

Mental Health and Adjustment Problems of Higher Secondary Students

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Abstract

The prime purpose of education is to train children for life situations and help to solve their personal, social, and emotional problems. Adolescent's adjustment is affected by internal factors as well as external factors. Intellectual ability, emotional maturity, attitude and interest are internal factors. Peer group, home environment and teacher student relationships are some of the external factors which have influence on his adjustment. Adolescence is that transitional stage which involves biological, social and psychological changes so, these changes disturb the adolescence. Though these disturbances vary by individual to individual but every individual faces some problems, these problems may be related to their adjustment. The findings of the study confirmed that there was significant negative correlation between mental health and adjustment problems of higher secondary students. It indicated that higher secondary student's healthier mental state significantly decreases their adjustment problems.

INTRODUCTION

Problems of life arise out of problems of adjustment. Adjustment is the process by which a living organism maintains a balance between its needs and circumstances that influence the satisfaction of these needs. Since the circumstances are often changing, adjustment problems pervade throughout the life. But the adjustment problems of high school's life have some special focus. Because, high school environment poses an entirely a new situation on one hand on the other hand. adjustment in the school life has an important role in determining one's future. For better adjustment in school environment, one has to modify, adopt or alter individual or collective patterns of behaviours so as to bring them into conformity with social patterns as with those provided by the cultural environment.

Mentally healthy people neither underestimate nor overestimate their abilities. They easily accept their own self-respect and they feel and show respect to others. They feel able to deal with the oddest situations that come in their way. They enjoy their life and get satisfaction from simple everyday pleasure. They like and trust others and take it for granted that others will like and trust them. They recognize differences among people and also, they respect these differences. They neither push the people around nor do they allow themselves to be pushed

around. They feel happy among the group and they consider themselves as part of the group. They feel a sense of responsibility to their friends, neighbors, co-workers and others. Willin (1949) has described the major characteristics of a mentally healthy person as being happy in spite of his shortcoming, independent in actions and decisions, self-confident, fairly related by himself with others, aware of the feelings of others and eager to attend new and challenging tasks happily.

NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Adjustment means reaction to the demands and pressures of social environment imposed on the individual. It involves the ability to solve one's problems in socially acceptable and constructive way. Adjustment is nothing but the interaction between a person and his environment. In other words, both personal and environmental factors work side by side in adjustment process. The adjustment problems of the individual play a decisive role in his/her total development. Such problems often have their roots at home and school. Children spend a sizable portion of their time in schools, which influence their total personality. So, understanding of adjustment problems of adolescents is needed to help them to solve their different problems. Adolescence is the most important period of human life.

Mental health and adjustment are useful in bringing happiness in every stages of life. The success of a person depends upon good mental health and adjustment. So, if we have some knowledge of various aspects of mental health and adjustment, we can improve mental health and bring happiness in our life. This research leads us an idea of how mental health is related with adjustments in life. For example, family adjustments, parental adjustments and home environment are very important aspects of adjustments. Through this research we can get the help in bringing adjustments and happiness in our day to day life. This is very important use of the results of our research emotional stability, security-insecurity and autonomy are other aspects related with overall adjustment and mental health. Therefore, the results of this research can be use in our daily life.

Usually our happiness is related with family life, home environment and relations with parents. Here researcher has explored all these three aspects of life. Which bring happiness and good mental health. The main topic of this research is mental health and adjustment problems. Our mental health depends upon overall adjustment in various aspects of life. For the purpose of research, the researcher has particularly selected the students of higher secondary schools. Researcher has also selected boys and girls and the socio-economic status of the students. The problem of mental health and adjustment problems in this research is explored by some selected background variables. These background variables are related with each other and affect the mental health and adjustment problems in general. In this research apart from group comparison researcher has also attempt to find out the relationship between mental health and adjustment problems of higher secondary school students.

TITLE OF THE PROBLEM

The title of the present study is, " **Mental Health and Adjustment Problems of Higher Secondary Students** ".

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF THE TERMS

(i) Mental Health

The World Health Organization (2014) defines mental health as a state of wellbeing in which the individual realizes his own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a contribution to one's community.

(ii) Adjustment

Crow and Crow (1956) defined it as an individual's adjustment is adequate, whole some or healthful to the extent that he has established harmonious relationship between himself and the condition, situations and persons who comprise his physical and social environment.

(iii) Adjustment Problems

Cornell et al., (1975) stated that in middle adolescence, adjustment problems peak and these are associated with the heightened struggle for independence and identity. The problem of adolescent's adjustment is strongly influenced by family characteristics, low income of families and child maltreatment.

(iv) Higher Secondary Students

Higher secondary students or senior secondary class means +1 and +2 standard of Tamilnadu State Board of Higher Secondary Education. At this level of education, they studying the academic subjects namely, Arts, Commerce, Sciences and Mathematics (medical & engineering).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following are the hypotheses of the study;

1. To study mental health and adjustment problems of higher secondary students.
2. To find out whether there is any significant difference between the higher secondary students in their mental health with regard to the background variables namely, (i) Gender (Male and Female), (ii) Medium of study (Tamil and English), (iii) Groups (Arts, Science and Vocational), (iv) Locality (Rural and Urban), (v) Type of Institution (Boys, Girls and Co-Education), (vi) Family type (Joint and Nuclear).
3. To find out whether there is any significant difference between the higher secondary students in their adjustment problems with regard to the background variables namely, (i) Gender (Male and Female), (ii) Medium of study (Tamil and English), (iii) Groups (Arts, Science and Vocational), (iv) Locality (Rural and Urban), (v) Type of Institution (Boys, Girls and Co-Education), (vi) Family type (Joint and Nuclear).
4. To find out whether there is any significant relationship between mental health and adjustment problems of higher secondary students.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

The literal meaning of the term hypothesis is a tentative statement about the solution of the problem. The following are the hypotheses of the study;

1. There is no significant difference between the higher secondary students in their mental health with regard to the background variables namely, (i) Gender (Male and Female), (ii) Medium of study (Tamil and English), (iii) Groups (Arts, Science and Vocational), (iv) Locality (Rural and Urban), (v) Type of Institution (Boys, Girls and Co-Education), (vi) Family type (Joint and Nuclear).
2. There is no significant difference between the higher secondary students in their adjustment problems with regard to the background variables namely, (i) Gender (Male and Female), (ii) Medium of study (Tamil and English), (iii) Groups (Arts, Science and Vocational), (iv) Locality (Rural and Urban), (v) Type of Institution (Boys, Girls and Co-Education), (vi) Family type (Joint and Nuclear).
3. There is no significant relationship between mental health and adjustment problems of higher secondary students.

METHOD USED FOR THE STUDY

The Investigator has adopted the survey method of research to study on mental health and adjustment problems of higher secondary students.

AREA AND POPULATION FOR THE STUDY

The area of the present study has Tiruchirappalli District of Tamil Nadu State, India. The population of the present study consists of the students of higher secondary schools who are studying in XII standard from Tiruchirappalli District of Tamil Nadu State, India.

SAMPLE FOR THE STUDY

The Investigator used stratified random sampling technique for selecting the sample from the population. The sample consists of 540 higher secondary students (XII) from 24 higher secondary schools in Tiruchirappalli District of Tamil Nadu State, India.

TOOLS USED FOR THE STUDY

The following tools were used for data collection

1. Mental Health Scale developed and validated by Dr. C. Ashok Kumar and Dr. K. K. Rajendran (2016).
2. Adjustment Problems Inventory developed and validated by Dr. G. Nageshwara Reddy and Dr. M. Sivarathnam Reddy (2015).

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES USED FOR THE STUDY

1. 't' Test
2. ANOVA

3. Pearson Product Moment Correlation

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Null Hypothesis - 1

There is no significant difference between the higher secondary students in their mental health with regard to the background variables namely, (i) Gender (Male and Female), (ii) Medium of study (Tamil and English), (iii) Family type (Joint and Nuclear), (iv) Locality (Rural and Urban).

Table - 1

Mean score difference between the Higher Secondary Students in their Mental Health

Variable	Demographic Variables	Sub	Mean	SD	't' value	Sig.
		Demographic Variables				
Mental Health	Gender	Male	173.407	13.2027	5.423	.000
		Female	178.167	14.1882		
	Medium of Instruction	Tamil	176.681	12.4923	9.393	.000
		English	183.457	9.9858		
	Family Type	Joint	173.056	12.8086	14.178	.000
		Nuclear	183.691	10.5834		
	Locality	Rural	177.039	14.4085	3.049	.002
		Urban	174.333	13.0742		

The above table -1 showed that there was significant difference between male and female higher secondary students in their mental health. The calculated 't' value of 5.423 was greater than the table value of 1.96 at 1% level of significance. While comparing the mean score female higher secondary students had better mental health than their male counterparts.

Further the table indicate that there was significant difference between Tamil and English medium of studied higher secondary students in their mental health. The calculated 't' value of 9.393 was higher than the table value of 1.96 at 1% level of significance. While comparing the mean score English medium studied higher secondary students had better mental health than their counterparts.

Furthermore, the table inferred that there was significant difference between joint and nuclear family type of higher secondary students in their mental health. The calculated 't' value of 14.178 was above than the table value of 1.96 at 1% level of significance. While comparing the mean score nuclear family higher secondary students had better mental health than their counterparts.

Also, the above table reported that there was significant difference between rural and urban milieu higher secondary students in their mental health. The calculated 't' value of 3.049 was more than the table value of 1.96 at 1% level of significance. While comparing the mean score rural milieu higher secondary students had better mental health than their urban milieu.

Null Hypothesis - 1a

There is no significant difference between the higher secondary students in their mental health with regard to the background variables namely, (i) Groups (Arts, Science and Vocational), (ii) Type of Institution (Boys, Girls and Co-Education).

Table - 2**Mean score difference between the Higher Secondary Students in their Mental Health**

Variable	Demographic Variables	Sub Demographic Variables	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	'F' value	Remarks
Mental Health	Group of Study	Between Groups	901.348	450.674	3.216	.041
		Within Groups	136070.837	140.135		
	Type of Institution	Between Groups	2155.940	1077.970	6.506	.002
		Within Groups	160874.973	165.680		

The above table - 2 showed that there was significant difference between arts, science and vocational group studied higher secondary students in their mental health. The calculated 'F' value of 3.216 was greater than the table value of 3.00 at 5% level of significance. While comparing the alpha score vocational group studied higher secondary students had better mental health than their science and arts counterparts.

Also, the table indicate that there was significant difference between boys, girls and co-education school higher secondary students in their mental health. The calculated 'F' value of 6.506 was more than the table value of 3.00 at 1% level of significance. While comparing the alpha score co-education school higher secondary students had healthier mental health than their girls' and boys' counterparts.

Null Hypothesis - 2

There is no significant difference between the higher secondary students in their adjustment problems with regard to the background variables namely, (i) Gender (Male and Female), (ii) Medium of study (Tamil and English), (iii) Family type (Joint and Nuclear), (iv) Locality (Rural and Urban).

Table - 3**Mean score difference between the Higher Secondary Students in their Adjustment Problems**

Variable	Demographic Variables	Sub Demographic Variables	Mean	SD	't' value	Remarks
Adjustment Problems	Gender	Male	181.958	12.9822	4.726	.000
		Female	178.415	10.2491		
	Medium of Instruction	Tamil	181.352	12.1022	6.869	.000
		English	175.769	11.0308		
	Family Type	Joint	178.918	13.4891	2.041	.042

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	Nuclear	177.229	12.3241		
Locality	Rural	171.059	10.0301	3.159	.002
	Urban	189.256	11.6260		

The above table - 3 showed that there was significant difference between male and female higher secondary students in their adjustment problems. The calculated ‘t’ value of 4.726 was greater than the table value of 1.96 at 1% level of significance. While comparing the mean score male higher secondary students had higher adjustment problems than their female counterparts.

Further the table indicate that there was significant difference between Tamil and English medium of studied higher secondary students in their adjustment problems. The calculated ‘t’ value of 6.869 was higher than the table value of 1.96 at 1% level of significance. While comparing the mean score Tamil medium studied higher secondary students had composite adjustment problems than their counterparts.

Furthermore, the table inferred that there was significant difference between joint and nuclear family type of higher secondary students in their adjustment problems. The calculated ‘t’ value of 2.041 was above than the table value of 1.96 at 5% level of significance. While comparing the mean score joint family higher secondary students had complex adjustment problems than their counterparts.

Also, the above table reported that there was significant difference between rural and urban milieu higher secondary students in their adjustment problems. The calculated ‘t’ value of 3.159 was more than the table value of 1.96 at 1% level of significance. While comparing the mean score urban milieu higher secondary students had problematic adjustment problems than their rural milieu.

Null Hypothesis - 2a

There is no significant difference between the higher secondary students in their adjustment problems with regard to the background variables namely, (i) Groups (Arts, Science and Vocational), (ii) Type of Institution (Boys, Girls and Co-Education).

Table - 4
Mean score difference between the Higher Secondary Students in their Adjustment Problems

Variable	Demographic Variables	Sub Demographic Variables	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	‘F’ value	Sig.
Adjustment Problems	Group of Study	Between Groups	346.355	173.177	3.607	.027
		Within Groups	46615.522	48.008		
	Type of Institution	Between Groups	2236.590	1118.295	6.753	.001
		Within Groups	160794.322	165.597		

The above table - 4 showed that there was significant difference between arts, science and vocational group studied higher secondary students in their adjustment problems. The calculated 'F' value of 3.607 was greater than the table value of 3.00 at 5% level of significance. While comparing the alpha score arts group studied higher secondary students had higher adjustment problems than their science and vocational counterparts.

Also, the table indicate that there was significant difference between boys, girls and co-education school higher secondary students in their adjustment problems. The calculated 'F' value of 6.753 was more than the table value of 3.00 at 1% level of significance. While comparing the alpha score boys' school higher secondary students had noteworthy adjustment problems than their girls' and co-education counterparts.

Null Hypothesis - 3

There is no significant relationship between mental health and adjustment problems of higher secondary students.

Table - 5
Relationship between the Higher Secondary Students
in their Mental Health and Adjustment Problems

Variables	Mental Health	Sig.	Remarks
Adjustment Problems	-0.792**	.000	High Correlation

The above table - 5 showed that there was significant negative correlation between mental health and adjustment problems of higher secondary students. The calculated 'γ' value of 0.792 were negatively significant at 1% level. It indicated that higher secondary student's healthier mental health significantly decreases their adjustment problems.

FINDINGS, INTERPRETATIONS AND DISCUSSION

The major findings of the present study were;

1. There was significant difference between the male and female, Tamil and English medium studied, arts, science and vocational subject group, boys', girls' and co-education schools and rural and urban milieu of higher secondary students in their mental health and adjustment problems.
2. There was significant negative relationship between mental health and adjustment problems of higher secondary students.

The analysis of 't' test for research variable, "Mental Health" and "Adjustment Problems" of higher secondary students indicated that there was significant difference between male and female, Tamil and English medium studied, arts, science and vocational subject group, boys', girls' and co-education schools and rural and urban milieu. In gender based, female higher secondary students have better mental health but in lesser adjustment problems when compared their male counterparts. The reason behind that the female students have better understanding about the family environment, parental concerns, cultural ethics, god's faith, emotional balance,

peer sharing and sibling's relationship has helping them us mentally healthy. This mentally healthy state or behaviours could reduce their adjustment problems. The study conducted by **Ashok Kumar & Rajendran (2016)** reported that there is significant difference between men and women high school teachers in their mental health. While comparing the mean scores, women teachers higher in their mental health than men teachers. Similarly, **Ruby Kumari & Lalita Prasad (2015)** revealed that significant difference was found between adjustment problems and mental health of male and female secondary students. The girl students were found better than boy students in adjustment problems. Also, the study confirmed that significant difference was found between adjustment problems and mental health of urban and rural area located secondary school students. The urban students were found better than rural students in adjustment problems. Further the study confined that significant positive co-relation was found between mental health and adjustment problems of secondary school students. Also, **Bhatt (2012)** confirmed earlier on adjustment problems of school children is primarily dependent on the school variables like the gender and medium of instruction in the school. Further the study conducted by **Kaur (2012)** reported that girls have more adjustment power than boys while locality does not influence adjustment power. Similarly, **Tadas, Rohini Vikas (2011)** reported that there was significant difference in mental health of male and female students. Comparing mean score of mental health of female students was better than that of male students. Further it was confirmed that there was significant difference in mental health of male and female students belonging to rural area and urban areas. Comparing mean score of mental health of students belonging to urban area is better than that of rural area. Likewise, **Basu (2012)** reported that there exist highly significant differences between the adjustment of secondary school students when compared on the basis of gender, type of family structure and medium of instruction in school. Similarly, the study conducted by **Roy and Mitra (2012)** revealed that early and late adolescents group differed significantly from each other in the home, health and social areas of adjustment. Girls showed better adjustment than boys. Also, **Chawla & Anita (2012)**, **Subramanyam and Viswanatha Reddy (2012)** and **Bandhana (2010)** revealed that women students are healthier than men students to their mental health status. Further the study conducted by **Raju & Khaja Rahamtulla (2007)** revealed that adjustment of school children is primarily dependent on the school variables like the class in which they are studying, the medium of instruction presents in the school, and the type of management of the school.

But, on the other side the study conducted by **Sayanika Deka (2017)** reported that there exists no significant difference between adolescent girl students from urban and rural areas in relation to their educational adjustment problems but a significant difference was found between urban and rural adolescent girls in relation to the social and emotional adjustment problems. Similarly, **Surya & Mahendran (2017)** reported that there is a no significant mean score difference in adjustment problems based on gender among the selected secondary school students. But they confirmed that there is a significant mean score difference in adjustment problems based on locality among the selected secondary school students. Likewise, **Birina Boro (2017)** revealed that, the boy students have more emotional adjustment problems compared

to the girls. That means the girl students are emotionally stronger than the boys. Similarly, **Naresh G. Vaghela (2013)** reported contrarily that there was no significant mean difference between boys and girls, and there was a significant mean difference between arts and commerce college students with regard to their mental health. **Perumal (2008)** showed contrarily that there was no significant difference between gender group and Location of residence group with respect to Mental Health status.

The present study revealed that the study conducted by **Srividhya (2007)** that students age, type of family, ordinal position, sibling status and constellation, parental education, occupation and family income did not influence mental health and adjustment problems. Also, the study confirmed that mental health was significantly correlated to adjustment problems indicating the higher the problems, the lower the mental health. **Veereshwar (1979)** reported that there was significant difference in the area of family adjustment between urban girls and rural girls. Family problems were more unsatisfactory for rural girls. The percentage of cases requiring help was very low for both the groups.

CONCLUSION

Adjustment involves the ability to solve one's problems in a socially acceptable and constructive way. Adjustment in a particular situation depends upon one's personal characteristics and also the circumstances of the situation in other words, both personal and environmental factors work side by side in adjustment. An adjustment is adjusted if he is adjusted to himself and to his environment. Mental health is not just the absence of mental disorder it is the full and harmonious functioning of the whole personality. People in a state of emotional, physical and social well-being fulfil life responsibilities, function effectively in daily life and are satisfied with their interpersonal relationships and themselves. A mentally healthy child feels good about herself/himself, enjoys relationships, learns confidently and overcomes her/his difficulties. Some children find themselves overwhelmed by misery, anger or fear.

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