International Journal of Gender Psychology and Human Behaviour
VOL 01 | No. 1 | 2026
P-ISSN: XXXX-XXXX | E-ISSN: XXXX-XXXX

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN STRESS MANAGEMENT, SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS, AND EMOTIONAL BEHAVIOUR

Tayyaba Fatima
BS, Department Islamic Studies, The Cosmic Degree College (For Women) ,University of Okara

ABSTRACT

Gender differences in stress management, social relationships, and emotional behaviour represent an important area of contemporary psychological and social research. Individuals experience and respond to stress through different emotional, cognitive, and behavioural strategies, and these responses may be influenced by gender roles, cultural expectations, social environments, and personal experiences. Women and men may differ in the ways they express emotions, seek social support, manage interpersonal conflicts, and respond to academic, professional, and family pressures. However, these differences should not be understood as fixed characteristics because personality, upbringing, age, economic circumstances, and social expectations also influence individual behaviour. Stress management involves recognizing stressful situations, regulating emotional responses, developing coping strategies, and maintaining psychological balance. Social relationships provide emotional support, communication, trust, and a sense of belonging, while emotional behaviour influences how individuals express feelings, understand others, and maintain interpersonal connections. This research examines gender-related patterns in stress management, social relationships, and emotional behaviour, with particular attention to emotional regulation, coping mechanisms, social support, communication, and psychological well-being. It adopts a qualitative approach based on recent academic literature published between 2023 and 2026. The study highlights that understanding gender differences requires consideration of both individual psychological processes and wider social conditions. It concludes that emotional awareness, supportive relationships, healthy coping strategies, and gender-sensitive psychological support can improve well-being and encourage positive interpersonal behaviour across society.

KEYWORDS:*Gender differences, stress management, social relationships, emotional behaviour, emotional regulation, coping strategies, social support, psychological well-being, interpersonal communication, mental health.*

INTRODUCTION

Stress is a common part of human life and can arise from educational responsibilities, professional demands, family expectations, financial difficulties, health concerns, and interpersonal relationships. Although individuals experience many similar sources of stress, their methods of responding to stressful situations may differ according to personal characteristics, social experiences, and gender-related expectations. Stress management refers to the processes through which individuals recognize pressure, evaluate difficult circumstances, regulate emotions, and apply strategies to reduce or manage psychological strain. Some individuals respond through direct problem-solving, while others may rely more heavily on emotional expression, social support, reflection, or temporary distraction. DePaul Trumbach, L. M., Arredondo, E. M., Geyton, T., & Roesch, S. C. (2026)found that,. These approaches cannot be assigned exclusively to women or men because coping behaviour varies considerably between individuals. Fida et al. (2023), in their research on gender and workplace stressors, found that evidence concerning gender differences in exposure to stress was mixed, with many studies reporting no significant differences. This demonstrates that gender should be examined alongside workplace conditions, social responsibilities, and individual experiences rather than treated as the only explanation for stress-related behaviour.Gender differences in stress management have received considerable attention in educational and psychological research because stress can influence emotional stability,

International Journal of Gender Psychology and Human Behaviour
VOL 01 | No. 1 | 2026
P-ISSN: XXXX-XXXX | E-ISSN: XXXX-XXXX

academic performance, professional productivity, and overall health. Rathi, S. R., & Shukla, A. (2026). Revealed, Research suggests that women and men may differ in the coping strategies they report using, although the size and direction of these differences depend on the situation and population being studied. Women may be more likely in some contexts to seek emotional or interpersonal support, discuss their feelings, or use emotion-focused coping strategies. Men may report greater use of independent problem-solving or emotional restraint in certain social environments, particularly where traditional masculine expectations discourage expressions of vulnerability. However, these patterns are not universal, and individuals of every gender may use several coping strategies depending on their circumstances. Del Pino and Matud (2024) examined stress, mental symptoms, and well-being among students and highlighted the importance of considering gender, educational circumstances, coping styles, self-esteem, and social support together. Their research supports the view that stress management is a complex process influenced by multiple psychological and social factors.

Social relationships are another important dimension of psychological well-being because they provide individuals with emotional security, practical assistance, companionship, and opportunities for meaningful communication. Relationships with family members, friends, colleagues, classmates, and community members can help individuals manage stressful experiences and develop a sense of belonging. Social support may involve listening, providing advice, offering practical help, showing empathy, or simply being available during difficult circumstances. Gender-related social expectations can influence how people develop and maintain these relationships. For example, some social environments encourage women to communicate personal feelings and maintain close emotional networks, whereas men may experience pressure to demonstrate independence and avoid openly discussing personal difficulties. These expectations can influence the availability and use of social support, but they do not determine every individual's relationship style. Research by Lilly et al. (2026), based on 14 annual waves of a large nationwide panel study, examined gender differences in the relationship between perceived social support and psychological distress. The study highlights the importance of examining social connections over time when understanding mental health among women and men.Emotional behaviour refers to the ways individuals experience, express, interpret, and regulate emotions in different situations. It includes happiness, sadness, anger, fear, affection, empathy, frustration, and other emotional responses that influence human interaction. Social and cultural expectations may shape which emotions individuals feel comfortable expressing and how others respond to those expressions. In some communities, men may be encouraged to control visible signs of sadness or fear, while women may be expected to demonstrate care, sensitivity, and emotional understanding. These expectations can influence communication patterns, conflict resolution, and the development of interpersonal relationships. However, emotional behaviour is not determined by gender alone because upbringing, personality, experiences, mental health, and social circumstances also play important roles. A healthy understanding of emotional behaviour requires recognizing that all individuals need opportunities to express emotions, develop emotional awareness, and communicate their needs without being restricted by stereotypes.

Family environments play a major role in shaping stress management, social relationships, and emotional behaviour from childhood. Children observe how parents and other family members respond to pressure, communicate feelings, resolve disagreements, and support one another during difficult circumstances. These experiences can influence their future coping

International Journal of Gender Psychology and Human Behaviour
VOL 01 | No. 1 | 2026
P-ISSN: XXXX-XXXX | E-ISSN: XXXX-XXXX

strategies and expectations about relationships. Traditional family roles may sometimes encourage boys to become independent and emotionally reserved while encouraging girls to develop caregiving and relationship-oriented behaviour. Although these expectations vary across families and cultures, they may influence the way individuals understand responsibility, emotional expression, and social support. Unequal household responsibilities, financial pressure, family conflict, and limited personal freedom can also create stress for individuals of different genders. Supportive family environments can reduce these pressures by promoting shared responsibilities, respectful communication, emotional openness, and mutual understanding. Therefore, family relationships should be considered an important social context when examining gender-related psychological experiences.Educational institutions and workplaces are additional environments in which gender differences in stress and emotional behaviour may become visible. Students experience pressure related to examinations, academic performance, competition, career expectations, and relationships with teachers and classmates. Employees may face heavy workloads, professional responsibilities, financial concerns, workplace conflict, and uncertainty about career development. These experiences may affect individuals differently depending on their responsibilities, available support, and social circumstances. García-Moya et al. (2025), in a mixed-method study involving 4,768 adolescents, reported higher school stress among girls in their sample and identified factors including school workload, emotional experiences, gender stereotypes, social expectations, and differences in teacher treatment. Workplace research by Fida et al. (2023) also demonstrates that gender differences in exposure to stressors are not consistent across all studies. Together, these findings indicate that educational and professional stress should be understood through the interaction of gender, institutional practices, workload, and individual circumstances.

Modern communication technologies and social media have further influenced social relationships and emotional behaviour. Digital platforms allow individuals to maintain friendships, communicate with family members, share personal experiences, and access emotional support beyond their immediate communities. They can also provide opportunities for professional networking, educational collaboration, and participation in social discussions. However, excessive comparison, online criticism, cyberbullying, privacy concerns, and pressure to maintain a particular digital image may create additional psychological stress. Gender expectations can also influence online behaviour, including the way individuals express emotions, communicate with others, and respond to criticism. Some people may find it easier to discuss personal problems online than in face-to-face interactions, while others may experience social isolation despite having large online networks. Digital communication can therefore strengthen or weaken social relationships depending on how platforms are used and whether interactions provide genuine emotional support.Understanding gender differences in stress management and emotional behaviour is particularly important for promoting mental health and inclusive social environments. Psychological support programmes should recognize that individuals may have different communication preferences, coping styles, and experiences of social pressure. At the same time, professionals should avoid assuming that all women or all men respond to stress in the same way. Shao et al. (2025) investigated gender differences in interpersonal emotion regulation and reported differences between male and female participant groups in emotional regulation outcomes and behavioural synchrony during a controlled task. Such findings provide a useful basis for further investigation into how people regulate emotions within relationships. The present research therefore examines gender-related patterns in coping

International Journal of Gender Psychology and Human Behaviour
VOL 01 | No. 1 | 2026
P-ISSN: XXXX-XXXX | E-ISSN: XXXX-XXXX

strategies, social support, emotional expression, and interpersonal behaviour. It emphasizes that healthy stress management and positive relationships require emotional awareness, mutual respect, supportive environments, and recognition of individual differences.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

1. To examine gender differences in stress management, social relationships, and emotional behaviour by analysing coping strategies, emotional regulation, social support, interpersonal communication, and their influence on psychological well-being.

RESEARCH QUESTION

1. How do gender differences influence stress management strategies, social relationships, and emotional behaviour in different personal, educational, professional, and social environments?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on gender differences in stress management highlights the importance of understanding how individuals experience and respond to pressure in different social and professional environments. Paciello, M., Fida, R., Skovgaard-Smith, I., Barbaranelli, C., & Caprara, G. V. (2023). Found that, Stress may arise from heavy workloads, financial responsibilities, family expectations, discrimination, interpersonal conflict, and uncertainty about the future. However, the sources and intensity of stress are not necessarily the same for all individuals. Fida et al. (2023) conducted a systematic review and empirical investigation of gender and workplace stressors, examining factors such as job demands, social support, role clarity, and control over work. Their findings showed mixed evidence, with a considerable proportion of studies reporting no significant gender differences in exposure to workplace stressors. This research is important because it challenges the assumption that women or men automatically experience greater workplace stress. It suggests that organizational conditions, professional responsibilities, workplace culture, and individual circumstances must be considered when explaining gender-related stress experiences.A second major area of literature focuses on gender differences in coping strategies and psychological well-being among students. Academic environments create several sources of pressure, including examinations, assignment deadlines, competition, expectations of success, and concerns about future employment. Paniagua, C., García-Moya, I., & Moreno, C. (2022). Revaled, Students may respond through problem-solving, emotional support, planning, acceptance, self-distraction, or avoidance. Del Pino and Matud (2024) examined stress, mental symptoms, and well-being among 1,426 students aged between 16 and 26 years. Their study considered gender, educational status, coping styles, self-esteem, and social support in relation to psychological outcomes.

The findings indicated that although some gender differences were present, educational status explained more variation than gender in several outcomes. This suggests that academic circumstances and personal resources may be as important as gender when understanding student stress. The literature therefore supports the development of educational programmes that strengthen coping skills and psychological support for all students.Another important

International Journal of Gender Psychology and Human Behaviour
VOL 01 | No. 1 | 2026
P-ISSN: XXXX-XXXX | E-ISSN: XXXX-XXXX

contribution comes from research on gender differences in adolescent school stress. García-Moya et al. (2025) conducted a mixed-method study using survey information from 4,768 adolescents and focus groups involving boys and girls from different school environments. Paniagua, C., García-Moya, I., & Moreno, C. (2022). Explained, Their findings confirmed higher school stress among girls in the study and identified several possible explanations, including differences in school involvement, workload, emotional factors, gender stereotypes, social expectations, and teacher treatment. This research demonstrates that gender-related stress differences may emerge through the interaction of academic responsibilities and the social environment. It also highlights the importance of examining students' experiences rather than relying only on general assumptions about gender. The study provides useful evidence for schools seeking to develop fair assessment practices, supportive teacher-student relationships, and effective stress-management programmes. It further indicates that academic pressure should be addressed through institutional improvements as well as individual coping skills.The literature on stress management also emphasizes the importance of recognizing different coping patterns rather than dividing strategies into strictly masculine or feminine categories. DePaul Trumbach et al. (2026) investigated coping profiles among 372 undergraduate students using questionnaires and daily diaries. Lilly, K. J., Simionato, N. M., Barlow, F. K., Osborne, D., Salom, C., & Sibley, C. G. (2026explained, Their research identified several coping patterns, including high coping and direct problem-solving approaches, and found that coping profiles were associated with stress, positive and negative emotions, psychological symptoms, and stress-related growth.

Social relationships and perceived social support represent another central theme in research on gender and psychological well-being. Social support may protect individuals from the harmful effects of stress by providing emotional reassurance, practical assistance, advice, and a sense of belonging. However, the ways people seek, provide, and interpret social support may differ according to personal experiences and social expectations. Lilly et al. (2026) examined gender differences in the longitudinal relationship between perceived social support and psychological distress using 14 annual waves of data from a nationwide panel involving 75,404 participants. Their findings indicated that within-person increases in perceived social support predicted subsequent reductions in psychological distress for both women and men. This research provides strong evidence for the importance of social connections over time and demonstrates that supportive relationships are relevant to psychological well-being across gender groups. It also suggests that social support should be encouraged as a general resource rather than treated as a need belonging to only one gender.Emotional behaviour and interpersonal emotion regulation have also become important subjects in psychological research. Emotional regulation refers to the processes through which individuals understand, manage, and modify their emotional responses. Interpersonal emotion regulation occurs when individuals influence or support another person's emotional state through communication, empathy, reassurance, or shared activities. Shao et al. (2025) investigated gender differences in interpersonal emotion regulation through a study involving same-gender participant pairs and observed behavioural and neural synchrony during emotional regulation tasks. Their findings suggested differences in perceived regulation outcomes and synchrony between the female and male groups studied. Although the study involved a relatively small and controlled sample, it provides insight into the role of coordinated behaviour and interaction in emotional support. The literature suggests that emotional regulation is not simply an individual process; it can also develop through communication, shared attention, trust, and supportive relationships.

International Journal of Gender Psychology and Human Behaviour
VOL 01 | No. 1 | 2026
P-ISSN: XXXX-XXXX | E-ISSN: XXXX-XXXX

Research further indicates that gender-related expectations can influence how individuals communicate emotions and maintain interpersonal relationships. In some social environments, men may experience pressure to appear independent, avoid expressing vulnerability, and manage problems privately. Women may face expectations to maintain relationships, demonstrate empathy, and provide emotional care to others. Such expectations can influence how individuals respond to conflict, request support, and communicate personal difficulties. However, these patterns are not universal and should not be treated as biological or fixed behavioural differences. Individuals may adopt different emotional styles depending on personality, family upbringing, cultural environment, and previous experiences. The literature therefore highlights the need to distinguish between observed gender patterns and the social expectations that may contribute to them. Understanding these influences can help educators, counsellors, families, and employers create environments that encourage open communication and healthy emotional expression.Overall, recent literature indicates that gender differences in stress management, social relationships, and emotional behaviour are complex and context-dependent. Some studies report differences in stress levels or coping preferences, while others identify similarities or show that educational and workplace conditions explain more variation than gender alone.

METHODOLOGY

The present research adopts a qualitative research methodology to examine gender differences in stress management, social relationships, and emotional behaviour. A qualitative approach is suitable because the topic involves personal experiences, emotional responses, communication patterns, social expectations, and individual coping strategies. The study explores how women and men may experience stress, seek emotional support, regulate feelings, and maintain interpersonal relationships in different environments. It also considers that gender differences are influenced by social and cultural conditions and should not be interpreted as fixed characteristics shared by every individual. This approach provides an opportunity to understand the relationship between psychological experiences and the social environments in which people live, study, and work.The research is based on secondary sources of information, including academic journal articles, systematic reviews, research papers, and scholarly publications published between 2023 and 2026. Particular attention is given to recent studies concerning stress management, coping strategies, emotional regulation, social support, interpersonal relationships, psychological distress, and gender-related behaviour. Sources are selected according to their relevance to the research objectives, academic credibility, publication period, and contribution to understanding gender-related psychological experiences. Research involving students, working adults, adolescents, and general populations is considered to provide a wider perspective on the subject.A descriptive and analytical research approach is used to identify and examine major patterns in stress management and emotional behaviour. The descriptive component explains common coping strategies, including problem-solving, emotional expression, social support, planning, acceptance, and avoidance.

DATA ANALYSIS

The analysis of the selected literature indicates that gender differences in stress management are influenced by the type of stressor, social environment, and coping resources available to individuals. Some studies report that women experience higher levels of stress in particular

International Journal of Gender Psychology and Human Behaviour
VOL 01 | No. 1 | 2026
P-ISSN: XXXX-XXXX | E-ISSN: XXXX-XXXX

educational settings, while other research identifies mixed evidence regarding gender differences in workplace stress exposure. García-Moya et al. (2025) found higher school stress among girls in their adolescent sample and identified workload, emotional factors, gender stereotypes, and social expectations as relevant influences. In contrast, Fida et al. (2023) reported mixed findings concerning gender differences in workplace stressors. These findings suggest that stress should be understood through the interaction of gender and environmental conditions rather than through general assumptions about women and men. A second theme concerns coping strategies and emotional regulation. Individuals may manage stress through direct problem-solving, planning, acceptance, emotional expression, social support, or distraction. DePaul Trumbach et al. (2026) identified several coping profiles among university students and found that these profiles were associated with stress levels, emotional experiences, and psychological symptoms. Their comparison of female and male students revealed broadly similar but not identical coping patterns. Del Pino and Matud (2024) also emphasized the importance of coping styles, self-esteem, social support, and educational circumstances in understanding students' mental health. The analysis indicates that effective stress management depends on the suitability and combination of coping strategies rather than on assigning particular methods to a specific gender.

FINDINGS

The research finds that gender differences in stress management exist in certain contexts, but they are not universal or consistent across all individuals and situations. Women and men may report different coping preferences, stress experiences, and emotional responses depending on their educational, professional, family, and cultural environments. The reviewed literature indicates that workload, social expectations, institutional conditions, and available coping resources can influence stress levels. It also suggests that individuals benefit from developing multiple coping strategies, including problem-solving, emotional awareness, planning, and appropriate help-seeking. Therefore, stress management programmes should recognize individual needs rather than assume that all members of a particular gender respond to pressure in the same way.The study also finds that social relationships and emotional support play an important role in psychological well-being. Family members, friends, colleagues, and supportive communities can help individuals manage stress and maintain emotional stability. Although social expectations may influence how people communicate feelings and seek support, meaningful relationships are important for women and men alike. The findings further indicate that emotional expression, empathy, active listening, and respectful communication can improve interpersonal relationships and reduce misunderstandings. Encouraging emotional openness can help individuals develop healthier relationships without placing restrictive expectations on how a particular gender should behaveFinally, the research identifies the importance of inclusive psychological support and gender-sensitive approaches to stress management. Educational institutions and workplaces should provide accessible support services, fair responsibilities, and opportunities to develop healthy coping skills.

CONCLUSION

Gender differences in stress management, social relationships, and emotional behaviour represent a complex area of psychological and social research. Individuals may differ in the ways they experience stress, express emotions, seek support, and maintain relationships, but

International Journal of Gender Psychology and Human Behaviour
VOL 01 | No. 1 | 2026
P-ISSN: XXXX-XXXX | E-ISSN: XXXX-XXXX

these differences are influenced by many factors beyond gender. Educational responsibilities, professional demands, family expectations, cultural traditions, personality, and available social resources all contribute to psychological experiences. The reviewed literature demonstrates that some gender-related patterns can be observed in particular settings, while other findings show important similarities between women and men. Therefore, gender differences should be understood carefully without creating generalizations or treating particular emotional behaviours as natural characteristics of one gender.The study concludes that effective stress management and healthy social relationships require emotional awareness, appropriate coping strategies, supportive communication, and access to psychological resources. Individuals should be encouraged to express emotions, discuss personal difficulties, seek assistance, and develop problem-solving abilities without being restricted by traditional gender expectations. Families, educational institutions, and workplaces have an important responsibility to create environments that support emotional well-being and respectful relationships. Social support should also be understood as a shared responsibility in which all individuals can provide and receive care, encouragement, and practical assistance. Such an approach can improve psychological resilience and strengthen interpersonal connections.Finally, promoting healthy emotional behaviour requires greater awareness of individual differences and the social conditions that influence stress.

REFERENCES

DePaul Trumbach, L. M., Arredondo, E. M., Geyton, T., & Roesch, S. C. (2026). Gender Comparison of Latent Coping Profiles in a Representative Sample of College Emerging Adults. Psychological Reports, 00332941261442783.

Rathi, S. R., & Shukla, A. (2026). The Relationship Between Social Support and Psychological Well-Being: A Systematic Literature Review and Meta-Analysis. International Journal of Applied Positive Psychology, 11(4), 68.

Paciello, M., Fida, R., Skovgaard-Smith, I., Barbaranelli, C., & Caprara, G. V. (2023). Withstanding moral disengagement: Moral self-efficacy as moderator in counterproductive behavior routinization. Group & Organization Management, 48(4), 1096-1134.

Paniagua, C., García-Moya, I., & Moreno, C. (2022). Adopted adolescents at school: Social support and adjustment. Youth & Society, 54(3), 419-441.

Lilly, K. J., Simionato, N. M., Barlow, F. K., Osborne, D., Salom, C., & Sibley, C. G. (2026). Gender Differences in the Longitudinal Relationship Between Psychological Distress and Perceived Social Support. Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being, 18(3), e70148.