmosphere where students could speak openly and respectfully.

Using both quantitative responses and qualitative insights enabled the study to develop a more complete picture of how higher secondary students in Mizoram experience stress, express their personality traits, and use coping strategies.

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES USED FOR DATA ANALYSIS

To interpret the data collected in the study, both quantitative and qualitative techniques were applied. Descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage were used to present the overall patterns in students perceived stress, personality traits, and coping skills. Inferential statistics, including the independent sample t-test and Pearson's product-moment correlation, helped in comparing different groups and examining the relationships among the main variables.

In addition to these numerical analyses, the qualitative data from the focus group discussions were examined using thematic analysis based on Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework, which was carefully adapted to fit the cultural and educational context of Mizoram. This combined approach provided a deeper and more grounded understanding of students' experiences.

MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. Level of Perceived Stress

The analysis of data from 1,386 secondary students in Mizoram reveals a clear trend in how teenagers view stress throughout their schooling. Out of these 259 students (18.69%) identified experiencing levels of stress showing that a significant fraction of the student body faces substantial pressure which could impact their emotional well-being and academic performance. The majority, 1,060 students (76.48%) were classified under stress implying that stress is a common and ongoing aspect of school life, for the majority of these students. 67 students (4.83%) were identified as having low stress indicating that only a small number of adolescents manage their academic and personal duties with little pressure. The results highlight an occurrence of stress among higher secondary students, in Mizoram, where most encounter moderate stress levels and a notable portion report high stress requiring supportive measures.

2. Level of Personality Traits

a) Five Domains of Personality Traits

A study involving 1,386 secondary school students in Mizoram offers an, in-depth overview of their personality traits assessed via the NEO-FFI-3 (Form S—Adolescent). In all five dimensions—Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness—the vast majority of students consistently scored in the spectrum reflecting well-rounded emotional, social and behavioral patterns characteristic of adolescence. For example 73.59% of students exhibited Neuroticism indicating generally steady emotional regulation, with comparable percentages observed in Extraversion (72.58%) Openness (66.81%) Agreeableness (71.13%) and Conscientiousness (73.95%). These trends emphasize that the majority of students demonstrate levels of adaptability, social involvement, creativity, empathy and responsibility.

A minor portion of the population exhibited scores in multiple areas varying between 12% and 16% based on the characteristic. Learners with Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness or Conscientiousness generally show pronounced sociability, creativity, benevolence or self-control respectively. Conversely individuals, with Neuroticism (12.48%) might face increased emotional reactivity and susceptibility to stress. At the same time, approximately 13–17% of students scored in the low range across traits, reflecting tendencies such as introversion, preference for routine, assertiveness over cooperation, or less structured study habits.

b) Overall Personality Traits

When taking all five personality domains into account simultaneously the results revealed a pattern. Most of the 967 students (69.77%) displayed overall personality traits indicating balanced psychosocial growth. These students are probably able to handle academic and social challenges with adequate confidence and steadiness. A smaller subset of 200 students (14.43%) showed overall personality development representing robust behavioral qualities such as emotional resilience, sociability, openness, to learning and systematic work habits. At the time 219 students (15.80%) were categorized in the low overall trait range highlighting

areas in which they might need extra assistance, with emotional regulation, motivation or social skills.

In summary the findings indicate variation in personality traits among higher secondary school students in Mizoram. Although a majority of teenagers display progress in various personality aspects the coexistence of both well-developed and underdeveloped profiles highlights the necessity, for adaptable teaching methods, school counseling support and personality enhancement initiatives to address the diverse requirements of students.

3. Level of Coping Skills

An analysis of 1,386 secondary school students in Mizoram shows distinct trends, in how teenagers cope with daily stresses and difficulties. Utilizing the Coping Skills Scale, a portion of 1,055 students (76.12%) exhibited moderate coping abilities suggesting that the majority manage academic tasks, emotional fluctuations, physical habits, spiritual health and social pressures with a fair level of competence. A smaller group, 187 students (13.49%), showed high coping abilities, suggesting strong resilience, emotional balance, and the capacity to respond positively to stressful situations. In contrast, 144 students (10.39%) displayed low coping skills, reflecting difficulties in adjusting to challenges or managing stress across academic, emotional, or social domains.

The findings highlight that while coping skills among higher secondary students are generally stable, there remains a significant group that may benefit from targeted support. Strengthening life-skills education, emotional guidance, and school-based counselling could help these students develop healthier and more effective ways of dealing with stress.

4. Differences in Perceived Stress

a) With reference to gender

A notable disparity was observed in perceived stress levels between female students in Mizoram. Female students showed a score of 22.835 whereas male students had an average score of 20.251 indicating that females endure greater stress.

This difference was statistically significant, at the 0.01 level. This implies that female students might be dealing with emotional or academic burdens than their male counterparts.

b) With reference to stream of study

The research demonstrated a variation in perceived stress among the three academic disciplines. Students, in Science exhibited the average stress level, with Commerce and Arts students trailing behind. The ANOVA analysis ($F = 24.384$, $p < 0.01$) verified that these variations hold significance. Additional post hoc analysis revealed that:

- Science vs. Arts → significant difference (mean difference = 2.252)
- Science vs. Commerce → significant difference (mean difference = 1.255)
- Arts vs. Commerce → significant difference at 0.05 (mean difference = 0.997)

These findings emphasize that students in Science face the stress probably because of increased academic demands and expectations, for achievement.

c) With reference to type of school management

There was no difference observed in the perceived stress levels between students attending government and private schools. The average score for government school students was 21.629 whereas private school students averaged 21.956; however this variation was not statistically meaningful. This suggests that students from both types of schools endure stress levels implying that the type of school administration does not solely determine perceived stress. Additional elements—, like coping strategies, academic demands or familial surroundings—might play a more significant role.

5. Differences in Personality Traits

a) With reference to gender

A study involving 1,386 secondary school students uncovered notable gender-related distinctions across various personality characteristics. Among the group 825 students (59.54%) were girls and 561 students (40.46%) were boys. Female students demonstrated elevated levels in Neuroticism, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness implying increased emotional responsiveness, cooperation and dependability. Conversely male students exhibited higher ratings, in Openness reflecting a somewhat stronger inclination to engage with new ideas and experiences. No notable variation was found for Extraversion indicating that males and females exhibit levels of sociability. These results suggest that gender significantly influences personality traits in adolescents.

b) With reference to stream of study

Personality traits also differed among the three streams. Out of the students 641 (46.27%) belonged to Arts, 308 (22.22%) to Commerce and 437 (31.51%) to Science. Notable variations were observed in all five personality dimensions. Students in Science obtained scores in Conscientiousness and Openness indicating enhanced discipline and inquisitiveness. Those in Arts displayed Agreeableness, implying greater interpersonal kindness whereas variations in Neuroticism and Extraversion, among streams highlighted the distinct stresses and learning settings linked to each academic discipline. These results verify that students' personality characteristics vary based on their chosen discipline.

c) With reference to type of school management

When analyzing students from government and private schools the majority of personality traits—Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness and Conscientiousness—revealed no differences. Among 1,386 students, 892 (64.36%) attended government schools while 494 (35.64%) were enrolled in schools. The sole significant variation was found in Agreeableness with private school students demonstrating higher scores suggesting a greater inclination, toward cooperation and social harmony. For

the traits both groups exhibited comparable patterns. Therefore the kind of school administration largely does not affect personality characteristics with the exception of Agreeableness.

6. Differences in Coping Skills

a) With reference to gender

An analysis of the coping skills, among 1,386 secondary school students—including 825 girls (59.54%) and 561 boys (40.46%)—showed a minor but notable difference based on gender. Boys had a coping score of 95.825 whereas girls had a marginally lower average of 93.520. While the disparity is modest the difference reached significance at the 0.01 level. This suggests that boys on average exhibit more effective coping mechanisms in handling academic stress, emotional requirements and routine difficulties. According to this result the null hypothesis was dismissed, indicating that gender has an influence on the coping strategies of students, in Mizoram.

b) With reference to stream of study

Coping skills were also analyzed among the three academic streams—Arts, Commerce and Science. From the sample 641 students (46.27%) were in the Arts stream 308 (22.22%) in Commerce and 437 (31.51%) in Science. The ANOVA findings indicated no variation, between the streams ($F = 1.268$, $p > 0.05$). Subsequent post hoc tests also verified that none of the pairwise differences were statistically significant. These results show that students' coping skills are largely similar across academic disciplines implying that coping is influenced more by individual and contextual elements than by the area of study. Consequently the null hypothesis, for this aspect was accepted.

c) With reference to type of school management

Upon analyzing coping skills by school management type, 689 students (49.71%) attended government schools while 697 (50.29%) were enrolled in schools. The average scores—94.723 for those in government schools and 94.152 for those in schools—were almost the same, with the difference showing no statistical

significance ($t = .819$, $p > 0.05$). This indicates that the nature of school management does not affect students ability to cope with stress or tackle difficulties. Students in both settings appear to draw upon similar coping resources, leading to the acceptance of the null hypothesis for this factor.

7. Relationship between Perceived Stress, Personality Traits, and Coping Skills

a) Relationship between perceived stress and personality traits

- i. A significant but weak positive relationship was found between perceived stress and personality traits among higher secondary students in Mizoram ($r = .089$, $p < .01$).
- ii. Students with certain personality characteristics—particularly traits linked to emotional sensitivity—tended to report slightly higher levels of perceived stress.
- iii. Since the correlation was statistically significant, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that perceived stress and personality traits are meaningfully connected.

b) Relationship between perceived stress and coping skills

- i. A moderate and significant negative relationship was observed between perceived stress and coping skills ($r = -.280$, $p < .01$).
- ii. Students with stronger coping abilities generally reported lower levels of perceived stress, highlighting the protective role of adaptive coping strategies.
- iii. As the correlation was statistically significant, the null hypothesis was rejected, confirming that coping skills are closely associated with how students perceive and manage stress.

c) Relationship between personality traits and coping skills

- i. A very weak but significant negative relationship was found between personality traits and coping skills ($r = -.065$, $p < .01$).
- ii. Although the association is small, the result suggests that certain personality characteristics may influence the type and effectiveness of coping strategies

students use.

- iii. The null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that personality traits and coping skills are statistically related, even if the strength of the relationship is minimal.

8. Factors contributing to Stress, Personality Traits and Coping Skills

To supplement the quantitative data, fifteen Focus Group Discussions were organized involving 150 higher secondary students, from various streams and types of schools. Held via Google Meet these discussions allowed students to openly express the stress they experience their personalities and their coping mechanisms. Although the analysis started with a predefined set of themes aligned with the study's objectives the group discussions also revealed insights. Every session was captured, transcribed and analyzed using a modified version of Braun and Clarke's analysis. This approach revealed seven themes providing a richer and more solid understanding of the elements affecting students' well-being.

a) Academic, school, and parental pressure

The discussions showed that students deal with academic, school and family pressures with extended hours of lessons, homework and extra classes giving them minimal time to relax. A majority of students (80%) reported experiencing peak stress during exams and deadlines when the convergence of tasks and demands became too much. Several mentioned that their studying is motivated not by personal goals but also, by a desire to fulfill parents' and teachers' expectations causing their self-esteem to be linked to their grades. Several also explained how grouping by class and constant comparisons diminished self-esteem for students who learn more slowly. In general although 75% identified workload and expectations, as sources of stress and 25% cited other issues they continued attempting to remain motivated despite being fatigued and stressed.

b) Emotional strain from family and relationships

A majority of students (56%) indicated experiencing distress linked to family issues and personal relationships with 40% pointing to stress caused by parental

disputes or ineffective communication within the household. 15% Encountered increased pressure resulting from fragmented families or households impacted by alcohol complicating their ability to concentrate on school. Conversely 44% mentioned that having encouraging connections, with parents, siblings and friends aided in relieving stress and sustaining their motivation. Students expressed that support, empathy and emotional connection lessened anxiety and enhanced their capacity to manage challenges. Overall emotional distress in people is influenced not only by family disruption but also, by the existence of nurturing compassionate relationships that build resilience.

c) Gender and stream differences in stress experiences

The conversations showed that 65% of students believed stress differed according to gender and field of study. Female students experienced anxiety and emotional pressure partly due to 35% mentioning that household duties allowed them minimal relaxation time while male students frequently concealed their stress or managed it through recreational activities. Students in Science expressed a burden with labs, assignments and extended study periods whereas those in Arts and Commerce mainly felt stress from comparisons, with Science students. Certain students emphasized the advantages of health classes offering useful techniques to cope with stress. In general stress in teenagers is affected not by academic workload but also, by gender expectations domestic duties and the chosen field of study.

d) Physiological manifestations of stress

A large portion of students (70%) indicated that stress impacted them physically resulting in fatigue, headaches, muscle pain and insomnia around exam times. 45% Mentioned that missed meals staying up late or intense anxiety made them feel exhausted whereas 20% faced agitation and trouble focusing prior to significant exams. A number of students mentioned shaking hands, chest discomfort or reduced appetite, as indicators of stress despite their efforts to conceal it. The impact varied among students with some bouncing swiftly after exams concluded. In general these narratives reveal that stress, in teenagers appears both mentally and physically. Students still manage to endure with determination.

e) Personality traits and individual differences

Students demonstrated personality-related variations, in their experience and handling of stress. 30% Reported intense anxiety and self-criticism whereas 60% highlighted calmness organization and self-discipline. Female students (65%) frequently exhibited neuroticism, agreeableness and conscientiousness resulting in empathy but a tendency to worry while a significant portion of male students (45%) relied on organized schedules or leisure activities to manage stress. Science students (55%) showed a tendency to be disciplined and analytical Arts students were expressive and emotionally balanced and Commerce students (50%) were pragmatic yet occasionally hesitant. In personality characteristics—neuroticism, conscientiousness, openness and extraversion—influenced how teenagers viewed, understood and reacted to stress, within their academic experiences.

f) Coping skills and emotional regulation

Students characterized coping as a combination of social and spiritual approaches with 68% depending on friendships, family and faith to handle stress. Gender affected coping methods as boys generally had liberty to unwind and socialize whereas girls juggled academic work and household duties. The academic stream showed impacts: Arts students employed creativity and adaptability Science students depended on discipline and organization and Commerce students blended structure with flexible tactics. A majority of students (70%) emphasized the significance of prayer and spiritual rituals, for managing emotions and achieving tranquility. Overall Mizo teenagers showed coping abilities relying on connections, belief and self-control to handle everyday stress yet continuing to experience the burden of outside demands.

g) Interplay of stress, personality, and coping

The discussions emphasized that stress, personality and coping mechanisms are deeply connected in the experiences of students. 70% viewed stress as a motivator whereas 40% perceived it as exhausting with their reactions influenced by characteristics such, as emotional sensitivity, conscientiousness or openness. Students employed a variety of approaches—55% depended on expressing emotions

and seeking support 45% adopted organized planning and 50% engaged in creative or social activities to handle stress. Prayer, mindfulness, and small personal rituals also helped them regain calm and focus. Altogether, personality shaped not only how stress was felt but also how effectively it was managed, showing that coping among Mizo adolescents is an evolving skill rooted in resilience, relationships, and self-awareness.

9. Measures for managing Stress, development of Personality and enhancing Coping Skills

The combined quantitative and qualitative results indicate that the majority of secondary students, in Mizoram experience consistent academic stress, emotional vulnerability and coping abilities that exist but are still evolving. Drawing from the students feedback and the data the following steps can support the enhancement of their health, personal development and daily resilience.

1. Strengthening Stress-Management Programs

Given that numerous students face moderate, to levels of stress schools might incorporate easy daily routines—brief breathing techniques, silent contemplation or mindfulness breaks—to assist them in beginning or concluding the day with tranquility. Educators trained in emotional assistance can softly support students when stress grows intense aiding them to stop recognize their emotions and restore balance.

2. Promoting Emotional Literacy and Counselling Support

Students candidly discussed the burden stemming from family disagreements and comparing themselves to peers. Supportive counseling environments, peer-support groups and life-skills courses can assist them in sharing their emotions without anxiety. Parents can also receive guidance to motivate their children in a manner that fosters confidence of stress building a home setting where students feel acknowledged.

3. Gender-Sensitive Interventions

Girls frequently reported carrying emotional and domestic duties whereas boys usually concealed their emotions. Programs that are aware of gender differences can assist boys in adopting ways to express their feelings and aid girls in securing individual study periods. This promotes sharing of tasks and fosters more open and assured coping skills, in both sexes.

4. Curriculum Integration for Personality Development

The majority of students exhibit degrees of personality characteristics allowing space for development. Engagements like debates, collaborative projects, leadership roles and artistic endeavors can foster confidence, empathy and accountability. Incorporating health and ethics-related subjects throughout all disciplines aids students, in enhancing both scholarly knowledge and self-awareness.

5. Enhancing Coping Skills through Practical Training

When feeling stressed students often turn instinctively to friends, music and prayer. Educational institutions can enhance these supports by creating peer-support groups activities centered on music or art and sessions focused on time management and stress control. These simple approaches can assist students in converting pressure into more constructive coping strategies.

6. Incorporating Faith and Community in Resilience Building

Numerous students gain solace from prayer and participation, in church gatherings. Educational institutions, religious organizations and youth clubs can work together to provide workshops on ethics, kindness and spiritual contemplation. This helps students recognize themselves as members of a community that supports their welfare beyond just academic matters.

7. Teacher Capacity Building

Educators hold a position in the emotional and educational experiences of students. Equipping them with knowledge about behaviour, compassion and

emotional interaction allows them to support students, with kindness and insight. Teacher-led mentorship groups create environments where students feel secure and comfortable to express themselves.

8. Multi-Level Collaboration

Students benefit most when parents, teachers, counsellors, and community groups work together. Well-being committees in schools, parental support programs, and collaborations with churches and NGOs can create a consistent network of care. With shared responsibility, students feel supported from all sides and gain the confidence to face academic and emotional challenges.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study show that higher secondary students in Mizoram are doing their best to balance studies, emotions, relationships, and expectations. Their experiences remind us that schools are not only places for academic learning but also spaces where young people grow emotionally, socially, and personally. The implications below highlight how teachers, parents, and the school community can support students more meaningfully as they navigate this sensitive stage of life.

1. Creating Emotionally Safe Classrooms

Since many students live with steady academic pressure, classrooms should feel calm and welcoming. Simple gestures—such as warm greetings, short emotional check-ins, or a few minutes of quiet reflection—can help students feel more relaxed. When teachers appreciate effort, students gain confidence and feel less overwhelmed.

2. Enhancing Personality Development Opportunities

Adolescence is a period of personality growth. Schools can encourage this through leadership clubs, group projects, community service, reflective writing, and creative activities. These experiences help students discover their strengths, understand themselves better, and build key qualities such as

responsibility, empathy, and confidence.

3. Integrating Life-Skills and Emotional Learning

Students naturally use music, friendship, and prayer to cope. Schools can reinforce these positive habits by teaching mindfulness, stress-reduction strategies, emotional awareness, and simple breathing practices. These life-skills help students feel more grounded and in control of their emotions.

4. Implementing Gender-Responsive Support Systems

The study shows clear gender differences in stress and coping. Girls often feel emotionally overloaded, while boys struggle to express their feelings. Schools can offer safe spaces where both genders can talk openly, share experiences, and learn healthy emotional habits without judgment.

5. Strengthening Parent Awareness and Support

Parental expectations strongly influence students' stress. Schools may organize sessions that guide parents toward offering encouragement instead of pressure. When communication at home improves, students feel more secure and are better able to concentrate on their studies.

6. Expanding Counselling and Wellness Services

Many students hesitate to ask for help. Accessible counselling services, quiet corners for reflection, or a caring teacher entrusted with emotional support can make a meaningful difference. Knowing that someone is available to listen reduces feelings of isolation.

7. Encouraging Empathetic, Student-Centred Teaching

Teachers sometimes misinterpret stress-related behaviour as disinterest. An empathetic approach—listening gently, offering reassurance, and understanding emotional signs—helps strengthen teacher-student relationships. When students feel understood, their motivation and participation naturally improve.

8. Providing Creative and Recreational Outlets

Music, arts, sports, and cultural activities serve as healthy emotional outlets. Including these regularly in the school routine helps students release tension, explore talents, and find joy in school life. Such activities support both emotional stability and personal confidence.

9. Promoting Peer Mentorship and Support Networks

Since peer support is a powerful coping resource, schools can introduce buddy systems or peer-mentoring groups. These connections help students share their thoughts, reduce loneliness, and build a sense of belonging within the school community.

10. Aligning School Practices with NEP-2020's Holistic Vision

The study reinforces NEP-2020's emphasis on well-being, experiential learning, and value-based education. By integrating emotional learning into daily routines, encouraging student voice, and strengthening teacher training, schools can nurture young people who are not only academically capable but emotionally balanced and morally grounded.

Overall, these implications highlight a simple truth: students thrive when they feel safe, understood, and supported by the adults around them. By working together with compassion—teachers, parents, counsellors, and the wider community—schools in Mizoram can help adolescents grow into confident, resilient, and well-balanced young individuals ready to meet life's challenges with hope and strength.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations from this research arise from an insight: higher secondary students in Mizoram are attempting to balance academic duties alongside handling emotions, expectations and individual difficulties. The subsequent recommendations provide methods, for teachers, parents, schools and policymakers to assist adolescents ensuring their educational experience is healthier and more optimistic.

1. Strengthening Stress-Management Practices in Schools

Educational institutions can foster a beginning to the day by incorporating brief relaxation techniques such, as breathing drills, brief silent intervals or calm contemplation. These straightforward habits assist learners in soothing their minds organizing their thoughts and starting classes with focus and ease.

2. Incorporating Life-Skills and Emotional Literacy in the Curriculum

Teachers can integrate life-skills exercises into everyday classes—such, as setting goals, managing time and writing reflectively. These methods assist students in recognizing their feelings maintaining order and boosting their confidence while handling stress.

3. Expanding Counselling and Student Support Services

Access, to counsellors or a secure wellness space can have a significant impact. When students realize there is a person to listen empathetically they experience reduced isolation and increased ability to manage stress.

4. Encouraging Supportive and Patient Parenting Practices

Parents can be advised to strike a balance between their expectations and emotional support. When they listen attentively and promote effort over results children feel appreciated and experience less stress, from pressure.

5. Building Gender-Sensitive Well-Being Programs

Educational institutions might develop environments where boys and girls alike feel at ease sharing their feelings. Boys frequently require motivation to open up whereas girls might gain from assistance in handling overwhelm. Customized support ensures each pupil feels acknowledged.

6. Providing Opportunities for Personality Development

Engagements such as holding leadership positions, participating in team endeavors, expressing creativity and self-reflection help adolescents to discover their abilities. These activities foster resilience, self-assurance and compassion— traits, for individual growth.

7. Promoting Collaboration Between Teachers, Parents, and Counsellors

Consistent interaction, among adults overseeing the child guarantees that both emotional and educational needs are met collaboratively. When educators, guardians and counselors exchange perspectives learners benefit from assistance.

8. Creating a Positive and Inclusive School Climate

Schools can create a welcoming atmosphere by organizing tasks, cultural events and artistic activities. An educational setting in which each student feels accepted promotes well-being and enhances drive.

9. Encouraging Teachers to Adopt Empathetic and Student-Centered Approaches

Educators who react with patience, compassion and empathy enable students to feel secure in expressing their difficulties. Kind encouragement can turn stress-induced behaviours into chances, for connection.

10. Aligning School Practices with NEP-2020's Vision for Holistic Education

In accordance with NEP-2020 schools can incorporate learning hands-on activities and wellness habits, into daily schedules. This holistic method supports students growth both academically and in their ethical development.

11. Encouraging Curriculum Planners to Integrate Socio-Emotional Learning

Programs of study ought to incorporate literacy, techniques, for managing stress and mindfulness exercises. When these factors are integrated throughout courses, learners gradually build enhanced emotional understanding and more effective coping mechanisms.

12. Guiding Policymakers to Prioritize Adolescent Mental Health

Decision-makers can enhance institutions by institutionalizing counseling programs, educator development and mental health protocols. Incorporating support into school regulations ensures that every student—no matter where they are—has equal opportunities, for wellness assistance.

These recommendations remind us that academic success becomes meaningful only when students feel emotionally secure and supported. By working together with empathy and clarity, teachers, parents, schools, and policymakers can help adolescents in Mizoram grow into confident, resilient, and emotionally balanced young individuals.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

This study offers understanding regarding the stress levels, personality traits and coping skills of higher secondary students in Mizoram while also highlighting the vast scope for further exploration into the emotional experiences of adolescents.

The recommendations indicate avenues, for future researchers to investigate in order to expand and enhance these results.

1. Conducting Studies in Rural and Remote Areas

Upcoming studies might involve students from remote regions to understand experiences that could contrast with those in urban and semi-urban locations. Youth, in environments might encounter distinct pressures and coping challenges that warrant further investigation.

2. Undertaking Longitudinal Research

Tracking the set of students, over a period would provide a deeper understanding of how stress, personality and coping mechanisms change as adolescents progress through key academic and developmental phases.

3. Including Additional Psychological or Social Variables

Elements, like intelligence, motivation, family environment, peer impact or social media behaviors might be included to create a more comprehensive insight into the factors influencing adolescent well-being.

4. Conducting Qualitative Studies with Teachers, Parents, and Counsellors

Upcoming research might address not students but also educators, parents and counsellors whose viewpoints can uncover emotional and behavioral trends that youth might not articulate openly.

5. Conducting Deeper Comparative Studies Across School Types

In-depth comparisons of government aided schools—focusing on atmosphere, interactions, expectations and support frameworks—might clarify why emotional experiences vary among different school settings.

6. Testing the Effectiveness of Intervention Programs

Scholars might assess initiatives, like mindfulness sessions, peer support groups or life-skills seminars to determine which approaches effectively alleviate stress and enhance coping skills.

7. Exploring Gender Differences More Deeply

Additional research might explore the impact of norms and social roles, on the emotional experiences of boys and girls enabling schools to develop more gender-responsive support strategies.

8. Using Larger and More Randomized Samples

Expanding the sample size and employing random sampling would enable future research to yield results that better reflect students, throughout the state.

9. Examining the Role of Digital Life and Online Learning

Given that numerous teenagers dedicate a portion of their emotional and social experiences to the internet upcoming studies might investigate the role of digital behaviors in causing stress or aiding in stress management.

10. Studying the Influence of Cultural and Community Factors

Exploring the influence of culture, community norms and spiritual customs, on students' stress and coping methods can assist in developing interventions that resonate meaningfully within the Mizo setting.

These suggestions point toward rich possibilities for future exploration, showing that the emotional world of adolescents is layered, evolving, and deeply influenced by the environments in which they grow. By expanding research in these directions, future scholars can help build school systems that understand young people more fully and support them with greater sensitivity and care.

~**~

APPENDIX – 1

PERCEIVED STRESS SCALE

The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) is an instrument for measuring the perception of stress and the degree to which situations in one's life are appraised as stressful.

Instructions: The questions in this scale ask you about your feelings and thoughts during the last month. In each case, please indicate with a check how often you felt or thought a certain way. Assume the statements relate to your current work situation. Read each statement in the questionnaire carefully without hurrying and choose the response you think is highly appropriate. Your 1st response is the most valuable response and hence do not ponder over a question for too long.

Put a tick mark against the appropriate box.

- 0 Never
- 1 Almost never
- 2 Sometimes
- 3 Fairly often
- 4 Very often

S. No	Questions	0	1	2	3	4
1	In the last month, how often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?					
2	In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?					
3	In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and "stressed"?					
4	In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?					
5	In the last month, how often have you felt that things were going your way?					
6	In the last month, how often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do?					
7	In the last month, how often have you been able to control irritations in your life?					
8	In the last month, how often have you felt that you were on top of things?					
9	In the last month, how often have you been angered					

	because of things that were outside of your control?					
10	In the last month, how often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?					

APPENDIX – 2

NEO-FFI-3

NEO Five-Factor Inventory-3

Item Booklet

Form S-Adolescent

SELF-REPORT

Paul T. Costa, Jr., PhD and Robert R. McCrae, PhD

Instructions

Write only where indicated in this Item Booklet. Carefully read all of the instructions before beginning. This questionnaire contains 60 statements. Read each statement carefully. For each statement, fill in the circle with the response that best represents your opinion. Make sure that your answer is in the correct box.

Fill in **(SD)** if you *strongly disagree* or the statement is definitely false.

Fill in **(D)** if you *disagree* or the statement is mostly false.

Fill in **(N)** if you are *neutral* on the statement, if you cannot decide, or if the statement is about equally true and false.

Fill in **(A)** if you *agree* or the statement is mostly true.

Fill in **(SA)** if you *strongly agree* or the statement is definitely true.

Note that the responses are numbered in *rows*.

Example

First five responses from an individual who strongly disagrees with items 1, 2, and 3, and agrees with items 4 and 5.

ENTER
ACROSS

1 (SD) 2 (SD) 3 (SD) 4 (A) 5 (A)

Fill in only one response for each statement. Respond to all of the statements, making sure that you fill in the correct response. **DO NOT ERASE!** If you need to change an answer, make an "X" through the incorrect response and then fill in the correct response.

Before responding to the statements, turn to the inside of this Item Booklet and enter your name, age, sex, ID number (if any), and today's date.

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Name _____ ID# _____
 Age _____ Sex _____ Today's date _____

1. I am not a worrier.
2. I like to have a lot of people around me.
3. I enjoy concentrating on a fantasy or daydream and exploring all its possibilities, letting it grow and develop.
4. I try to be courteous to everyone I meet.
5. I keep my belongings neat and clean.
6. At times I have felt bitter and resentful.
7. I laugh easily.
8. I think it's interesting to learn and develop new hobbies.
9. At times I bully or flatter people into doing what I want them to.
10. I'm pretty good about pacing myself so as to get things done on time.
11. When I'm under a great deal of stress, sometimes I feel like I'm going to pieces.
12. I prefer jobs that let me work alone without being bothered by other people.
13. I am intrigued by the patterns I find in art and nature.
14. Some people think I'm selfish and egotistical.
15. I often come into situations without being fully prepared.
16. I rarely feel lonely or blue.
17. I really enjoy talking to people.
18. I believe letting students hear controversial speakers can only confuse and mislead them.
19. If someone starts a fight, I'm ready to fight back.
20. I try to perform all the tasks assigned to me conscientiously.
21. I often feel tense and jittery.
22. I like to be where the action is.
23. Poetry has little or no effect on me.
24. I'm better than most people, and I know it.
25. I have a clear set of goals and work toward them in an orderly fashion.
26. Sometimes I feel completely worthless.
27. I shy away from crowds of people.
28. I would have difficulty just letting my mind wander without control or guidance.
29. When I've been insulted, I just try to forgive and forget.
30. I waste a lot of time before settling down to work.
31. I rarely feel fearful or anxious.
32. I often feel as if I'm bursting with energy.
33. I seldom notice the moods or feelings that different environments produce.
34. I tend to assume the best about people.
35. I work hard to accomplish my goals.
36. I often get angry at the way people treat me.
37. I am a cheerful, high-spirited person.
38. I experience a wide range of emotions or feelings.
39. Some people think of me as cold and calculating.
40. When I make a commitment, I can always be counted on to follow through.

41. Too often, when things go wrong, I get discouraged and feel like giving up.
42. I don't get much pleasure from chatting with people.
43. Sometimes when I am reading poetry or looking at a work of art, I feel a chill or wave of excitement.
44. I have no sympathy for beggars.
45. Sometimes I'm not as dependable or reliable as I should be.
46. I am seldom sad or depressed.
47. My life is fast-paced.
48. I have little interest in speculating on the nature of the universe or the human condition.
49. I generally try to be thoughtful and considerate.
50. I am a productive person who always gets the job done.
51. I often feel helpless and want someone else to solve my problems.
52. I am a very active person.
53. I have a lot of intellectual curiosity.
54. If I don't like people, I let them know it.
55. I never seem to be able to get organized.
56. At times I have been so ashamed I just wanted to hide.
57. I would rather go my own way than be a leader of others.
58. I often enjoy playing with theories or abstract ideas.
59. If necessary, I am willing to manipulate people to get what I want.
60. I strive for excellence in everything I do.

Enter your responses here—remember to enter responses **ACROSS** the rows.

SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; N = Neutral; A = Agree; SA = Strongly Agree

1	SD	D	N	A	SA	2	SD	D	N	A	SA	3	SD	D	N	A	SA	4	SD	D	N	A	SA	5	SD	D	N	A	SA
6	SD	D	N	A	SA	7	SD	D	N	A	SA	8	SD	D	N	A	SA	9	SD	D	N	A	SA	10	SD	D	N	A	SA
11	SD	D	N	A	SA	12	SD	D	N	A	SA	13	SD	D	N	A	SA	14	SD	D	N	A	SA	15	SD	D	N	A	SA
16	SD	D	N	A	SA	17	SD	D	N	A	SA	18	SD	D	N	A	SA	19	SD	D	N	A	SA	20	SD	D	N	A	SA
21	SD	D	N	A	SA	22	SD	D	N	A	SA	23	SD	D	N	A	SA	24	SD	D	N	A	SA	25	SD	D	N	A	SA
26	SD	D	N	A	SA	27	SD	D	N	A	SA	28	SD	D	N	A	SA	29	SD	D	N	A	SA	30	SD	D	N	A	SA
31	SD	D	N	A	SA	32	SD	D	N	A	SA	33	SD	D	N	A	SA	34	SD	D	N	A	SA	35	SD	D	N	A	SA
36	SD	D	N	A	SA	37	SD	D	N	A	SA	38	SD	D	N	A	SA	39	SD	D	N	A	SA	40	SD	D	N	A	SA
41	SD	D	N	A	SA	42	SD	D	N	A	SA	43	SD	D	N	A	SA	44	SD	D	N	A	SA	45	SD	D	N	A	SA
46	SD	D	N	A	SA	47	SD	D	N	A	SA	48	SD	D	N	A	SA	49	SD	D	N	A	SA	50	SD	D	N	A	SA
51	SD	D	N	A	SA	52	SD	D	N	A	SA	53	SD	D	N	A	SA	54	SD	D	N	A	SA	55	SD	D	N	A	SA
56	SD	D	N	A	SA	57	SD	D	N	A	SA	58	SD	D	N	A	SA	59	SD	D	N	A	SA	60	SD	D	N	A	SA

Now answer the three questions labeled A, B, and C below.

- A. Have you responded to all of the statements? _____ Yes _____ No
- B. Have you entered your responses across the rows? _____ Yes _____ No
- C. Have you responded accurately and honestly? _____ Yes _____ No

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Age:_____ **Gender:**_____ **Class:**_____

Name of School:_____

Type of School (Private/Government):_____

Stream of Study (Arts/Science/Commerce):_____

Contact No./Mobile No.:_____

INSTRUCTIONS

This questionnaire is designed to understand how higher secondary students manage stress in their daily lives. It includes statements related to different ways of coping—emotionally, mentally, physically, and academically. There are no right or wrong answers. What matters most is your honest response.

Please read each statement carefully and tick the option that best describes how true it is for you during difficult or stressful situations. Choose only one response for each item.

Your answers will be used strictly for academic research, and all information you provide will be kept confidential. Kindly respond freely and sincerely to every statement.

**Tick your desired response in the response box given:*

During difficulties or stressful situations						
S.No	Item	Response				
		Not at all true of me	Not true of me	Some- what true of me	True of me	Very true of me
1	I take control of the situation without getting anxious					
2	I maintain a positive and adaptive mindset					
3	I develop positive aspects of myself					
4	I am constantly full of optimism about everything					
5	I can reflect myself for a better outcome					
6	I can articulate a purpose for my existence					
7	Even in situations where I fail, I still can find the value in it					
8	I always maintain inner peace and tranquility					
9	I sacrifice my leisure time to help people in need					
10	I often experience a strong sense of connectedness					

11	I cannot make right decisions for myself					
12	I usually see the negative side of things in life					
13	I effectively follow the same study habits					
14	I am able to listen actively inside the classroom					
15	I have the capability to fulfill the tasks assigned by the teachers					
16	I set realistic goals for myself to manage academic pressure					
17	I become highly motivated to excel in my studies					
18	I prioritize my academic goals over everything else					
19	I share a close bond with my teachers					
20	I sacrifice other activities to focus solely on my academics					
21	I effectively identify and resolve my academic issues					
22	I usually engage myself in taking exercise/yoga/meditation					

	to relieve stress					
23	I am always physically healthy regardless of my stress level					
24	I practice healthy lifestyle habits					
25	I prioritize self-care activities to support my physical well-being					
26	I reward myself to keep motivated					
27	I find a solution to keep myself busy					
28	I socialize more with my classmates to feel better					
29	I learn to say 'NO' to bad habits offered by friends					
30	I actively participate in class activities to avoid being left out by my classmates					
31	I am usually good at balancing my needs and my friends' needs					

APPENDIX – 4

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION (FGD)

I. General discussion themes for all students

1. To begin with, how would you describe your day-to-day experience as a higher secondary student in Mizoram?
2. In your opinion, which parts of school life tend to feel most stressful—studies, friendships, or expectations from family and teachers?
 - Probe (if needed): Do you feel students in the Science stream usually experience more pressure than those in Arts or Commerce?

II. Discussion theme about Perceived Stress

3. What do you feel are the main things that cause stress for you as a student?
 - Probe: Do you think boys and girls sometimes feel stressed in different ways?
4. When stress builds up, do you usually feel in control, or does it become difficult to manage?
5. Have you ever noticed stress affecting your body—for example, feeling tired, losing sleep, or having aches?

III. Discussion theme about Personality Traits

6. How would you describe yourself as a student—how you think, behave, or deal with challenges?
7. Do you feel your personality influences how you handle stress? If yes, how?
 - Probe: Can you recall a situation where your personality helped you cope with a stressful moment?
8. Some students stay calm, while others feel anxious quickly. How do you usually respond when you face pressure or problems?

9. Do you enjoy group activities, or do you prefer working on your own? How does this shape your confidence at school?
10. Do you like trying new ideas or learning in different ways, or do you feel more comfortable with familiar routines?
11. How would you describe the way you relate to your classmates and teachers?
12. Are you generally organised and disciplined with your schoolwork, or do you sometimes struggle to keep track of tasks?
 - Probe: Do you think being organised or disciplined helps you manage stress more effectively?

IV. Discussion theme about Coping Skills

13. When you feel stressed or overwhelmed, what do you usually do to make yourself feel better?

Probe: Of the things you try—talking to someone, praying, taking a break—what seems to help the most?
14. During difficult times, who or what supports you the most—your family, teachers, friends, or your own efforts?
15. What helps you stay hopeful and motivated—for example, prayer, music, conversations, rest, or exercise?

Probe: Do you think your ways of coping differ from those of boys, girls, or students from other streams?

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EDUCATION

Examination	Board/University	Year of passing	Division	(%)
HSLC	St. Pauls HSS	2007	Distinction	79
HSSLC (Science, PCB)	Greenland HSS	2009	First	65
B.A (English)	Govt. Aizawl College	2015	First	72.9
M.A (English)	Mizoram University	2016	Second	58
B.ED	Mizoram University	2019	First	74.7
M.ED	Mizoram University	2021	First	74.40
NET- Education	UGC/NTA	2022	Lectureship	
NET- English	UGC/ NTA	2024	Lectureship	

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

1. Lallianvungi, L., Lalhriatpuii, L., Tochwawng, L., & **Lalruatpuii, C.** (2024). Teaching competency and job satisfaction: Exploring the relationship. *African Journal of Biological Sciences*, 6(Si4), 717–729. <https://doi.org/10.48047/AFJBS.6.Si4.2024.717-729>
2. Lalhriatpuii, L., Tochwawng, L., **Lalruatpuii, C.**, & Zosangzuali. (2024). Study habits among undergraduate students in Aizawl City: An overview. *African Journal of Biological Sciences*, 6(Si4), 730–738. <https://doi.org/10.48047/AFJBS.6.Si4.2024.730-738>
3. Lalnunsiami, K., Lalhriatpuii, L., Lalthanpuii, S., & **Lalruatpuii, C.** (2024). Career maturity and creativity of undergraduate students in Mizoram: A correlational study. *African Journal of Biological Sciences*, 6(Si4), 710–716. <https://doi.org/10.48047/AFJBS.6.Si4.2024.710-716>
4. Lalhriatpuii, L., Tochwawng, L., & **Lalruatpuii, C.** (2024). Is family background a moderator of vocational maturity? *Yugato*, 76(1), 1278–1285.
5. **Lalruatpuii, C.**, & Lalhriatpuii, L. (2025). A study on the level of coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram. *International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research*, 7(6), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.36948/ijfmr.2025.v07i06.60597>
6. **Lalruatpuii, C.**, & Lalhriatpuii, L. (2025). Perceived stress and coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram: A correlational study. *International Journal for Research Trends and Innovation*, 10(11), 569–579. <https://doi.org/10.56975/ijrti.v10i11.207537>

PRESENTATION, WORKSHOP AND CONFERENCE

1. Presented a paper on “Artificial Intelligence in Teaching Profession” in the International Conference On ‘Reskilling and Upskilling Stakeholders of Higher Education through Artificial Intelligence under G20 Initiative,2023 held on 19th-20th May,2023 organized by the Department of Education, Mizoram University.
2. Presented a paper on “An Analytical Study on Achievement Motivation of Post Graduate Students with regard to their stream of Study” in the International Conference on Higher Education: Issues, Challenges and Ways Forward held on 25th-27th October, 2023, organized by School of Education, Mizoram University.
3. Presented a paper on “Comparative Study of Teacher Education in India and Finland” in the International Conference on Higher Education: Issues, Challenges and Ways Forward held on 25th-27th October, 2023 organized by School of Education, Mizoram University.
4. Presented a paper titled ‘Inter Group Comparison of Post Graduate Students with Regards to their Achievement Motivation’ in the One Day International Seminar on Issues and Trends in Education organized by Kawnpui College on 19th March,2024.
5. Presented a paper titled ‘An Empirical Study on the Life Skills of Teacher Trainees’ in the One Day International Seminar on Issues and Trends in Education organized by Kawnpui College on 19th March,2024
6. Presented a paper on “Coping Skills through Peace Education” in the International Conference on Implementing Peace Education organized by Department of Education, Mizoram University held on 28-29 April, 2025.
7. Presented a paper entitled “Perceived Stress and Coping Skills among Higher Secondary School Students in Mizoram: A Correlational Study” in the National Seminar on Contemporary Issues in Education organized by Mizoram Educational Foundation on 7th November 2025.



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ACADEMIA

INDEX  COPERNICUS

A Study on the Level of Coping Skills among Higher Secondary School Students in Mizoram

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Abstract

This study evaluates the level of coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram and evaluates the differences by gender, academic stream and school management. A quantitative descriptive survey design is used to gather data on 1,386 students using a structured Coping Skills Scale that included academic coping, emotional regulation, physical control, spiritual well-being and resistance to peer pressure. Z-score norms were used to standardize total scores so that students can be categorized based on the level of high, moderate, and low coping. Analysis was done using descriptive statistics, independent samples t-tests, and one-way ANOVA tests. Findings indicated that 76.12 percent of students had moderate coping skills, 13.49 percent had high coping skills and 10.39 percent had low coping skills. Gender difference was statistically significant where the females had a mean of 93.520 and SD of 12.923, and the males had a mean of 95.825 and SD of 12.897 ($t = 3.264$, $p = .01$). There was no major difference among the streams of academics (Arts, Commerce, Science; $F = 1.268$, n.s.), or types of school management (Government vs. Private; $t = 0.819$, n.s.). The results outline generally sufficient coping in adolescents and a significant subgroup that needs specific attention. Educational implications are universal programs on life-skills that are to be complemented with interventions based on the enhancement of stress management and emotional resilience.

Keywords: coping skills, adolescents, higher secondary students, Mizoram, stress management.

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is one of the most important development periods in human life that is associated with a rapid physical, cognitive, emotional, and social change. At this stage, people start to work at their identity, develop autonomous character, and adapt to multiple internal and external demands [1]. This is particularly strenuous to students at higher secondary school who are usually aged between 16 and 18 years. Having to balance the academic demands, peer pressure, career choice, and emotional control, they have to cope with the transition between childhood and adulthood [2].

In case they are not managed successfully, they can result in an increased level of stress, lowered academic success, emotional instability, and diminished psychological well-being [3]. Here, the coping skills which can be explained as the mental, emotional, and behavioral processes that people use to cope with stress, play the important role in promoting positive adjustment. Acquiring sound coping skills in adolescence is

not only crucial to the eventual academic and emotional adaptation but also the cornerstone of long-time mental health, resilience, and interpersonal competence [4].

The coping skills involve the various dimensions, such as academic coping (good study habits, time management skills, and examination stress management), emotional regulation (ability to control anger, frustration, or anxiety), physical control (ability to control physiological processes such as fatigue and sleep), spiritual well-being (finding strength in own beliefs and values), and resistance to peer pressure (ability to stay independent and self-integrity in the social environment) [5,6]. When they have well-developed coping mechanisms, such students are in a position to stay emotionally stable, make rational decisions whenever in stress, and react positively to issues in life [7]. On the other hand, poor coping may result in an increase in anxiety, educational problems, personal conflict and an exposure to psychological distress.

It is therefore crucial to understand the degree as well as trends of coping competencies among adolescents by educators, counselors as well as policymakers [8]. It allows them to recognize the areas that need intervention and develop systematic programs that can help them grow holistically and psychologically healthy.

A. Importance of Coping Skills in Adolescence

The level of higher secondary education is a transitional stage in which students are preparing to higher education, career choices and final adulthood. During this period, coping skill will serve as intermediaries of resistance to stressors that might arise due to academic pressures, high level examination, socialization and personal issues [9]. The time management, good study habits and the ability to cope with examination stress is the academic coping. Regulating the emotions gives students a chance to deal with negative emotions such as anger, frustration or anxiety and behave in a difficult situation. The regulation of physiological response to stress i.e. fatigue or sleeping problems is physically controlled and the resilience is a spiritual well-being depending on personal beliefs and values [10]. Being able to resist peer pressure will allow the students to be upright and make their own decisions without being affected by the social factors. Evaluation of coping skills among students in these dimensions provides the concept of the willingness to succeed in solving academic and personal challenges.

B. Rationale and Need for the Study

Mizoram is a state of Northeast India with a peculiar socio-cultural and educational context, which predisposes the emotional and psychological experiences of the adolescents. Although the importance of mental health and coping are becoming widely recognized in the context of adolescent development, there has been a lack of empirical studies on coping skills in higher secondary-level students in Mizoram [11]. The available literature on the topic in other areas suggests that gender, academic stream and kind of school management are some of the variables that affect coping capabilities. Nevertheless, the data on the degree to which these aspects influence adolescents in Mizoram has not been examined properly. Furthermore, it has been further revealed in recent years that the increasing competition, digital exposure, and academic demands have required the consideration of coping capacities in students further as a systematic study [12].

This research paper is therefore meant to quantitatively measure the coping skills of high school students in Mizoram on the standardized (Z-score based) classification norm. The results can be interpreted as a piece of evidence and understanding of the level of coping and disparities of students in terms of demographic factors. The findings of this study can be used by teachers, counselors and policymakers to come up with specific programs that include:

- Stress management and resiliency workshops,
- Use of life skills and emotional intelligence training,
- Peer-support and school counseling.

It can be predicted that these interventions will positively affect the coping abilities of students, as well as their academic activity, emotional resilience, and mental health in general. The research, therefore, has a great educational and policy implication in terms of encouraging the comprehensive growth of adolescents in Mizoram.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To assess the level of coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.
- To examine differences in coping skills based on gender, stream of study, and type of school management.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Şahin and Hepsöğütü (2018) [13] studied the psychological hardiness and coping mechanisms of high school students with special focus on the effect of such variables as gender, age, and socio-economic background. Their research emphasized that those students who had greater resilience were in a better position to use adaptive coping mechanisms such as problem-solving and emotional regulation. This highlights the dependency between resilience and coping skills pointing to the possibility that resilience-based interventions would have a beneficial impact on the ability of the students to cope with stress effectively.

Javidi and Garmaroudi (2019) [14] examined how life skills training influenced social and coping skills, and aggression in high school students. They discovered that structured life skills programmes had a great impact in enhancing the social competencies and coping mechanisms of the students and in minimizing aggressive behaviors. The experiment has shown that specific educational intervention is efficient in enhancing the adaptive skills of adolescents, and it is valuable to consider the integration of training in life skills into the school curriculum to promote emotional and social well-being.

Thenga, et al. (2015) [15] concentrated on the stress coping styles adopted by learners of secondary schools, and they have found that the problem-oriented and emotion-oriented strategies are the most effective strategies used by students. Their study also emphasized that students tend to vary their coping strategies depending on the type of stressor, which implies that flexibility and situational awareness are the significant elements of the good coping process. These results highlight the necessity of educational activities that will inform students about various coping skills to manage academic and social stresses effectively.

Özer and Korkman (2022) [16] investigated the connection between self-esteem and coping behavior in secondary school students. Their research revealed that there was a strong positive relationship that exists

between high self-esteem students and their use of more effective coping styles, such as problem-solving, emotional regulation, and seeking of social support. This shows that self-esteem development during adolescence is a central factor towards adaptive coping skills.

Purohit (2016) [17] studied the coping skills needed in the 21st century in the secondary school level. The paper has underscored that modern students are exposed to various stressors, such as academic pressures, distractors, and social pressures. According to Purohit, coping can be done effectively by using not only traditional skills, including time management, emotional control, and others, but also digital literacy, self-directed learning, and other modern skills. The study highlights the importance of imparting students with holistic coping skills to succeed in fast changing education settings.

Srisongkhram and Srisongkhram (2019) [18] examined the learning skills and academic stress coping style interplay between senior high school students. Their results indicated that students who had better learn strategies, which included goal setting, self-monitoring, and effective studying skills, tended to embrace adaptive coping styles, where problem focused coping and cognitive reframing coping styles featured. The authors of the research focus on the interdependence of academic skills and coping skills, which can be improved to support stress management skills in adolescents indirectly through the development of learning skills.

Freire, et al. (2016) [19] examined psychological well-being profiles and coping strategies in the university students and found that students having high psychological well-being employed proactive and positive coping strategies. Although they studied older adolescents, their results suggest that psychological well-being is a major indicator of coping effectiveness, which supports the need to take care of sanity and cognitive well-being in secondary education to equip students to address future academic and social problems.

Labrague et al. (2017) [20] performed an in-depth literature review of stress and coping behaviors in nursing students and concluded that academic stress, clinical workload, and social expectations play major roles in determining the level of stress. The review has found the similarity in coping strategies such as problem-solving, managing time, seeking social support, and relaxation. The authors emphasized the significance of the institutional support and skill development initiatives to improve coping efficacy and said that the structured interventions in schools and colleges are essential to cope with stress in adolescents.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this section, the systematic procedures and techniques that were used in the conducting of the current study are outlined. It outlines the research design, population, sample, method of data collection, scoring, and classification, and statistical tests that will be used to analyze the extent of coping skills of students in higher secondary schools in Mizoram.

A. Research Design

The research was quantitative in nature and descriptive survey design was used to identify the level of coping skills among students of higher secondary schools in Mizoram. This design enabled the trends identification and comparison of coping skills among gender, academic streams, and types of school management. The methodology was appropriate to a large population and allowed making statistically valid conclusions.

B. Population and Sample

The study was delimited to five districts of Mizoram i.e. Aizawl, Kolasib, Champhai, Lunglei and Serchhip. Therefore, the population was the total population of higher secondary school students in these five districts of Mizoram. A multi-stage stratified random sampling technique was used to select a total sample of 1386 students from 37 schools comprising of both genders, streams of study (Arts, Commerce, and Science) and type of school management (Government and Private). The sample size was also sufficient to provide statistical reliability and external validity of the results.

C. Tool for Data Collection

Data was collected using the Coping Skills Scale developed by the researcher. The following dimensions of coping were measured in the scale:

- **Academic coping:** Capacity to deal with academic load and academic pressure.
- **Altering the emotional state:** Ability to control negative emotions and to stay stable.
- **Physical control:** Control of physiological and behavioral stress responses.
- **Spiritual health:** Coping with individual beliefs and values.
- **Avoiding peer pressure:** Being able to deal with social pressures and still be upright.

The scale followed 5-point Likert scale and the higher the score, the better the coping ability. The total of the item scores served as the score of the sum of the coping skills of a participant.

D. Data Collection Procedure

Before collecting the data, the school authorities were contacted and the participants informed about the purpose of the study. Informed consent was taken and confidentiality and anonymity were ensured. The questionnaire was conducted in the classroom environment to the supervision of the researcher.

E. Scoring and Classification

The total score of every student was obtained by adding all the answers to the items in the scale, as depicted below in Equation 1:

$$\text{Total Score (TS)} = \sum_{i=1}^n x_i \quad (1)$$

where:

- TS = Total score of a student
- x_i = Score for the i^{th} item
- n = Total number of items

To establish statistical norms for classification, Z-score standardization was applied to the total raw scores using the formula (Equation 2):

$$Z = \frac{X - \bar{X}}{SD} \quad (2)$$

where:

- X = Individual's raw score
- $\bar{X}$ = Mean of total scores
- SD = Standard deviation of total scores

F. Data Analysis

Data analysis involved both descriptive and inferential statistics.

Descriptive Statistics

- The mean ($\bar{X}$) and standard deviation (SD) were computed to summarize the central tendency and variability of coping skill scores using the formulas shown in Equation 3 & 4:

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^N X_i}{N} \quad (3)$$

$$SD = \sqrt{\frac{\sum_{i=1}^N (X_i - \bar{X})^2}{N - 1}} \quad (4)$$

where:

- N = Total number of students
- x_i = Individual score

Inferential Statistics

To test for significant differences:

- A t-test was conducted to compare coping skills between male and female students, using the formula mentioned below (Equation 5):

$$t = \frac{\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2}{\sqrt{\frac{SD_1^2}{n_1} + \frac{SD_2^2}{n_2}}} \quad (5)$$

Where:

- $\bar{X}_1, \bar{X}_2$ = Mean scores of the two groups
- SD_1, SD_2 = Standard deviations of the groups
- n_1, n_2 = Sample sizes of the groups

Additionally, one-way ANOVA was used to analyze differences in coping skills across different streams of study, as shown in Equation 6:

$$F = \frac{MS_{\text{between}}}{MS_{\text{within}}} \quad (6)$$

Where:

- MS_{between} = Mean square between groups
- MS_{within} = Mean square within groups

Significance was tested at 0.01 and 0.05 levels, and results were interpreted to understand the impact of gender, stream, and school management type on coping skills.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

This section presents the results of the analysis of data that is gathered among students of higher secondary schools in Mizoram. These findings have been logically interpreted to evaluate the general level of coping skills and their difference based on gender, academic stream, and type of school management. The Z-score normalization technique is used in all the classifications of the coping levels, with the result of statistical consistency and objective comparison across groups.

A. Level of Coping Skills

The Coping Skills Scale was carried out on 1,386 higher secondary school students in five districts of Mizoram to evaluate five critical areas of coping: academic coping, emotional regulation, physical control, spiritual well-being and also avoiding peer pressure. The total score of each participant was normalized through Z-score method which is elaborated in methodology section in order to assure statistical normalization and proper classification.

Depending on the standardized distribution, the levels of coping skill were classified in the following way:

Table 1. Z-Score Classification of Coping Skills

Level	Z-Score Range	Corresponding Raw-Score Range
High Coping Skills	$Z > +1 \text{ SD}$	109 and above
Moderate Coping Skills	$-1 \text{ SD} \leq Z \leq +1 \text{ SD}$	79 – 108
Low Coping Skills	$Z < -1 \text{ SD}$	78 and below

The frequency distribution of students within each category is summarized below.

Table 2. Level of coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram

Category	Range of Scores	Number of Students	Percentage
High Coping Skills	109 and above	187	13.49
Moderate Coping Skills	79 - 108	1055	76.12
Low Coping Skills	78 and below	144	10.39
Total		1386	100

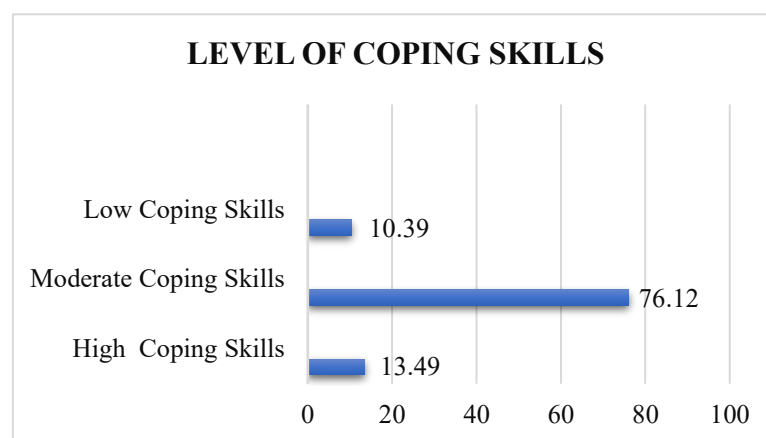


Fig. 1. Percentage showing the level of coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram

The results reveal that a percentage of 76.12 out of the students are in the moderate range of coping skills meaning that they have balanced coping skills in overcoming academic, emotional, and social problems. A total of 13.49 percent is highly adaptable and stress managing which is portrayed in the high coping skills category, whereas 10.39 percent represent the low coping skills category, which depicts possible problems with adaptability.

On the whole, most students have moderate coping skills, although more specific interventions can be required in students with lower coping skills, particularly in the emotional and academic domains.

B. Coping Skills by Gender

In order to answer the question on the difference in coping skills between male and female students, an independent-samples t-test is conducted on the standardized scores.

Table 3. Gender Differences in Coping Skills

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t Value	Significance
Female	825	93.520	12.923	3.264	*(0.01)
Male	561	95.825	12.897		

*Significant at 0.01 level

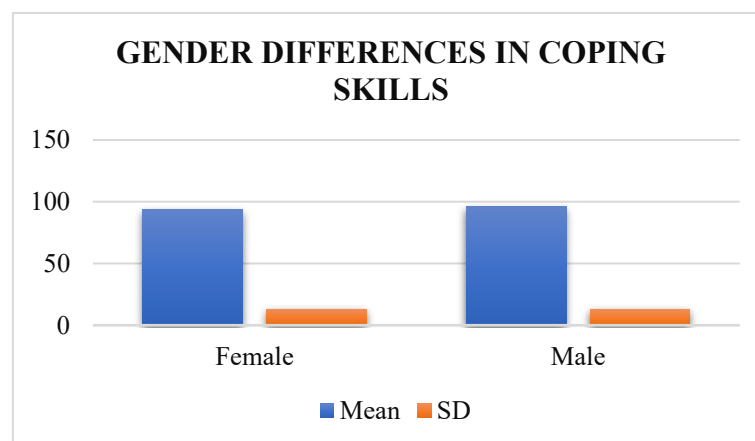


Fig. 2. Comparison of coping skills scores between male and female students

The result of the analysis shows that the scores of coping skills were slightly higher among male students (Mean = 95.825, SD = 12.897) as compared to female students (Mean = 93.520, SD = 12.923). The t value of 3.264 above is statistically significant at the 0.01 level meaning that there is no chance that the difference between the genders in coping skills has arisen. The result of this finding implies that the average male students have slightly stronger coping skills compared to their female counterparts. Yet, the difference between the mean scores is rather minor, this is why it is possible to assume that both sexes exhibit almost equal coping skills. These findings highlight the importance of introducing gender-

sensitive, balanced interventions that lead to emotional stability, management of stress and adaptive coping strategies in both male and female students.

C. Coping Skills by Stream of Study

One-way ANOVA is used to test the hypothesis that there were differences in coping skills among academic streams namely Arts, Commerce, and Science.

Table 4. Differences in Coping Skills across Streams

Stream	Mean	ANOVA F	Significance
Arts	94.123		
Commerce	94.804	1.268	NS
Science	94.001		

*NS = Not significant

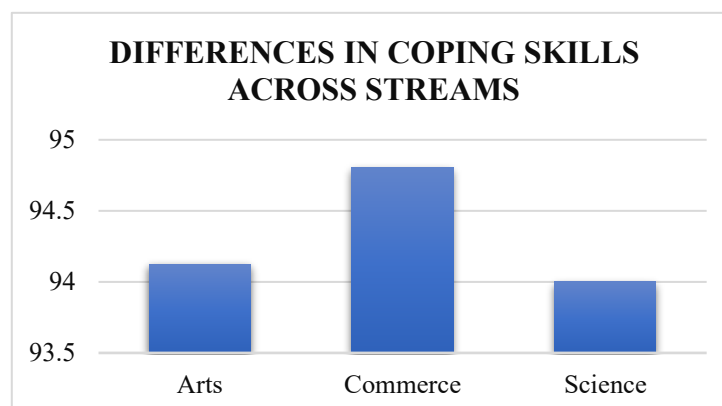


Fig. 3. Mean score of coping skills across different streams of study

The findings reveal that the mean score of the students in the Commerce stream (94.804) was slightly higher than the students in the Arts (94.123) and Science (94.001) streams. But, the ANOVA value obtained ($F = 1.268$) is not statistically significant ($p = 0.05$) and this means that the differences between the mean scores of coping among the three groups are not significant and might be due to chance. This is an indication that students regardless of their academic stream are likely to have similar coping skills. It can therefore be concluded that, nature of the academic field of study does not significantly influence the coping skills of the students. Thus, the improvement of coping skills and stress management programs could be applied to all streams without having to differentiate them stream-by-stream.

D. Coping Skills by Type of School Management

The independent-samples t-test is applied to compare coping skills of Government and Private school students.

Table 5. Coping Skills by School Type

School Type	Mean	t Value	Significance
Government	94.723	0.819	NS
Private	94.152		

*NS = Not significant

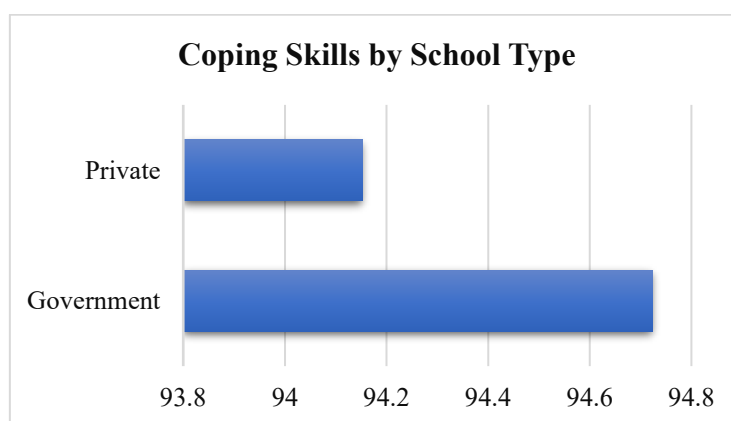


Fig. 4. Mean score of coping skills by type of school management

It can be seen that the coping skill scores of Government-school students (Mean = 94.723) are marginally higher than those of Private-school students (Mean = 94.152). Nonetheless, the t value (0.819) is not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$) and, therefore, it does not show any significant difference between the two groups statistically. It implies that there is no significant difference in the coping skills of students based on the kind of school management, that is, Government or Private. The two groups have almost similar abilities to deal with academic stress, emotional pressures, and stress connected with peers. These results mean that students who do not have coping skills are more influenced by both personal and environmental factors compared to the type of institutional management, and therefore, daily coping skills development programs should be directed in all schools.

DISCUSSION

The present study entitled “A Study on the Level of Coping Skills among Higher Secondary School Students in Mizoram” was conducted with the objective of assessing the level of coping skills and their variation with respect to gender, academic stream, and type of school management. The coping score of every student was standardized and categorized into high, moderate and low using the method of classification by Z-score. This made the interpretation of the coping levels sound and according to the level of individual relative to the entire population.

The results also indicated that most of the students (76.12) had moderate coping skills which indicated that most students in higher secondary school have sufficient psychological adaptability and strength to

cope with the demands of academic tasks, peer relations, and emotional issues. These students seem to be able to deal with the usual stressors efficiently with a balanced mix of problem-oriented and emotion-oriented coping styles. This is in line with studies that reveal that most adolescents tend to use flexible coping reactions which enable them to adapt to developmental, academic and social requirements comfortably.

The percentage of students with high coping skills (13.49) as exhibiting high self-regulation, optimism, and emotional control was lower and 10.39% of the students were at the low coping skills category. The heterogeneity of coping abilities among adolescents is highlighted by the fact that the low-coping group also includes students. Such students can become more susceptible to stress or academic burnout, or peer influence, and therefore can receive some special intervention such as stress management, emotional stability and problem-solving skills.

Another statistically significant finding of the study was a difference in the coping skills between males and females among students ($t = 3.264$, $p < 0.01$). Coping scores were a little higher among males (Mean = 95.825, SD = 12.897) than females (Mean = 93.520, SD = 12.923). Although the difference is not significant, it indicates that there are gender-related differences in coping style and stress management. It has also been noted that males tend to be more problem-oriented (direct action to cope with stressors) than females who tend to be more emotion oriented (seeking social support or dealing with emotional distress). Such patterns may be due to cultural demands, socialization or gender-based stress perception. Nevertheless, the comparatively narrow difference between the present study shows that there is a relatively similar coping potential in both genders meaning that coping interventions must be inclusive and yet adaptive to gender-specific requirements.

On the stream of study, the findings indicated no significant difference in results between Arts, Commerce, and Science stream students ($F = 1.268$, n.s.). The average scores were almost the same showing that the academic specialization is not a significant factor in coping skills development. This observation demonstrates that the coping ability is more influenced by the individual and environmental factors including personality, motivation, parental support, and peer relationship, as compared to the academic stream in itself.

Equally, there were no significant differences between Government and Private school students ($t = 0.819$, n.s.). In spite of the fact that the Government school students ranked slightly higher, the difference was statistically not significant, which means that institutional type and management system do not predetermine coping abilities. The two types of schooling appear to offer similar learning and socialization experiences, implying that the coping capacity may be largely based on the personal resiliency, socio-emotional learning experiences, and family support networks rather than school organization.

The results focus on the idea that the vast majority of students have average coping skills, yet a minor but significant portion of the population has difficulties with coping with stress. The analysis of the Z-score offered a statistically normalized and objective means of revealing these students, which means accuracy and comparability of all variables. The findings put an emphasis on early detection, supportive instructions and organized manipulations that could help in enhancing coping skills in high school education.

MAJOR FINDINGS

The major findings of the study are shown below:

1. Level of Coping Skills

It was found that among 1386 students, 76.12% exhibited moderate coping skills, 13.49% had high coping skills, and 10.39% had low coping skills. It implies that the underperformance of the mode of functioning of a considerable portion of the students in the standard academic and social conditions is observed, and the intervention of a special support to help them improve their coping strategies and avoid maladjustments under the influence of stressors is necessary.

2. Gender Differences

It is observed that the level of coping between the males and female students was statistically different ($t = 3.264, p < 0.01$). Male respondents had a marginally higher coping skills (Mean = 95.825) as compared to the female respondents (Mean = 93.520). This suggests that there are slight differences in gender-based coping styles- maybe due to difference in emotional expressivity, stress perception and use of social support. Nonetheless, the small margin implies that the programs of coping should be developed in terms of a comprehensive approach to both sexes, with the additional focus on emotional health among female students.

3. Stream of Study

The outcomes of one-way ANOVA ($F = 1.268, n.s.$) were not statistically significant to distinguish the coping skills of Arts, Commerce, and Science students. This proves that the academic specialization or curriculum load based on streams does not have a significant impact on coping capacity. Subject orientation is less likely to influence coping compared to intrapersonal characteristics, the exposure to stress as well as the availability of emotional support systems.

4. Type of School Management

Independent-samples t-test ($t = 0.819, n.s.$) showed no significant difference between Government (Mean = 94.723) and Private school (Mean = 94.152) students. This means that the coping competence is not very dependent on the administrative management of the school and that both forms of institutions offer equal opportunities and challenges to the students in terms of coping with stress and issues of problem-solving.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The implications of the results of this study to educators, school administrators, counselors and policymakers are enormous. They offer information about how coping skills may be trained systematically, facilitated and strengthened by organized educational and psychosocial forums.

- 1. Development of School-Based Coping Enhancement Programs:** Schools ought to create systematic programs that focus on building coping and resilience amongst school-going children. Stress management workshops, mindfulness, emotional control, and problem solution workshops can be included in the school calendar. They should especially target students in the low-coping category.
- 2. Integration into Curriculum:** The development of coping skills can be integrated in the Curriculum of Life Skills Education or even in the Curriculum of Moral Science. Both emotional and behavioral coping competencies can be developed by lessons on time management, decision making, goal setting, and management of peer relationships.

3. **Gender-Sensitive Interventions:** Although gender differences were mild, girls might be supported by the activities that will focus on their emotional awareness, confidence-building and assertive communication. Gender-based disparities can be reduced by holding group counseling sessions, which assist students in recognizing stressors and learning to use positive self-talk and coping skills.
4. **Inclusive Interventions by Streams and Type of School:** The similarity in coping skills between academic streams and school management meant that all students and their backgrounds should be given equally the opportunity to develop adaptive strategies.
5. **Training of Teachers and Counselors:** Teachers are critical in identifying the early signs of poor coping (e.g., absenteeism, poor performance, irritability). Therefore, frequent teacher training, mental-health sensitization should be applied so that teachers are provided with rudimentary psychological first-aid and referral systems.
6. **Parental and Community Sensitive:** Parents are to be engaged as active contributors in the resilience promotion at home. Positive coping behaviors may be reinforced with the help of awareness sessions and parent-teacher partnerships that encourage good coping strategies, communicate with parents, and provide them with supportive home environments.
7. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Periodic coping skill assessment that is used to monitor the progress of students should be adopted in schools. Z-score based classifications can be used to enable schools to detect the changes in the level of coping and by which way the intervention programs have increased the effectiveness of the process.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

Despite the insights presented by this research, a number of issues are yet to be explored in future to further the knowledge on coping strategies in adolescents.

1. **Longitudinal Research:** Future research might follow the students over an academic or several years to investigate the development of coping skills with the passage of time, especially during critical periods like examinations, admission to higher education, and after school.
2. **Qualitative Investigations:** To further enrich the understanding of personal experiences and contexts that would drive the coping strategies of students, it may be useful to supplement the quantitative analysis based on the Z-score with the qualitative interviews, focus groups, and case studies.
3. **Socioeconomic and Family Factor Analysis:** Future studies may examine the effect that family structure, parental support, socioeconomic status, and cultural behaviors have in affecting the level of coping among the adolescents, which will aid in creating more tailored interventions.
4. **Intervention-Based Experimental Studies:** Experimental literature comparing the impact of structured interventions (mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR), cognitive-behavioral training (CBT) and peer mentoring programs) on improving coping in adolescents may be used to determine evidence-based methods in improving coping among adolescents.
5. **Comparative and Cross-Regional Studies:** It would be possible to carry out similar studies in other Indian states or different socio-cultural settings to draw comparisons between the profile of coping and to generalize the findings on the national-level educational policy development.
6. **Domain-Specific Stressor Exploration:** Future studies may be conducted on certain domains, including academic examination stress, peer effect, digital media exposure, or emotional adaptation to establish domain-specific patterns of coping as well as interventions.

CONCLUSION

The research has given a thorough perspective of the coping skills among the high school students in Mizoram and how most teenagers portray moderate coping skills, which depict a balanced emotional and behavioral adaptation at this critical period of growth. Standardization was done using Z-score, which guaranteed objective classification as well as accurate comparison across demographic variables. Although the majority of students seem to be able to manage all academic, emotional, and social difficulties successfully, a considerable percentage of them demonstrates the low level of coping which indicates the necessity of specific interventions. The observed gender disparity with male students displaying a few more coping skills than female students highlights the necessity of introducing gender-sensitive programs that will help female students to increase emotional control and resiliency. The fact that there are no material differences among academic streams or the types of school management supports the claim that the coping capacity is not affected by the institutional or curricular factors and has more to do with the individual and psychosocial factors.

On the whole, the results highlight the importance of the school-based approach to coping and resilience training based on life-skills education and counseling and teacher-led support programs. Enhancing these adaptive processes through strengthening them as adolescents will lead to long-term emotional and academic success and social competence, which will promote the overall development of youth in Mizoram.

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Perceived Stress and Coping Skills among Higher Secondary School Students in Mizoram: A Correlational Study

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Abstract - The present study investigates the level of perceived stress and coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram and examines the relationship between the two variables. A total of 1,386 students were selected from 37 higher secondary schools across five districts of Mizoram. Data were collected using the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10) by Cohen Williamson (1988) and the researcher-developed Coping Skills Scale. Statistical analyses such as percentage, mean, standard deviation, and Pearson's correlation coefficient were applied. Results revealed that most students experienced moderate levels of both stress and coping skills. A significant negative correlation was found between perceived stress and coping skills, indicating that students with better coping skills tend to perceive less stress. These findings highlight the need for integrating coping skill development and emotional-resilience programs into the school curriculum.

Keywords - Perceived stress, coping skills, higher secondary students, Mizoram, correlation.

I. INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a transitional period marked by emotional turbulence and developmental changes that influence learning and behavior. Santrock (2020) described this stage as a period of “storm and stress,” during which young people struggle with identity formation, peer influence, and academic expectations. Stress, according to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), is “a relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised as taxing or exceeding the person's resources.” It is not the situation itself but the individual's perception that determines stress intensity.

In modern schooling, stress has become an unavoidable part of adolescent life. Academic workload, examinations, and parental expectations often create a pressure-filled environment (Misra & Castillo, 2004). In Mizoram, where education holds high social and cultural importance, higher secondary school students face additional pressures from family and community expectations. Success in board examinations and career selection is often seen as a collective achievement for families. Consequently, stress is not only an individual psychological state but also a social concern intertwined with communal aspirations.

Coping, as defined by Carver, Scheier, and Weintraub (1989), consists of “cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person.” Coping skills help students regulate emotions, problem-solve, and maintain psychological equilibrium. In the Mizo context, coping may involve social and spiritual dimensions such as support from peers, teachers, and church communities. Understanding how these coping skills function can help educators strengthen students’ mental health through culturally responsive interventions.

This study therefore aims to identify the level of perceived stress and coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram and to examine the relationship between these two constructs. The findings are expected to contribute to educational and psychological strategies that promote emotional well-being and resilience in adolescents.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A number of recent studies between have explored stress and coping among adolescents, revealing both consistent and contrasting results.

1. **Singh and Kaur (2017)** found that most adolescents in Punjab experienced moderate levels of academic stress, largely due to examination anxiety and competition. Their study suggested that structured relaxation programs can lower anxiety and improve focus.
2. **Kumar and Ghosh (2018)** observed that students using adaptive coping methods—such as time management and social support—reported significantly lower stress levels than those relying on avoidance.
3. **Sharma and Tripathi (2019)** demonstrated that emotional regulation and self-control are linked to reduced perceived stress, emphasizing that life-skills education enhances students’ coping competence.
4. **Nandhini and Kumar (2020)** compared urban and rural students and concluded that while urban students faced more academic competition, they benefited from better access to coping resources.
5. **Patel and Singh (2022)** noted gender differences, with female students showing higher perceived stress but stronger emotional coping strategies, highlighting the need for gender-sensitive interventions.
6. **Gupta and Khanna (2021)** found that mindfulness-based programs improved students’ coping abilities and reduced anxiety.
7. **Joshi and Verma (2023)** studied adolescents in Northeast India and revealed that family expectations and community involvement heavily influence students’ stress experiences—an aspect that resonates with Mizoram’s communal culture.
8. **Banerjee and Das (2024)** concluded that problem-focused coping correlates with higher resilience and academic satisfaction, suggesting that strengthening coping skills can substantially improve students’ well-being.

Overall, the reviewed studies demonstrate that moderate stress is typical among adolescents, yet coping skills—particularly emotional regulation and social support—serve as vital buffers. However, differences in cultural, environmental, and educational contexts necessitate region-specific studies such as this one in Mizoram.

III. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Adolescence is often a turning point in life when young people face emotional changes and growing responsibilities. For students, this stage can bring pressure from studies, examinations, and expectations from family and society. In Mizoram, where education holds deep cultural and social value, students often carry not only their own ambitions but also the hopes of their families, which can sometimes lead to stress. How they manage this stress—their coping skills—greatly influences their emotional health and academic performance. Yet, very few studies have explored how students in Mizoram cope with such pressures within their unique cultural and community context. This study therefore seeks to examine the levels of perceived stress and coping skills among higher secondary students in Mizoram and how the two are related, with the aim of helping teachers, parents, and students themselves build stronger resilience and create more understanding, supportive learning environments.

IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To determine the level of perceived stress among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.
2. To determine the level of coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.
3. To examine the relationship between perceived stress and coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.

V. HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

H₀: There is no significant correlation between perceived stress and coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.

VI. METHODOLOGY

Method of Study

This study adopted a quantitative approach with a descriptive–correlational design, aiming to explore the levels of perceived stress and coping skills among higher secondary school students and to determine how these two variables are related.

Population and Sample Size

The population of the study consisted of all higher secondary school students enrolled in Classes XI and XII in Mizoram during the academic session 2024–2025. The study was delimited to five districts—Aizawl, Champhai, Lunglei, Serchhip, and Kolasib—to ensure adequate representation while maintaining feasibility.

A total of 1,386 students from 37 higher secondary schools were selected as the sample. The selected schools represented 27.20% of all higher secondary schools within the five districts, ensuring adequate statistical representation. Table 1 shows statistics of sampled schools by district.

Table 1**Statistics of Higher Secondary Schools and Sampled Schools by District**

Sl. No.	Districts	No. of Schools	No. of Sampled Schools	Percentage of Sampled Schools (%)
1	Aizawl	73	20	27.40
2	Champhai	10	3	30.00
3	Kolasib	10	3	30.00
4	Lunglei	29	7	24.13
5	Serchhip	14	4	28.57
	Total	136	37	27.20 %

Sampling Technique

A multi-stage stratified random sampling technique was employed, as outlined below:

1. First Stage – District Selection: Five districts were chosen randomly taking into account accessibility and feasibility of data collection.
2. Second Stage – School Selection: Within each selected district, higher secondary schools were stratified by district size, and a proportionate number of schools were chosen randomly to maintain representativeness.
3. Third Stage – Student Selection: From each sampled school, students from Classes XI and XII were selected through simple random sampling, ensuring inclusion across gender and academic streams.

VII. TOOLS USED

1. Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10) by Cohen and Williamson (1988) was used to measure students' perception of stress.
2. Coping Skills Scale, developed by the researcher, was used to assess how effectively students manage stress and adjust to everyday challenges.

VIII. STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES USED

The data were analyzed using percentage analysis, mean, standard deviation, and Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient.

IX. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

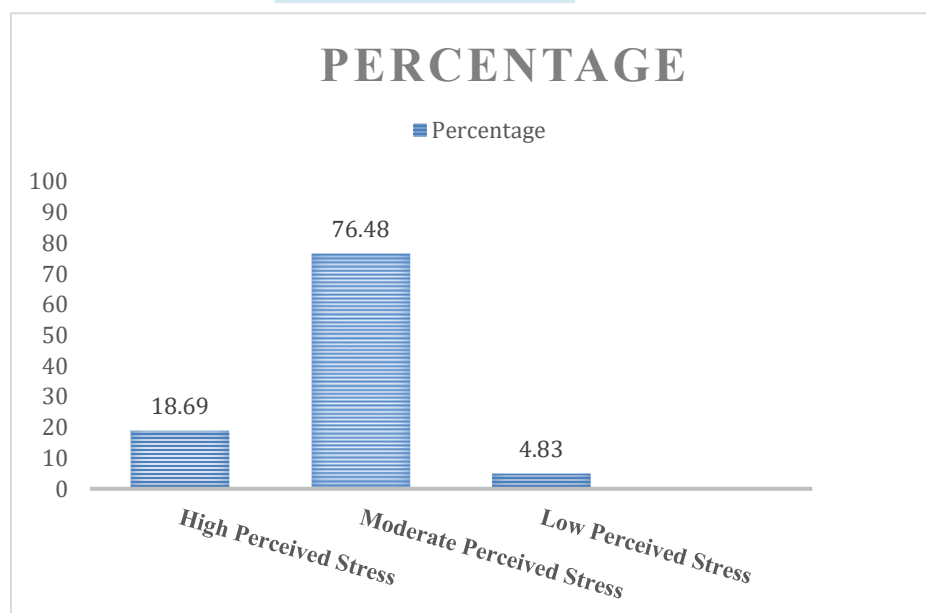
This section presents the analysis of data collected from 1,386 higher secondary school students across five districts of Mizoram. Descriptive statistics such as percentage, mean, and standard deviation were computed to determine the levels of perceived stress and coping skills. Pearson's product-moment correlation was then applied to examine the relationship between perceived stress and coping skills.

Objective 1: To find out the level of perceived stress among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.

The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS 10) was used with higher secondary school students in Mizoram to understand how they view and experience stress in their daily lives. Their responses were carefully scored following the standard procedure of the scale, and students were grouped into three categories: High Stress, Moderate Stress, and Low Stress, as per the established norms. The details of these stress levels are shown in Table 2 and Figure 1.

Table 2*Level of Perceived Stress among higher secondary school students in Mizoram*

Category	Range of Scores	Number of Students	Percentage (%)
High Perceived Stress	27 and above	259	18.69
Moderate perceived Stressed	14 - 26	1060	76.48
Low Perceived Stressed	13 and below	67	4.83
Total		1386	100

Figure 1*Percentage showing the level of perceived stress among higher secondary school students in Mizoram*

As shown in Table 2 and Figure 1, out of the total 1386 students, a large majority of 1,060 (76.48%) of higher secondary students experience a moderate level of perceived stress, while 259 students (18.69 %) experience high stress and only 67 students (4.83%) report low stress. This indicates that most adolescents in Mizoram are coping adequately with daily life pressures, yet a significant proportion still face high stress that may affect their emotional and academic functioning.

Objective 2: To find out the level of coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram

The Coping Skills Scale developed by the researcher was administered to higher secondary school students in Mizoram to assess various aspects of coping such as academic, physical, spiritual and emotional control, and peer pressure. After collecting responses from the students, their scores were carefully evaluated. Based on their overall performance, the students were categorized into three groups—High Coping Skills, Moderate Coping Skills, and Low Coping Skills. The results of this assessment are shown in Table 3 and Figure 2.

Table 3

Level of coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram

Category	Range of Scores	Number of Students	Percentage
High Coping Skills	109 and above	187	13.49
Moderate Coping Skills	79 - 108	1055	76.12
Low Coping Skills	78 and below	144	10.39
Total		1386	100

Figure 2

Percentage showing the level of coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram

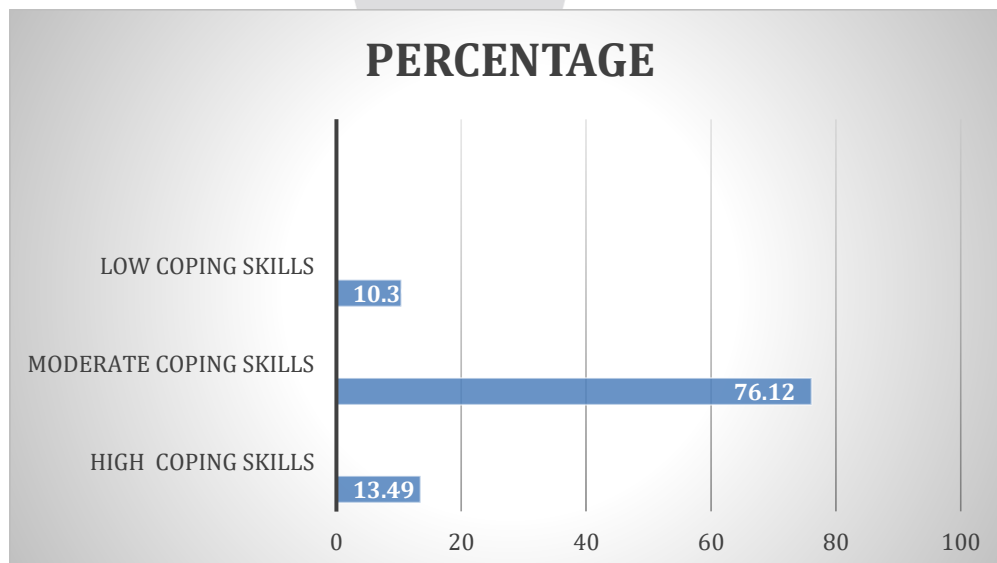


Table 3 and Figure 2 reveals that 1055 students (76.12%) out of the total students demonstrate moderate coping skills, 187 students (13.49 %) show high coping, and 144 students (10.39 %) display low coping skills. The findings suggest that most adolescents possess balanced adaptive skills, although some may require targeted support to strengthen their coping skills.

Objective 3: To examine the relationship between perceived stress and coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.

Null hypothesis: “There is no significant correlation between perceived stress and coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.”

This section examines whether the way students manage stress is related to the level of stress they experience. Pearson’s product-moment correlation was used to examine the nature and strength of the relationships between the two variables. The correlation between perceived stress and coping skills is presented in Table 4, showing whether students with stronger coping skills experience lower levels of perceived stress.

Table 4
Correlation between perceived stress and Coping skills

		PERCEIVED STRESS	COPING SKILLS
PERCEIVED STRESS	Pearson Correlation	1	-.280*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	1386	1386
COPING SKILLS	Pearson Correlation	-.280*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	1386	1386

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level*

Table 4 presents the Pearson correlation coefficient ($r = -0.280$, $p < 0.01$) showing a significant negative relationship between perceived stress and coping skills. This means students who possess stronger coping skills tend to experience lower levels of stress. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, confirming the buffering role of coping skills in reducing the impact of stress among adolescents in Mizoram.

X. MAJOR FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Major Finding 1: Most students experience a moderate level of perceived stress.

The analysis revealed that a large majority of higher secondary school students in Mizoram experience a moderate level of perceived stress, while a smaller proportion face high stress. This finding is consistent with the results of Singh and Kaur (2017), who also reported moderate stress among adolescents in Punjab due to examination pressure and competition. Similarly, Joshi and Verma (2023) found that adolescents in Northeast India experience moderate level of stress influenced by family expectations and community involvement – a trend that closely mirrors the Mizo context, where collective responsibility and academic achievement are culturally emphasized. However, this result contrasts slightly with Nandhini and Kumar (2020), who found higher stress among urban students due to intense competition. The difference may be attributed to Mizoram's relatively smaller, community-oriented educational environment where emotional and social support systems – both within families and through church networks – help buffer extreme stress levels despite academic pressure.

Major Finding 2: The majority of students demonstrate moderate coping skills.

The results showed that most students possess moderate coping abilities, with a small number demonstrating either high or low levels. This aligns closely with Kumar and Ghosh (2018), who observed that students using adaptive coping strategies, such as time management and social support, experience lower stress levels.

The finding also supports Sharma and Tripathi (2019), who highlighted that emotional regulation and self-control play key roles in reducing perceived stress, as well as Banerjee and Das (2024), who found that problem-focused coping enhances resilience and academic satisfaction.

Nevertheless, the present finding differs slightly from Gupta and Khanna (2021), who reported significant improvements in coping through mindfulness-based interventions. This contrast may stem from the fact that such structured mindfulness or psychological training programs are still relatively uncommon in Mizoram's school settings. Students here tend to rely more on natural or culturally rooted coping mechanisms, such as spiritual faith, peer support, and family encouragement, rather than formal stress-management programs.

Major Finding 3: A significant negative correlation exists between perceived stress and coping skills.

The study found a significant negative correlation between perceived stress and coping skills ($r = -0.280$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that students with stronger coping abilities tend to perceive less stress. This finding supports the theoretical perspective of Lazarus and Folkman (1984), which posits that coping acts as a moderating factor in stress experiences. Empirically, it agrees with Kumar and Ghosh (2018) and Banerjee and Das (2024), both of whom reported that effective coping strategies lead to reduced levels of perceived stress.

However, this finding partly contrasts with Patel and Singh (2022), who observed gender differences in coping and stress levels, noting that female students reported higher stress despite having strong emotional coping strategies. The contrast may be due to cultural variations: in Mizoram, where social expectations are more uniform across genders and strong community ties prevail, gender-based differences in stress experiences are often less pronounced.

Overall, these findings reinforce that coping skills serve as a crucial buffer against stress among adolescents. The results align with prior research in showing that moderate stress is common and that adaptive coping mechanisms — both personal and social — are vital for maintaining students' mental well-being. At the same time, the study highlights the importance of strengthening structured life-skills and mindfulness-based programs within Mizoram's education system to enhance coping efficiency and reduce psychological strain.

XI. EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study offer valuable insights for teachers, school administrators, parents, and policymakers concerned with students' emotional and psychological well-being.

1. Integration of life-skills education: Schools should incorporate life-skills and stress-management programs into the curriculum. These programs can help students recognize stress triggers and develop healthy ways of coping with academic and social challenges.
2. Teacher and counselor training: Teachers and school counselors play a vital role in supporting students. Providing professional training in stress identification, emotional guidance, and mental-health first aid can make classroom environments more supportive and responsive.
3. Parental involvement: Parents need to be made aware of how excessive academic pressure affects adolescents. Encouraging open communication at home and maintaining realistic expectations can foster a balanced and nurturing atmosphere.
4. Peer and community engagement: Mizoram's strong sense of community can be used positively by organizing peer mentoring programs, youth clubs, and church-based activities that promote resilience and a shared sense of belonging.
5. Policy-level initiatives: The Directorate of School Education could introduce school-wide wellness programs, regular psychological screening, and training sessions to strengthen students' coping capacities at the institutional level.

Overall, these educational implications highlight that student well-being should be viewed as an essential component of academic achievement rather than a separate concern.

XII. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

1. Future research could adopt longitudinal designs to observe how perceived stress and coping patterns evolve across academic years.
2. Comparative studies between rural and urban schools in Mizoram may help identify contextual differences in stress sources and coping opportunities.
3. Researchers could use qualitative approaches, such as interviews or focus-group discussions, to capture students' lived experiences and personal narratives about stress.
4. Future work may also include additional variables such as personality traits, social support,

- and academic motivation to develop a more holistic understanding of adolescent well-being.
5. Experimental or intervention-based studies could assess the effectiveness of school-based life-skills and mindfulness programs in enhancing students' coping efficiency and reducing perceived stress.

These recommendations can help build a stronger evidence base for promoting emotional health among higher secondary students in Mizoram and beyond.

XIII. CONCLUSION

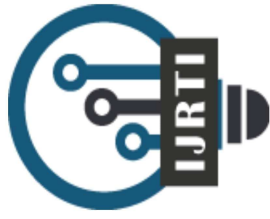
The present study concludes that most higher secondary school students in Mizoram experience a moderate level of perceived stress and demonstrate moderate coping skills, suggesting that while students generally manage stress effectively, there remains scope for improvement. The significant negative correlation between stress and coping confirms that students who possess stronger coping skills tend to experience lower levels of perceived stress.

These findings emphasize the importance of developing students' emotional resilience and adaptive skills as part of holistic education. In Mizoram's close-knit social environment—where family, school, and community values are deeply interwoven—students benefit from strong interpersonal and moral support. However, the absence of structured life-skills or counseling programs means that some students still struggle silently with stress, especially during critical academic transitions.

Therefore, schools and policymakers should focus not only on academic excellence but also on nurturing emotional well-being, self-regulation, and problem-solving abilities. Strengthening coping skills is not just a protective factor against stress—it is a foundation for developing confident, balanced, and responsible young citizens who can contribute meaningfully to society.

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.....
HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN MIZORAM..... submitted by

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ABSTRACT

PERCEIVED STRESS, PERSONALITY TRAITS AND COPING SKILLS OF HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN MIZORAM

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**PERCEIVED STRESS, PERSONALITY TRAITS AND COPING SKILLS OF
HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN MIZORAM**

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INTRODUCTION

Stress is a universal psychological experience that occurs when daily demands exceed a person's perceived ability to cope. During adolescence, this strain becomes more pronounced as young people navigate rapid physical growth, emotional fluctuations, academic responsibilities, and evolving social roles (Compas et al., 2001). In today's changing world—shaped by increasing academic competition, technological influences, and shifting family expectations—many adolescents struggle with maintaining emotional balance. These pressures can lead to reduced concentration, anxiety, and a decline in academic engagement if not addressed early.

In educational settings, academic achievement often becomes a central marker of success, particularly in regions where scholastic performance determines future opportunities. In Mizoram, competitive examinations and limited higher education options intensify academic pressure, causing many students to report fatigue, worry, and stress-related difficulties (Laldikpuii, 2023). High parental expectations and community values that place strong emphasis on education further heighten these challenges, shaping how young people perceive and manage stress (Sarma & Ralte, 2025).

Adolescents differ widely in how they interpret demanding situations, and these differences often stem from underlying personality traits. Qualities such as conscientiousness, optimism, and sociability encourage positive adaptation and determination, whereas tendencies toward worry, emotional sensitivity, and self-doubt can magnify stress and hinder coping (Pronk, 2024). As a result, even students in the same academic environment may experience and respond to pressure in highly individual ways.

Coping plays a crucial role in helping students regulate emotions, solve problems, and maintain psychological well-being during challenging times. Skills such as planning, emotional regulation, time management, and help-seeking support healthier adjustment and resilience. When these abilities are well developed,

adolescents are more likely to navigate both academic and personal demands effectively (Afanasyeva & Gurieva, 2021).

Together, perceived stress, personality traits, and coping skills form an interrelated framework that shapes students' emotional health, academic performance, and long-term development. Understanding these factors in the cultural context of Mizoram is essential for designing meaningful interventions that support resilience, strengthen life skills, and nurture well-rounded growth among adolescents.

Perceived Stress

Perceived stress refers to the subjective interpretation of how overwhelming, unpredictable, or uncontrollable life events feel to an individual. Two people may experience the same situation yet differ greatly in how stressful they find it, depending on past experiences, beliefs, emotional maturity, and perceived control (Cohen & Williamson, 1988). Rooted in cognitive appraisal theory, perceived stress emphasizes that stress arises not simply from difficult events but from the meaning and significance attached to them (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Adolescence is a developmental stage where perceived stress often intensifies. Academic workloads, examination pressure, shifting peer relationships, and the desire to meet family expectations all influence how young people evaluate stressors (Ursache et al., 2015). Local studies show that many students in Mizoram struggle with anxiety, disrupted sleep, and mental fatigue during exam seasons, revealing how subjective stress affects overall functioning. Because perceived stress shapes emotional well-being, motivation, and academic performance, understanding its sources and patterns is essential for supporting adolescent mental health.

Personality Traits

Personality traits are enduring characteristics that influence how individuals interpret challenges, regulate emotions, and choose coping strategies. Within the Five-Factor Model—openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and

neuroticism—each trait contributes differently to stress responses (Costa & McCrae, 2010). Conscientious adolescents often rely on structure, discipline, and planning, which support academic resilience. Extraverted individuals tend to draw strength from social interactions and optimism, while agreeable adolescents maintain supportive relationships that buffer interpersonal stress (Matthews et al., 2003). In contrast, high levels of neuroticism are associated with emotional instability, worry, and heightened sensitivity to stress.

During adolescence, personality traits interact closely with environmental pressures, becoming strong predictors of resilience or vulnerability. Conscientious students may approach exams as manageable challenges, whereas those with high neuroticism may feel overwhelmed even by routine academic tasks. These differences influence not only how stress is perceived but also the likelihood of choosing adaptive or maladaptive coping methods. Awareness of these traits can guide educators and counsellors in offering tailored support to promote healthier adjustment.

Coping Skills

Coping skills refer to the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural abilities individuals use to manage stress and maintain balance in demanding situations. Based on the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping, coping is viewed as an evolving process through which people evaluate demands and available resources before choosing how to respond (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Emotional regulation, problem-solving, time management, relaxation techniques, and effective communication form the foundation of adaptive coping, enabling adolescents to navigate challenges with greater clarity and resilience.

Students who actively use constructive coping methods—such as planning their work, seeking support, reframing negative thoughts, or turning to spiritual practices—tend to report better mental health, stronger academic engagement, and greater confidence (Afanasyeva & Gurieva, 2021). In contrast, habits like avoidance, withdrawal, or rumination may provide temporary relief but often prolong distress

and increase vulnerability to anxiety and low mood (Furman et al., 2018). In Mizoram, where cultural values emphasize community support and spirituality, coping also reflects shared beliefs and collective resilience. Strengthening these skills during adolescence helps prepare students for the emotional, academic, and social challenges of adulthood.

Interrelationship Between Stress, Personality, and Coping

Stress, personality, and coping are interdependent factors that work together to shape adolescent well-being. Personality traits influence how stressful a situation feels, while coping strategies determine whether these pressures become manageable or overwhelming (Karimzade & Besharat, 2011). Adolescents high in neuroticism often rely on avoidant or emotion-focused coping, which reinforces feelings of distress, whereas those high in conscientiousness or extraversion tend to adopt problem-focused strategies or seek social support. Effective coping acts as a protective buffer, reducing the harmful effects of stress and promoting psychological resilience (Carver & Connor-Smith, 2010). Empirical findings consistently show that coping mediates the relationship between personality and stress, particularly during adolescence when emotional and academic pressures are intense.

Adolescent Mental Health and Educational Context in Mizoram

Mizoram's socio-cultural setting adds an important layer to understanding adolescent stress. While the state maintains one of the highest literacy rates in India and places strong cultural value on education, limited higher educational options, economic challenges, and the need for many students to migrate for further studies contribute to increased stress. Community organizations such as the Young Mizo Association (YMA) provide social support and shared identity, yet access to professional mental health services remains limited. Adolescents commonly report anxiety, sleep disturbances, low self-esteem, and academic fatigue, especially in rural or low-resource settings (Sznitman et al., 2011). A rise in digital pressures—such as identity confusion, comparison, and cyberbullying—adds further complexity to their emotional experiences. These realities highlight the urgent need for culturally

sensitive psychological research and school-based interventions that strengthen coping abilities, build resilience, and promote emotional well-being among Mizo adolescents (Hoover & Bostic, 2021).

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Adolescence is a sensitive stage marked by rapid physical, emotional, and social changes, making young people both capable and vulnerable at the same time. As they try to build their identity and independence, they also face academic pressure, family expectations, and peer influences, which often lead to stress that can affect their well-being if not handled well. How adolescents perceive this stress depends on their thinking patterns, emotional maturity, and available support (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), and high stress has been linked to anxiety, low self-esteem, poor performance, and other difficulties (Cohen et al., 1983).

Personality traits also shape how students respond to challenges—traits like conscientiousness and extraversion often help them stay positive and seek support, while traits like neuroticism may make stress feel heavier and harder to manage (McCrae & Costa, 2008). Coping skills then become the bridge between personality and stress outcomes, with adaptive strategies promoting resilience and maladaptive ones increasing strain (Carver et al., 1989).

These issues take on added meaning in Mizoram, where high academic expectations, limited local opportunities, and growing social-media pressures intensify stress among adolescents (Government of Mizoram, 2023). At the same time, counselling services are limited, and stigma often keeps students from seeking help.

Another important reason for this study is the lack of research that examines perceived stress, personality traits, and coping skills together, especially among adolescents in North-East India. Although many studies look at these areas separately, students experience them as closely connected in their everyday lives. Studying them within one framework can offer clearer insights and help schools design support systems that genuinely meet students' needs.

Responding to these gaps, the present study examines the levels of perceived stress, the personality traits adolescents display, and the coping strategies they use. The findings are expected to support schools, teachers, counsellors, parents, and policymakers in strengthening life-skills education, building supportive environments, and promoting healthier, more resilient pathways for young people in Mizoram.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study aims to understand how higher secondary students in Mizoram experience stress, develop their personality traits, and use different coping strategies in their daily lives. To gain a clearer picture, the research explores their levels of stress, the traits they commonly display, and the ways they manage challenges. It also examines how these factors differ across groups of students and how they relate to one another. Guided by this purpose, the study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of perceived stress among higher secondary school students in Mizoram?
2. Which personality traits are most commonly observed among higher secondary school students in Mizoram?
3. To what extent do higher secondary school students in Mizoram demonstrate effective coping skills?
4. Are there noticeable differences in perceived stress among students based on their gender, chosen stream of study, or type of school management?
5. How do personality traits vary among students according to their gender, academic stream, and school management type?
6. In what ways do coping skills differ among students in relation to their gender, stream of study, and type of school management?
7. What is the relationship between perceived stress and personality traits among higher secondary school students in Mizoram?
8. How are perceived stress levels related to coping skills among these students?

9. What connection exists between personality traits and coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram?
10. Which factors appear to influence students' stress levels, personality development, and ability to cope with challenges in the higher secondary school context of Mizoram?

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem of the study has been stated as **“Perceived Stress, Personality Traits and Coping Skills of Higher Secondary School Students in Mizoram”**.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF THE KEY TERMS

Perceived Stress:

Perceived stress refers to how students experience and interpret the demands and pressures in their daily life. It reflects the feelings of tension, worry, or strain that arise when situations feel overwhelming, challenging, or difficult to manage. For higher secondary school students in Mizoram, perceived stress captures how they personally view the impact of academic responsibilities, social interactions, and personal concerns on their emotional and mental well-being. It emphasizes that stress is a subjective experience, shaped by individual perception, rather than just the presence of external challenges.

Personality Traits:

Personality traits are the stable patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving that make each student unique. They influence how students respond to situations, make decisions, interact with others, and approach learning and personal challenges. Among higher secondary school students, personality traits help to understand individual differences in attitudes, behavior, and emotional responses, revealing the distinctive psychological characteristics that guide how students perceive and navigate their daily lives.

Coping Skills:

Coping skills refer to a student's ability to manage emotions, maintain mental balance, and handle challenges in daily life. For higher secondary school students, these skills include the capacity to stay emotionally steady, sustain overall well-being, and adapt effectively to the pressures of academics, social relationships, spiritual and emotional needs, and physical health. Coping skills enable students to respond constructively to difficulties, maintain focus on personal goals, and grow resiliently through everyday experiences.

Higher Secondary School Students:

Higher secondary school students in Mizoram are individuals enrolled in the final two years of school (Class XI and XII), in Arts, Science, and Commerce streams. This stage marks a crucial period of growth, where students face increasing academic responsibilities, social challenges, and decisions related to their future education or careers. Their experiences during this period play a key role in shaping their cognitive, emotional, and social development, as well as their readiness for higher education and adult life.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following objectives have been framed to guide the study on stress, personality traits, and coping skills among higher secondary students in Mizoram.

1. To find out the level of perceived stress among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.
2. To find out the level of personality traits among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.
3. To find out the level of coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.
4. To examine the differences in perceived stress among higher secondary school students in Mizoram with reference to their:
 - a) Gender

- b) Stream of study
 - c) Type of school management
- 5. To examine the differences in personality traits among higher secondary school students in Mizoram with reference to their:
 - a) Gender
 - b) Stream of study
 - c) Type of school management
- 6. To examine the differences in coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram with reference to their:
 - a) Gender
 - b) Stream of study
 - c) Type of school management
- 7. To examine the relationship between:
 - a) Perceived stress and personality traits among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.
 - b) Perceived stress and coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.
 - c) Personality traits and coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.
- 8. To explore the factors contributing to the psychological and physiological stress, personality traits and coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.
- 9. To suggest measures for managing stress, development of personality and enhancing coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.

HYPOTHESES

The following null hypotheses are framed to test the objectives of the proposed study:

1. There is no significant difference in the level of perceived stress among higher secondary school students in Mizoram with reference to their gender, stream of study and type of school management.

2. There is no significant difference in the level of personality traits among higher secondary school students in Mizoram with reference to their gender, stream of study and type of school management.
3. There is no significant difference in the level of coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram with reference to their gender, stream of study and type of school management.
4. There is no significant correlation between perceived stress and personality traits among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.
5. There is no significant correlation between perceived stress and coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.
6. There is no significant correlation between personality traits and coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.

DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The present study is confined to higher secondary school students (enrolled in Classes XI and XII) from five selected districts of Mizoram, namely Aizawl, Champhai, Lunglei, Serchhip, and Kolasib. Although Mizoram comprises a total of eleven districts, the study focuses only on these five districts to provide a manageable and representative sample for the research.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A total of 198 related studies were reviewed across the three major variables of the study. Of these, 95 studies were conducted in India, while 103 studies were carried out abroad, reflecting a balanced blend of national and international perspectives. The reviewed works span a broad period from 2005 to 2025, capturing two decades of theoretical development and empirical findings on perceived stress, personality traits, and coping skills among adolescents.

METHODOLOGY

The present study followed a mixed-method approach using a Sequential Explanatory Design (QUAN → qual) to examine perceived stress, personality traits, and coping skills among higher secondary students in Mizoram. This structure allowed the research to begin with a quantitative phase to identify overall patterns and then move into a qualitative phase to understand the reasons behind those patterns more deeply.

Population

In the present study, the population consisted of all Higher Secondary School students enrolled in Classes XI and XII in the five selected districts of Mizoram—Aizawl, Champhai, Kolasib, Lunglei, and Serchhip—during the academic session 2023–2024. As per the Statistics of School Education 2022–2023, these five districts together had 136 higher secondary schools with a total enrolment of 19,224 students.

Sample

The present study used multi-phase sampling approach. In the first phase (quantitative), stratified random sampling technique was used to ensure that students from across Mizoram were adequately represented within the five districts of Mizoram—Aizawl, Champhai, Kolasib, Lunglei, and Serchhip, where stratification was done based on gender, stream of study (Arts, Science, and Commerce), and type of school management (Government and Private). Within each district, schools were randomly selected in proportion to the total number of schools, and students were then randomly chosen from those who agreed to participate. A total of 37 higher secondary schools, representing about 27.2% of schools in the selected districts, were included in the sample. The selection covered both government and private institutions to ensure representation. From these schools, 1,386 students were selected, including males and females across the Arts, Science, and Commerce streams, providing a balanced and realistic overview of the higher secondary student population in the region. The distribution of sampled schools is presented in Table 1.

Table 1*Distribution of Higher Secondary Schools and Sampled Schools by District*

Sl. No.	Districts	No. of Schools	No. of Sampled Schools	Percentage of Sampled Schools (%)
1	Aizawl	73	20	27.40
2	Champhai	10	3	30.00
3	Kolasib	10	3	30.00
4	Lunglei	29	7	24.13
5	Serchhip	14	4	28.57
Total		136	37	27.20 %

In the second phase (qualitative), 150 students were purposively selected for Focus Group Discussions to provide deeper insights that complemented the quantitative findings. Altogether, fifteen FGD sessions were conducted, allowing students to share their experiences openly, each session consisting of ten students. Table 2 presents the fifteen sessions of focus group discussion.

Table 2*Fifteen Sessions of Focus Group Discussions*

Sessions	Date	No. of students	Duration
1 st Session	2/9/25	10	1 hour 30 minutes
2 nd Session	6/9/25	10	1 hour 35 minutes
3 rd Session	10/9/25	10	1 hour 30 minutes
4 th Session	12/9/25	10	1 hour 30 minutes
5 th Session	17/9/25	10	1 hour 40 minutes
6 th Session	20/9/25	10	1 hour 35 minutes
7 th Session	23/9/25	10	1 hour 45 minutes
8 th Session	26/9/25	10	1 hour 40 minutes
9 th Session	2/10/25	10	1 hour 33 minutes
10 th Session	7/10/25	10	1 hour 35 minutes
11 th Session	10/10/25	10	1 hour 45 minutes
12 th Session	14/10/25	10	1 hour 30 minutes
13 th Session	18/10/25	10	1 hour 45 minutes
14 th Session	22/10/25	10	1 hour 40 minutes
15 th Session	28/10/25	10	1 hour 42 minutes
Total		150	

TOOLS OF THE STUDY

To assess perceived stress, personality traits, coping skills, and students lived experiences, the study made use of the following tools:

1. Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10) by Cohen and Williamson (1988)
2. NEO Five-Factor Inventory-3 (NEO-FFI-3) – Form S (Adolescent) by Costa and McCrae (2010)
3. Coping Skills Scale developed by the Researcher
4. Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

Coping Skills Scale developed by the Researcher

The researcher developed a Coping Skills Scale to assess how higher secondary students in Mizoram manage various academic and emotional challenges. This scale was developed under the guidance of the research supervisor, both as part of methodological training and to ensure the tool was appropriate for the local context.

Collection and Refinement of Statements

The study began with a thorough review of existing coping skills scales and theoretical models to develop a reliable tool suited for higher secondary students in Mizoram. From this, the researcher drafted statements covering emotional and spiritual well-being, academic orientation, physical health, and peer pressure. Experts from other universities and the Department of Education, Mizoram University, reviewed the draft, suggesting revisions to clarify wording, remove redundancy, and enhance relevance. After incorporating their feedback, the final scale was well-structured with 50 items rated on a five-point Likert scale: 1 (Not at all true of me), 2 (Not true of me), 3 (Somewhat true of me), 4 (True of me) and 5 (Very true of me), with negatively worded statements scored in reverse for consistency.

Pilot Study

The Coping Skills Scale, comprising 50 well-structured items, was administered to a sample of 100 higher secondary school students in Mizoram.

Item Discrimination

After the scale was administered to 100 students, their responses were organized in ascending order, and the top and bottom 27% of the sample were selected for item analysis. A t-test was conducted to evaluate the discriminative value of all 50 items. Items with a t-value greater than 2.58, reflecting significance at the 0.01 confidence level, were retained. As a result of this process, the finalized Coping Skills Scale consisted of 31 statements.

Reliability

To determine the reliability of the Coping Skills Scale, test-retest method and split-half method was employed.

For the test-retest procedure, the scale was first administered to 100 higher secondary students and then re-administered to the same group after four weeks. The resulting correlation coefficient of 0.949 demonstrated strong reliability, with significance at the 0.01 level.

For the split-half method, the items were divided into two sets—odd-numbered items in one group and even-numbered items in the other. Using Spearman–Brown’s formula, the reliability coefficient was calculated as 0.745, indicating a high level of reliability.

Validity

For the present study, content validity of the Coping Skills Scale was established through expert evaluation. The scale was reviewed by experts from universities outside Mizoram and from the Department of Education, Mizoram University, who examined the relevance, clarity, and representativeness of each

statement. Their feedback helped refine the wording and coverage of the items, ensuring that the scale accurately reflected the various dimensions of coping among higher secondary school students.

Scoring

The scoring of the Coping Skills Scale follows the Likert Method, where each item is rated on a five-point scale: 1 (Not at all true of me), 2 (Not true of me), 3 (Somewhat true of me), 4 (True of me) and 5 (Very true of me). Two negative statements (Items 11 and 12) were reverse-scored to ensure accurate interpretation.

The total score for a respondent is obtained by summing all item scores, resulting in a possible range from 31(31 x 1) to 155 (31 x 5). A higher total score reflects a stronger ability to cope effectively with academic, emotional, physical, and peer pressures, while a lower score indicates limited coping capacity. Table 6 presents the scoring key used for the scale.

Table 6

Scoring Key for the Coping Skills Scale

Sl. No.	Response Option	Score Assigned
1	Very true of me	5
2	True of me	4
3	Somewhat true of me	3
4	Rarely true of me	2
5	Not at all true of me	1

Norms and Interpretation of the Scale

Norms for the Coping Skills Scale were developed using z-score conversion based on data collected from 1,386 higher secondary students across five districts of Mizoram. This procedure helped to classify students into different levels of coping skills — high, moderate, and low — based on their total scores. The norms serve as a reference for interpreting individual and group scores in relation to the overall sample. Table 7 shows the normative categories derived from the distribution of scores.

Table 7

Norms and Interpretation of the Coping Skills Scale

Category	Z-Score Range	Range of Scores
High Coping Skills	+0.50 and above	109 and above
Moderate Coping Skills	−0.49 to +0.49	79-108
Low Coping Skills	−0.50 and below	78 and below

Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

The researcher designed a self-constructed interview schedule with pre-determined themes based on the students' quantitative findings. The focus group discussions were held with homogenous groups of students, consisting of 10 students per group, to ensure free and comfortable interaction. Altogether, fifteen FGDs were conducted. The themes focused on students' coping skills, emotional and academic well-being, as well as their experiences within the school environment and community context. These discussions helped to uncover the underlying reasons behind the quantitative results and provided deeper insight into the students' real-life coping experiences.

PROCEDURE OF DATA COLLECTION

Data for the study were gathered from higher secondary schools in the five selected districts of Mizoram after obtaining permission from school authorities and consent from the students. During the quantitative phase, the researcher visited each school and administered the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10), the NEO-FFI-3 – Form S (Adolescent), and the Coping Skills Scale in a quiet classroom setting so that students could respond comfortably and without distraction. Each session took about an hour, and the completed questionnaires were collected on the spot.

For the qualitative phase, fifteen focus group discussions were held through Google Meet each consisting of 10 students who volunteered to share their experiences. The researcher personally reached out to each chosen student by phone beforehand to explain why the discussion was being held and to ask for their permission to take part. Only those who agreed freely were included, ensuring that everyone joined with a clear understanding and genuine comfort. These online discussions were conducted in a relaxed atmosphere where students could speak openly and respectfully.

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES USED FOR DATA ANALYSIS

To interpret the data collected in the study, both quantitative and qualitative techniques were applied. Descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage were used to present the overall patterns in students perceived stress, personality traits, and coping skills. Inferential statistics, including the independent sample t-test and Pearson's product-moment correlation, helped in comparing different groups and examining the relationships among the main variables.

In addition to these numerical analyses, the qualitative data from the focus group discussions were examined using thematic analysis based on Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework, which was carefully adapted to fit the cultural and educational context of Mizoram.

MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The key findings relating to the objectives of the study are in the following section.

1. Findings of Objective 1: Level of perceived stress

- Out of the 1,386 higher secondary school students who participated in the study, 259 students (18.69%) were found to have a high level of perceived stress, 1,060 students (76.48%) experienced a moderate level, and 67 students (4.83%) reported a low level.
- The overall mean perceived-stress score was 21.72, indicating that most adolescents in Mizoram experience stress at a moderate level.

2. Findings of Objective 2: Level of Personality traits

- The analysis of the five personality domains—Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness—shows that the majority of students fall within the moderate range across all traits.
 - In Neuroticism, 1,020 students (73.59%) scored moderate, 173 (12.48%) high, and 193 (13.93%) low.
 - In Extraversion, 1,006 students (72.58%) scored moderate, 179 (12.92%) high, and 201 (14.50%) low.
 - In Openness, 926 students (66.81%) scored moderate, 222 (16.02%) high, and 238 (17.17%) low.
 - In Agreeableness, 986 students (71.13%) scored moderate, 193 (13.93%) high, and 207 (14.94%) low.
 - In Conscientiousness, 1,025 students (73.95%) scored moderate, 180 (12.99%) high, and 181 (13.06%) low.
- The overall level of personality traits among the 1,386 students followed general distribution, with 967 students (69.77%) at a moderate level, 200 students (14.43%) at a high level, and 219 students (15.80%) at a low level.

- The overall mean personality-trait score of the students was 22.78, reflecting a moderate level of personality development.

3. Findings of Objective 3: Level of coping skills

- Out of the 1,386 higher secondary school students, 187 students (13.49%) were found to have a high level of coping skills, 1,055 students (76.12%) displayed a moderate level, and 144 students (10.39%) showed a low level of coping skills.
- The overall mean coping-skills score of the students was 94.44, which falls within the moderate range of the scale indicating that the majority of students possess a moderate level of coping skills.

4. Findings of Objective 4: Differences in perceived stress

a) With reference to gender

The mean perceived-stress score for female students was 22.835, while that of male students was 20.251. The obtained t-value of 9.354 was significant at the 0.01 level, showing a significant difference in perceived stress between male and female students.

b) With reference to stream of study

The mean perceived-stress score for Science students was 22.86, for Commerce students 21.60, and for Arts students 20.61. The obtained F-value of 24.384 was significant at the 0.01 level, showing a significant difference among the three streams.

c) With reference to type of school management

The mean perceived-stress score for government school students was 21.629, while for private school students it was 21.956. The obtained t-value of 1.169 was not significant, indicating no significant difference in perceived stress between the two groups.

5. Findings of Objective 5: Differences in personality traits

a) With reference to gender

The analysis of personality traits by gender showed significant differences across most domains. Female students scored higher in Neuroticism ($t = 6.753$, $p < 0.01$), Agreeableness ($t = 2.657$, $p < 0.01$), and Conscientiousness ($t = 4.681$, $p < 0.01$). In contrast, male students scored slightly higher in Openness ($t = 2.427$, $p < 0.05$). No significant difference was found in Extraversion ($t = 1.230$, NS). The results indicate that four traits—Neuroticism, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Openness—show statistically significant gender differences, whereas Extraversion does not differ meaningfully between male and female students.

b) With reference to stream of study

With regard to stream of study, significant differences were found in all five personality traits: Neuroticism ($F = 11.278$, $p < 0.01$), Extraversion ($F = 5.122$, $p < 0.01$), Openness ($F = 9.080$, $p < 0.01$), Agreeableness ($F = 4.262$, $p < 0.05$), and Conscientiousness ($F = 4.305$, $p < 0.05$). Post-hoc analysis revealed that Science students were generally higher in Openness and Conscientiousness, Arts students scored higher in Agreeableness, and Commerce students showed slightly greater Neuroticism.

c) With reference to type of school management

In terms of type of school management, the analysis showed no significant difference in Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, and Conscientiousness, but a significant difference in Agreeableness ($t = 2.399$, $p < 0.05$). Private-school students scored higher in Agreeableness than those in government schools.

6. Findings of Objective 6: Differences in coping skills

a) With reference to gender

The mean coping-skills score for female students was 93.520, while that of male students was 95.825. The obtained t-value of 3.264 was significant at the 0.01 level, showing a significant difference in coping skills between male and female students.

b) With reference to stream of study

The mean coping-skills scores for students of different streams were Arts = 94.96, Commerce = 94.28, and Science = 95.84. The obtained F-value of 1.268 was not significant, indicating no significant difference in coping skills among the three academic streams.

c) With reference to type of school management

The mean coping-skills score for government-school students was 94.723, while that for private-school students was 94.152. The obtained t-value of 0.819 was not significant, showing no significant difference in coping skills between students of government and private schools.

7. Findings of Objective 7: Relationship between perceived stress, personality traits, and coping skills

a) Perceived Stress and Personality Traits

The correlation between perceived stress and personality traits was found to be $r = 0.089$, which was significant at the 0.01 level. This shows a small but statistically significant positive relationship, indicating that students with higher scores on certain personality dimensions also tended to report slightly higher levels of perceived stress.

b) Perceived Stress and Coping Skills

The correlation between perceived stress and coping skills was $r = -0.280$, which was significant at the 0.01 level. This indicates a moderate negative relationship, showing that students with stronger coping skills experienced lower levels of perceived stress.

c) Personality Traits and Coping Skills

The correlation between personality traits and coping skills was $r = -0.065$, which was significant at the 0.01 level. This reveals a weak negative relationship, suggesting that personality traits have a minimal yet statistically significant association with coping skills among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.

8. Findings of Objective 8: Factors Contributing to Stress, Personality, and Coping Skills

To enrich the quantitative findings, fifteen Focus Group Discussions were held with 150 higher secondary students from different streams and school types. Conducted over Google Meet, the conversations gave students room to speak freely about the stress they face, the personalities they carry, and the ways they try to cope. While the analysis began with a set of predetermined themes based on the study's aims, the group discussions also brought forward ideas that were not anticipated. All sessions were recorded, transcribed, and examined through an adapted form of Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis. Through this process, seven clear themes took shape, offering a deeper and more grounded picture of the factors influencing students' well-being.

a) Academic, school, and parental pressure

The discussions revealed that students navigate constant academic, school, and parental pressure, with long days of classes, assignments, and coaching leaving them little time to rest. Most students (80%) felt the highest tension during exams and submission periods, when overlapping tasks and expectations became overwhelming. Many shared that they study not only for themselves but to meet parents' and teachers' hopes, making their self-worth feel tied to marks. Some also described how class grouping and frequent comparisons lowered confidence, especially for slower learners. Overall, while 75% pointed to workload and expectations as major stressors and 25% mentioned other concerns, they still tried to stay motivated despite feeling tired and overwhelmed.

b) Emotional strain from family and relationships

Many students (56%) reported emotional stress arising from family circumstances and personal relationships, with 40% highlighting tension from parental conflict or poor communication at home. About 15% faced greater strain due to broken families or homes affected by alcohol, which made focusing on school more difficult. In contrast, 44% described how supportive relationships with parents,

siblings, and friends helped buffer stress and maintain motivation. Students explained that encouragement, understanding, and emotional closeness reduced anxiety and improved their ability to cope with academic pressures. Taken together, emotional stress among adolescents is shaped not only by family instability but also by the presence of supportive, caring relationships that foster resilience.

c) Gender and stream differences in stress experiences

The discussions revealed that 65% of students felt stress varied by gender and academic stream. Female students reported higher anxiety and emotional strain, partly because 35% noted that domestic responsibilities left them little time to relax, while male students often hid stress or used leisure to cope. Science students described a heavier workload with practicals, projects, and long study hours, whereas Arts and Commerce students felt pressure mainly from being compared to Science peers. Some students highlighted the benefits of mental health lessons, which provided practical strategies to manage stress. Overall, stress among adolescents is influenced not only by workload but also by gender roles, home responsibilities, and the type of academic stream.

d) Physiological manifestations of stress

Many students (70%) reported that stress affected them physically, causing tiredness, headaches, body aches, and sleeplessness, especially during exams. About 45% noted that skipped meals, late nights, or excessive worry left them feeling drained, while 20% experienced restlessness and difficulty concentrating before major tests. Some students described trembling hands, chest tightness, or loss of appetite as visible signs of stress, even when they tried to hide it. Not all students were equally affected, and some recovered quickly once exams ended. Overall, these accounts show that stress among adolescent manifests both psychologically and physiologically, yet students continue to persevere with resilience.

e) Personality traits and individual differences

Students showed clear personality-based differences in how they experienced and managed stress. About 30% described high anxiety and self-criticism, while 60% emphasized calmness, planning, and self-control. Female students (around 65%) often displayed neuroticism, agreeableness, and conscientiousness, making them empathetic but prone to worry, whereas many male students (45%) used structured routines or hobbies to cope. Science students (55%) tended to be disciplined and analytical, Arts students were more expressive and emotionally stable, and Commerce students (50%) were practical but sometimes uncertain. Overall, personality traits—neuroticism, conscientiousness, openness, and extraversion—shaped how adolescents perceived, interpreted, and responded to stress in their academic lives.

f) Coping skills and emotional regulation

Students described coping as a mix of emotional, social, and spiritual strategies, with 68% relying on friendship, family, and faith to manage stress. Gender influenced coping, as boys often had more freedom to relax and socialize, while girls balanced academic and domestic responsibilities. Academic stream had subtle effects: Arts students used creativity and flexibility, Science students relied on discipline and planning, and Commerce students combined structure with adaptive strategies. Many students (70%) highlighted prayer and spiritual practices as important for emotional regulation and calm. On the whole, Mizo adolescents demonstrated moderate coping skills, using relationships, faith, and self-discipline to navigate daily pressures while still feeling the weight of external expectations.

g) Interplay of stress, personality, and coping

The discussions highlighted that stress, personality, and coping are closely intertwined in students' daily lives. About 70% saw stress as motivating, while 40% felt it drained their energy, and their responses depended on traits like emotional sensitivity, conscientiousness, or openness. Students used a mix of strategies—55% relied on emotional expression and social support, 45% used structured planning,

and 50% turned to creative or social activities to manage pressure. Prayer, mindfulness, and small personal rituals also helped them regain calm and focus. Altogether, personality shaped not only how stress was felt but also how effectively it was managed, showing that coping among Mizo adolescents is an evolving skill rooted in resilience, relationships, and self-awareness.

9. Findings of Objective 9: Measures for Managing Stress, Developing Personality, and Enhancing Coping Skills

- a) Most students experience moderate to high stress mainly due to academic workload and parental expectations; hence, integrating daily mindfulness and guided relaxation can help restore balance and focus in school life.
- b) Emotional literacy and counselling support are essential, as students often struggle with family or peer-related pressures; safe counselling spaces and empathetic parental guidance can turn emotional strain into growth.
- c) Gender-sensitive programs are needed—girls carry heavier household responsibilities while boys often suppress emotions; open discussions can promote equality and healthier emotional expression.
- d) Personality development must be embedded in the curriculum through experiential learning and values education, helping students grow into responsible and empathetic individuals.
- e) Coping skills can be strengthened through creative outlets like peer groups, art, and relaxation workshops that teach practical ways to transform stress into self-control and resilience.
- f) Faith and community engagement should be encouraged, as prayer and shared reflection help students find peace and purpose while fostering moral grounding.
- g) Teachers need continuous professional development to recognize emotional needs early and mentor students with warmth and understanding.
- h) Collaboration among schools, families, communities, and educational authorities can ensure holistic care, making education in Mizoram not just a pursuit of marks but a path toward emotional strength, resilience, and self-worth.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study show that higher secondary students in Mizoram are doing their best to balance studies, emotions, relationships, and expectations. Their experiences remind us that schools are not only places for academic learning but also spaces where young people grow emotionally, socially, and personally. The implications below highlight how teachers, parents, and the school community can support students more meaningfully as they navigate this sensitive stage of life.

1. **Creating Emotionally Safe Classrooms**

Since many students live with steady academic pressure, classrooms should feel calm and welcoming. Simple gestures—such as warm greetings, short emotional check-ins, or a few minutes of quiet reflection—can help students feel more relaxed. When teachers appreciate effort, students gain confidence and feel less overwhelmed.

2. **Enhancing Personality Development Opportunities**

Adolescence is a period of personality growth. Schools can encourage this through leadership clubs, group projects, community service, reflective writing, and creative activities. These experiences help students discover their strengths, understand themselves better, and build key qualities such as responsibility, empathy, and confidence.

3. **Integrating Life-Skills and Emotional Learning**

Students naturally use music, friendship, and prayer to cope. Schools can reinforce these positive habits by teaching mindfulness, stress-reduction strategies, emotional awareness, and simple breathing practices. These life-skills help students feel more grounded and in control of their emotions.

4. **Implementing Gender-Responsive Support Systems**

The study shows clear gender differences in stress and coping. Girls often feel emotionally overloaded, while boys struggle to express their feelings. Schools can offer safe spaces where both genders can talk openly, share experiences, and learn healthy emotional habits without judgment.

5. Strengthening Parent Awareness and Support

Parental expectations strongly influence students' stress. Schools may organize sessions that guide parents toward offering encouragement instead of pressure. When communication at home improves, students feel more secure and are better able to concentrate on their studies.

6. Expanding Counselling and Wellness Services

Many students hesitate to ask for help. Accessible counselling services, quiet corners for reflection, or a caring teacher entrusted with emotional support can make a meaningful difference. Knowing that someone is available to listen reduces feelings of isolation.

7. Encouraging Empathetic, Student-Centred Teaching

Teachers sometimes misinterpret stress-related behaviour as disinterest. An empathetic approach—listening gently, offering reassurance, and understanding emotional signs—helps strengthen teacher-student relationships. When students feel understood, their motivation and participation naturally improve.

8. Providing Creative and Recreational Outlets

Music, arts, sports, and cultural activities serve as healthy emotional outlets. Including these regularly in the school routine helps students release tension, explore talents, and find joy in school life. Such activities support both emotional stability and personal confidence.

9. Promoting Peer Mentorship and Support Networks

Since peer support is a powerful coping resource, schools can introduce buddy systems or peer-mentoring groups. These connections help students share their thoughts, reduce loneliness, and build a sense of belonging within the school community.

10. Aligning School Practices with NEP-2020's Holistic Vision

The study reinforces NEP-2020's emphasis on well-being, experiential learning, and value-based education. By integrating emotional learning into daily routines, encouraging student voice, and strengthening teacher training, schools can nurture young people who are not only academically capable but emotionally balanced and morally grounded.

Overall, these implications highlight a simple truth: students thrive when they feel safe, understood, and supported by the adults around them. By working together with compassion—teachers, parents, counsellors, and the wider community—schools in Mizoram can help adolescents grow into confident, resilient, and well-balanced young individuals ready to meet life’s challenges with hope and strength.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations of this study flow from a simple understanding: higher secondary students in Mizoram are trying to carry academic responsibilities while managing emotions, expectations, and personal challenges. The following suggestions offer practical ways for teachers, parents, schools, and policymakers to support adolescents so that their learning years become healthier and more hopeful.

1. Strengthening Stress-Management Practices in Schools

Schools can create a gentle start to each day by introducing short relaxation practices like breathing exercises, moments of silence, or quiet reflection. These simple routines help students calm their minds, settle their thoughts, and begin lessons with more clarity and comfort.

2. Incorporating Life-Skills and Emotional Literacy in the Curriculum

Teachers can weave small life-skills activities into regular lessons—goal setting, time management, and reflective writing. These approaches help students understand their emotions, stay organized, and feel more confident when dealing with academic pressure.

3. Expanding Counselling and Student Support Services

Having approachable counsellors or a safe wellness room can make a meaningful difference. When students know there is someone who will listen with kindness, they feel less alone and more capable of handling stress.

4. Encouraging Supportive and Patient Parenting Practices

Parents can be guided to balance expectations with emotional warmth. When they listen patiently and encourage effort instead of perfection, children feel valued and less burdened by pressure.

5. Building Gender-Sensitive Well-Being Programs

Schools may create safe spaces where both boys and girls can express emotions comfortably. Boys often need encouragement to talk, while girls may benefit from help in managing emotional overload. Tailored support helps every student feel understood.

6. Providing Opportunities for Personality Development

Activities like leadership roles, teamwork projects, creative expression, and reflection help adolescents explore their strengths. Such experiences build resilience, confidence, and empathy—key qualities for personal development.

7. Promoting Collaboration Between Teachers, Parents, and Counsellors

Regular communication among adults who guide the child ensures that emotional and academic needs are addressed together. When teachers, parents, and counsellors share insights, students receive consistent support.

8. Creating a Positive and Inclusive School Climate

Schools can foster a warm environment through teamwork activities, cultural programs, and creative events. A school climate where every child feels included builds emotional stability and strengthens motivation.

9. Encouraging Teachers to Adopt Empathetic and Student-Centred Approaches

Teachers who respond with patience, understanding, and empathy help students feel safe to share their struggles. Gentle guidance can transform stress-related behaviours into opportunities for meaningful connection.

10. Aligning School Practices with NEP-2020's Vision for Holistic Education

Schools can integrate emotional learning, experiential activities, and wellness practices into everyday routines in line with NEP-2020. This balanced approach nurtures students academically as well as emotionally and ethically.

11. Encouraging Curriculum Planners to Integrate Socio-Emotional Learning

Curricula should include emotional literacy, coping strategies, and mindfulness practices. When these elements appear across subjects, students develop stronger emotional awareness and healthier coping habits over time.

12. Guiding Policymakers to Prioritize Adolescent Mental Health

Policymakers can strengthen school systems by formalizing counselling services, teacher training, and mental-health guidelines. When emotional care becomes part of school policy, all students—regardless of location—receive equal access to well-being support.

These recommendations remind us that academic success becomes meaningful only when students feel emotionally secure and supported. By working together with empathy and clarity, teachers, parents, schools, and policymakers can help adolescents in Mizoram grow into confident, resilient, and emotionally balanced young individuals.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

The present study provides valuable insights into the stress, personality traits, and coping skills of higher secondary students in Mizoram, yet it also reveals how much more there is to learn about the emotional lives of adolescents. The suggestions below point to meaningful directions that future researchers may explore to deepen and broaden these findings.

1. Conducting Studies in Rural and Remote Areas

Future research could include students from rural and remote districts to capture experiences that may differ from those in urban and semi-urban areas. Young people in rural settings may face unique stressors and coping demands that deserve closer exploration.

2. Undertaking Longitudinal Research

Following the same group of students over time would offer a richer picture of how stress, personality, and coping evolve as adolescents move through important academic and developmental stages.

3. Including Additional Psychological or Social Variables

Variables such as emotional intelligence, motivation, family climate, peer influence, or social-media habits could be incorporated to build a more detailed understanding of what shapes adolescent well-being.

4. Conducting Qualitative Studies with Teachers, Parents, and Counsellors

Future studies may speak not only to students but also to teachers, parents, and counsellors, whose perspectives can reveal emotional and behavioural patterns that young people may not express directly.

5. Conducting Deeper Comparative Studies Across School Types

Comparisons that examine government, private, and aided schools in more depth—looking at climate, relationships, expectations, and support systems—could help explain why emotional experiences differ across school environments.

6. Testing the Effectiveness of Intervention Programs

Researchers may evaluate programs such as mindfulness training, peer-support circles, or life-skills workshops to understand which interventions genuinely reduce stress and strengthen coping abilities.

7. Exploring Gender Differences More Deeply

Further studies could examine how cultural expectations and social roles influence the emotional experiences of boys and girls, allowing schools to create more gender-sensitive support plans.

8. Using Larger and More Randomized Samples

Increasing sample size and using wider random sampling would help future studies produce findings that are more representative of students across the state.

9. Examining the Role of Digital Life and Online Learning

Since many adolescents spend a significant part of their emotional and social life online, future research may explore how digital habits contribute to stress or support coping.

10. Studying the Influence of Cultural and Community Factors

Investigating how local culture, community expectations, and spiritual practices shape students' stress and coping can help create interventions that are meaningful within the Mizo context.

These suggestions point toward rich possibilities for future exploration, showing that the emotional world of adolescents is layered, evolving, and deeply

influenced by the environments in which they grow. By expanding research in these directions, future scholars can help build school systems that understand young people more fully and support them with greater sensitivity and care.

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