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# Investigating Efficacy Of Gestalt Theory To Reduce Psychological Disorders

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## **ABSTRACT**

The mental health of young adults is often at risk due to stress; hence it is essential to discover effective treatment methods to this issue. It is possible that the stress-reduction benefits of gestalt therapy can be realized due to the therapy's emphasis on introspection, individual agency, and the here-and-now. This study will combine and assess empirical data to present a grounded, evidence-based knowledge of the efficacy of Gestalt therapy in treating stress in young adults. A total of 150 young adults, ages 14 to 24, participated in the study. Using the Depression, Anxiety, and Stress (DASS) Scale, we were able to get a read on how each participant was feeling. The average change in participants' sadness, anxiety, and stress levels between pretest and posttest was used to evaluate the results.

**Keywords:** Gestalt therapy, Anxiety, Session, Therapeutic, Reduction.

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Young adulthood is a period characterized by numerous challenges and transitions, including academic pressures, career decisions, identity formation, and interpersonal relationships. These stressors can contribute to heightened levels of stress, leading to a range of negative outcomes. Research has shown that prolonged exposure to stress can increase the risk of mental health issues such as anxiety and depression, as well as physical health problems. Understanding and effectively addressing stress in young adults is crucial for promoting their well-being and preventing the long-term negative consequences associated with chronic stress.

Stress has become a prevalent concern among young adults, impacting their overall well-being and quality of life. The transition from adolescence to adulthood comes with numerous challenges, including academic pressures, career uncertainties, relationship issues, and financial burdens. The accumulation of these stressors can significantly affect the mental health of young adults, leading to a range of negative outcomes such as anxiety, depression, and impaired functioning.

Stress among young adults is a multifaceted phenomenon that has gained increasing attention due to its significant impact on mental health and well-being. The literature on

stress management encompasses various theoretical frameworks and therapeutic approaches aimed at mitigating stress levels and improving overall functioning. One such approach is Gestalt therapy, which offers a unique perspective and set of techniques that can be valuable in reducing stress among young adults.

Addressing stress in young adults is of utmost importance to promote their mental well-being and facilitate a smooth transition into adulthood. While various therapeutic interventions exist, Gestalt therapy offers a unique approach that emphasizes self-awareness, personal responsibility, and the present moment experience. Gestalt therapy focuses on integrating thoughts, emotions, sensations, and behaviors to foster holistic growth and development.

Gestalt therapy has shown notable effectiveness in reducing symptoms of depression, stress, and anxiety in individuals seeking therapeutic support. This approach focuses on the holistic well-being of individuals and encourages self-awareness, personal growth, and the integration of conflicting emotions and thoughts. Through various techniques, such as experiential exercises, role-playing, and dialogue, Gestalt therapy helps individuals explore and understand the underlying causes of their depression, stress, and anxiety. By actively engaging with their emotions and experiences in the present moment, individuals can gain insight into their patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving that contribute to their mental health challenges. This increased self-awareness facilitates the development of healthier coping strategies, emotional regulation skills, and a greater sense of control over their lives. Gestalt therapy also addresses the impact of interpersonal dynamics, promoting healthier relationships and reducing relational stress that may contribute to depression, stress, and anxiety. Overall, Gestalt therapy empowers individuals to take an active role in their healing process, leading to a reduction in symptoms and an improved overall sense of well-being.

Gestalt therapy, developed by Fritz Perls in the 1940s, is a humanistic and experiential form of therapy that emphasizes self-awareness, personal responsibility, and the integration of mind, body, and emotions. It focuses on the "here and now," encouraging individuals to explore their immediate thoughts, feelings, and experiences. Gestalt therapy places importance on the therapeutic relationship, supporting the client in gaining insight, self-acceptance, and personal growth.

## **II. KEY TECHNIQUES IN GESTALT THERAPY**

Gestalt therapy employs several techniques to facilitate stress reduction and self-awareness. Some of the core techniques include:

### **Empty Chair Technique**

This technique involves role-playing and dialogue with an imagined or symbolic representation of a person or situation. It can help young adults explore and express

unresolved conflicts, emotions, or concerns, contributing to stress reduction and emotional processing.

### **Two-Chair Technique**

Similar to the empty chair technique, the two-chair technique involves engaging in a dialogue between conflicting or contradictory aspects of oneself. By embodying different perspectives, young adults can gain insight into inner conflicts, reconcile opposing emotions, and reduce internal stress.

### **Experiential Exercises**

Gestalt therapy incorporates experiential exercises such as body awareness, breathing techniques, and creative expression (e.g., art, movement) to enhance self-awareness, emotional expression, and stress reduction.

## **III. METHODOLOGY**

150 young adults were chosen to participate in the study. After outlining the topic and goals of the study to camp staff, we were given permission to speak with the young adult participants. Current studies are of the mixed-method variety, combining qualitative and quantitative techniques (such as interviews and surveys). The university's research ethics committee and the camp administration both gave their stamps of permission before any questionnaires were administered to study participants.

Each participant was then given a unique code and asked to fill out the form after giving their informed permission. Additionally, everyone's privacy is protected. Participants were given gestalt individual sessions at that time. Depression, anxiety, and stress (DASS) measures have been used in this study.

The demographic information of the study's subjects was described using descriptive statistics. The difference between the pretest and posttest for each of depression, anxiety, and stress was measured in order to assess the efficacy of the gestalt approach to the person.

### **Sessions and activities of the Gestalt individual therapy**

For performing gestalt therapy following activities from 10 different sections was followed on selected respondents: -

**Table 1 Sessions and activities of the Gestalt therapy in the research study**

<b>Session number</b>	<b>Topic of session</b>
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First session	The researcher welcomed, introduced, and thanked the research participant for their participation & maintained good rapport & empathetic therapeutic environment throughout sessions. The research participant was informed about importance of attendance of all 10 sessions and responsibilities. After obtaining the informed consent, the instrument of Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale was employed & used to collect data as a pretest.
Second session	In this session, the researcher explained the (Symptoms of Depression, Anxiety and Stress) & Gestalt therapy to the research participant. Then, the research participant discussed and shared their feelings and emotions with the researcher in a safe therapeutic environment facilitated by researcher. At the end of the session, gestalt exercise was given called (I take responsibility) to the research participant in order to become aware & recognize the above- mentioned symptoms within themselves.
Third session	The session was initiated with a small discussion concerning the exercise which was given to the participant which required them to recognize & identify their distressing feelings in the previous session. The research participant expressed that they were able to, through their awareness recognize the symptoms of depression, anxiety and stress within herself. The topic for the session was (How to deal with Life Circumstance healthily & build inner & outer resources), which was actively discussed and explained thoroughly and the homework given was a set of instruction on how to be an active participant in the social environment than a passive participant.
Fourth session	In this session the homework of previous session was shared by the research participant. The research participant expressed that in most aspects of their life they are passive participant. This session's topic was (Psychological Awareness on each level of existence & Contact with oneself & environment) which was comprehensively explained by the researcher after the completion of homework's discussion. The session ended with self-awareness techniques as homework.

Fifth session	The research participant shared their homework to the researcher. The (Unfinished Business) i.e. Unexpressed emotion representing unfulfilled need which eventually resulting into emotional distress which is a significant story in Gestalt therapy was explained & discussed in this session. This was followed by homework as usual which involved of remembering triggering life situations where the participants emotional expression was unfinished & left unexpressed & emotional distressed cause as a result of it .
Sixth session	The research participant was encouraged to share their homework as usual. After making sure that concept of Unfinished business was fully understood by the research participants thereafter a small discussion was initiated after the presentation of the session's topic which was (Authenticity & Self-confidence), followed by authentic expression & self-confidence building techniques as homework to the research participant.
Seventh session	The research participant was encouraged to share their homework. Then the rest of the session was occupied with deep dialogues among the research participant and the researcher concerning different aspects of their life with gestalt exercise called (Dialogic Relationship & I language) as the main theme focus of the session as a means to enhance the relational contact of the research participant (whole self) with their environment through presence, understanding validating, inclusion open communication in an authentic manner by experiencing the same in therapeutic relationship. This was followed by homework given to research participant which required research participants to recollect distressing life situations which they would like to share with the researcher.
Eighth session	After the end of homework collection, the researcher introduced (Hot Seat- Empty Chair) which is a Gestalt therapy technique. The research participant was explained the Empty chair thoroughly & was thereby requested to sit on the seat. This was ended with homework which required the research participant to recollect distressing situations & unexpressed emotions relating to same event.

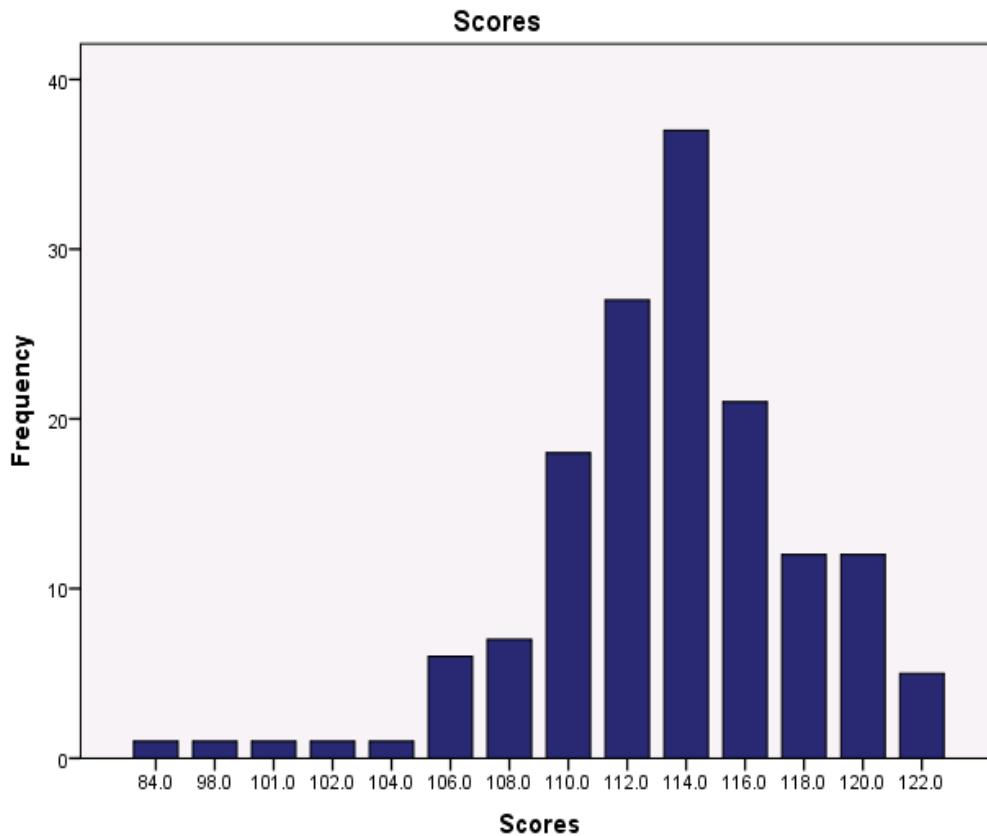
Ninth session	The research participant was encouraged to share their homework and thereafter it was thoroughly discussed. The main topic of this session was (Present moment Awareness: Nothing Exists Outside the Now). This topic was introduced with the aim to help the research participant to realize that past and future have no realities of their own and all that matters is the present moment. This topic was elaborately discussed with research participant with the guidance of the researcher.
Tenth session	The researcher reviewed what has been learned during counseling sessions. The researcher distributed the instrument of Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale as post-test and finally expressed appreciation and thankfulness to research participant for their kind contribution.

#### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

##### Calculation of Mean Scores of Pre -Test on DASS Scale

**Table 2 Descriptive Statistics**

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Scores	150	38.0	84.0	122.0	113.367	4.8941
Valid N (listwise)	150					



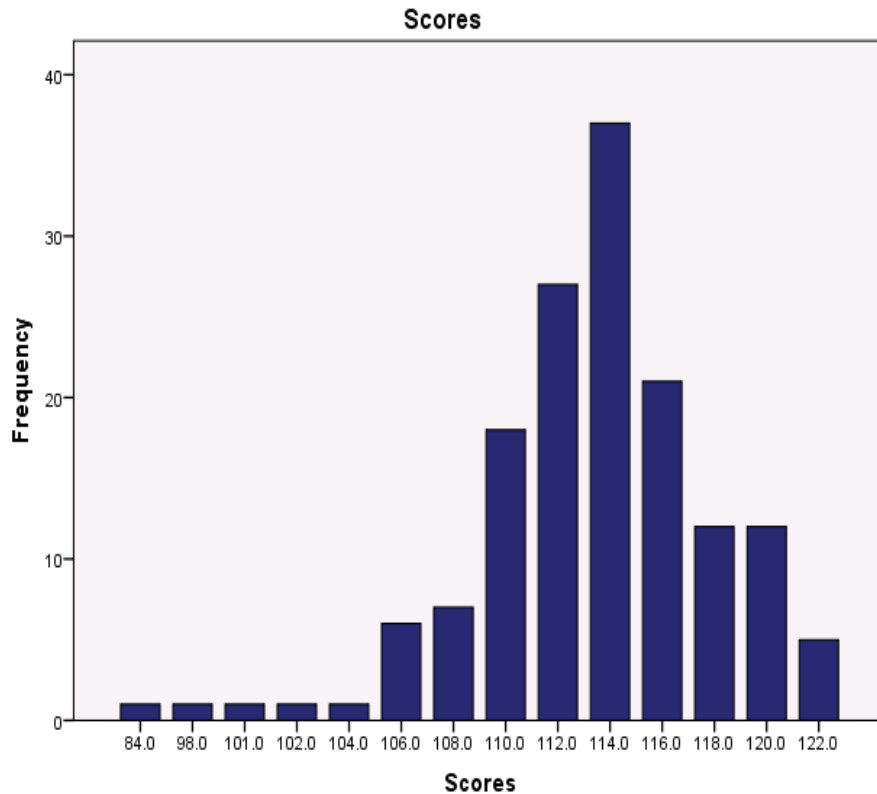
**Figure 1 Total scores of pre test**

The above table and graph shows the total scores of respondents on DASS scale. 113.367 is the mean value and 4.8941 is the standard deviation of total scores which signifies there is a high value of DASS scores among selected young adults.

**Calculation of Mean Scores of Post Test on DASS Scale**

**Table 3 Descriptive Statistics**

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Scores	150	38.0	84.0	122.0	113.367	4.8941
Valid N (listwise)	150					



**Figure 2 Total score of post-test**

Above data shows the post-test total scores of young adults. 113.367 is the mean value with standard deviation 4.8941.

## V. CONCLUSION

Individual preferences and characteristics should be taken into account while implementing Gestalt treatment, but it's crucial to remember that this is not a universal method. It's important to take a holistic and individualized approach to stress reduction, as some people may respond better to other treatment methods. As a result, the data imply that Gestalt therapy has the potential to be a helpful intervention in lowering stress among young adults, while further research is needed to enhance the evidence foundation. To better support the well-being and development of this crucial population and contribute to better mental health outcomes, we need a deeper understanding of effective therapeutic strategies for stress reduction among young adults.

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