



Mental health among adolescent students in relation to gender and locale

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Abstract

Good health enables peoples to enjoy life and to have the opportunity to achieve the goals they have set for themselves. Mental health is a fundamental aspect that influences both physical health and social effectiveness. Today, there are various problems around human societies. So, it is a challenge for humans to be mentally healthy. The purpose of the present study was to study the mental health of adolescent students across gender and locale. The study was conducted on a sample of 580 Govt. secondary school students in Budgam district (J&K) through randomization. Survey method was used for data collection. The data for the present research was personally collected while using the Mental Health Battery by Singh & Gupta (2005). The results revealed from the study showed that there is significant difference between male and female adolescent students in relation to their mental health. Thus, female adolescent students have better mental health than male adolescents. The results also showed that no significant difference was found between rural and urban adolescent students in relation to their mental health, both are equal.

Keywords: mental health, adolescent students, gender, locale

Introduction

Adolescents are no longer children, yet they are not adults. They are at an in-between stage. Adolescence is a suitable time period for concentration since it is a phase of human growth and development that lasts between the ages of 11 and 21 and is full of storms, stress, strains, confusion, challenges, and problems (Santrock, 2004) ^[17]. Nnodum (2001) ^[13] defined adolescence as the period between childhood and adulthood. It is a time of rapid learning and knowledge explosion, a period of critical conscience, and above all, a period of inquiry. As a result, this time is characterised by a wide range of aberrant behaviours that are societal problems, such as drug use and abuse, sexual assaults, and alcoholism, among many others. According to Hahn and Payne (2001) ^[10], adolescents go through strong emotional, social (interpersonal), cognitive (intellectual), personal, and moral growth in addition to their physical and sexual maturation. These processes are characterised as a period of storm and stress, tensions and adjustment problems, and a moment of separation from adult society.

Adolescent Students are the greatest asset to society as they can be molded and developed into the most capable future citizens. One must be physically and psychologically fit in order to take the nation forward for long-term. A mentally healthy person can grow emotionally, creatively, intellectually, and spiritually, according to the previous observations. The best possible level of health for the individual encourages dynamism, tenacity, productivity, and self-confidence to move forward. Because health is a basic requisite of existence, the phrase "Health is Wealth" is true. The three pillars of good health are mental, physical, and social that are intertwined and fundamentally interdependent. Individuals, societies, and countries all benefit from good mental health. Every person encounters problems with life as a whole but the mentally healthy person seeks solutions and learns from his or her

experiences. A psychologically healthy person constantly lives in the present, does not dwell on the past, and focuses on achieving his future goals.

According to Thornicroft and Strathdee (1991), medical disciplines have mainly disregarded earlier-generation health challenges. Since the publishing of the World Health Organization's flagship report in 2001, mental health has attracted the majority of emphasis in public health and policies. The idea of mental health is not new, but educators and psychologists have begun to emphasize it recently, according to Poonia and Berwal (2013) ^[15].

Mental health is a significant element of one's health and interacts with physical health and ability to perform in school, at work, and in society in a complicated way. Individuals must have good mental health in order to perform properly (WHO). According to Punia and Berwal (2015), a mentally ill individual devotes all of his resources to overcoming imagined threats and worries. Mental health is described by the World Health Organisation (2011) as "a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to contribute to her or his community." It is the mental condition in which an individual may work productively, enjoy the life happily while facing all the challenges ahead.

Need and significance of the study

In today's era of modernization, where the buzz of tension, stress, depression inculcates even in adolescents. It affects the studies of students. Different factors affect the achievement of the child, such as family environment, mental health, emotional maturity, social economic status. Adolescent's period is surrounded by a number of stressful situations. Any human being, whether a child or an adolescent possesses a unique mental health which is reflected in all his action toward life. The role of good mental health in any human life is amply important for

efficient learning and all round development of adolescent. This is so because the adolescent is a “period of stress and strain” and this period faces a number of problems which affects their mental health. A student plays an important role towards the national development. Only outstanding academic achievements will not qualify him for a significant role as a nation builder unless he fulfils his responsibilities with care and devotion. As a result, greater attention will be placed on the students overall development. This is feasible if everyone wants to protect students' mental health, including parents, teachers, and society. The level of adjustment to one's own self, people, and environment is a key indicator of one's wholesome personality and balanced behavior.

Neglecting one's mental health has major implications and renders a person unable to meet the demands of life and one's future job. Students with mental illnesses, in particular, socially separate themselves while developing anxiety disorders including concentration problems. A good mental health ensures all-around academic experiences that improve social and intellectual skills, resulting in self-confidence and high academic success. A person who is mentally healthy makes a sound contribution towards the functioning of human relationships. Therefore, this study is an attempt to study thoroughly the mental health of adolescent students in relation to gender and locale of district Budgam, (J&K), India. The findings and educational implications of this study will have a significant impact on parents, teachers, teacher educators, researchers, educational administrators, policy makers, counselors, psychologists, and medical experts.

Objectives of the study

Following are the major objectives of the study:

1. To study the mental health of adolescent students.
2. To study the differences between male and female adolescent students on their mental health.
3. To study the differences between rural and urban adolescent students on their mental health.

Hypotheses of the study

Ho1: There exists no significant difference between male and female adolescent students on their mental health.

Ho2: There exists no significant difference between rural and urban adolescent students on their mental health.

Research Methodology and Procedure

Research Design

The descriptive research design will be used for the study as this method is concerned with surveying, describing, and investigating the existing phenomenon or issues, conditions, and relationships that exist.

Population

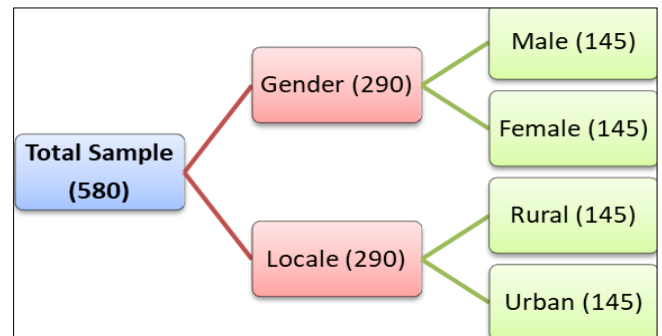
The population of this study consists of all the adolescent students of Budgam district, Jammu and Kashmir, India

Sample

Data were collected from 580 adolescent students from 10 Govt. secondary schools of Budgam district of J&K Union Territory. Further, 290 male and 290 female from 10 Govt. secondary schools were selected. 145 male students and 145 female students belong to schools in the urban area whereas

145 male and 145 female students belong to rural area school. The description of the total sample is given in the figure below:

Description of the Total Sample



Research tool used

- Mental health battery of Arun Kumar Singh and Alpana Sen Gupta (2005) was used to collect the data for the present investigation. This scale consists of total 130 items with six dimensions- I. Emotional stability, II. Overall adjustment, III. Autonomy, IV. Security-Insecurity, V. Self-concept and VI. Intelligence.

Statistical techniques used

In this proposed study, the following statistical tools were used: Mean, Standard Deviation, and t-test.

Analysis of Data and Interpretation

A. Mental health of Male and Female adolescent students

The mental health scores of male and female adolescent students were compared. Table-1 shows the mean and standard deviation of male and female adolescents, as well as the t-value evaluating significance of mean difference.

Hypothesis 1: There exists no significant difference between male and female adolescent students on their mental health.

Table 1: Comparison of male and female adolescent students on mental health

| Group | N | Mean | S.D. | t-value |
|--------|-----|------|-------|---------|
| Male | 290 | 75 | 10.41 | 2.33* |
| Female | 290 | 77 | 10.12 | |

* Significant at 0.05 level

The table-1 (A) shows that the mean score of male group is 75 and female group is 77 wherein the standard deviation is 10.41 and 10.12 respectively. It is also found that t-value is 2.33 which are significant at 0.05 level of confidence. Finding of the study revealed that female adolescents have better mental health than male adolescents. Hence, Hypothesis 1 stating “There exists no significant difference between male and female adolescent students on their mental health” partially rejected.

B. Mental health of Urban and Rural adolescent students

The mental health scores of urban and rural adolescent students were compared. Table 2 shows the mean and standard deviation of urban and rural adolescent students, as well as the t-value.

Hypothesis 2: There exists no significant difference between rural and urban adolescent students on their mental health

Table 2: Comparison of urban and rural adolescent students on mental health

| Group | N | Mean | S.D. | t-value |
|-------|-----|-------|-------|---------|
| Rural | 290 | 75.91 | 11.26 | .294* |
| Urban | 290 | 76.15 | 9.27 | |

*Not Significant at 0.01 and 0.05 levels.

The table-2 (B) shows that the mean score of rural group is 75.91 and urban group is 76.15 and the standard deviation is 11.26 and is 9.27 respectively. It is also found that t-value is .294 which is not significant at either level. Hence, Hypothesis 2 stating “There exists no significant difference between rural and urban adolescent students on their Mental Health” stands accepted.

Discussion

In the present study significant differences were found in the mental health of male and female adolescents. The results of the present study go in line with the findings of Gulwinder (2015), Kavita (2014) and Agarwal *et al.* (2010)^[1]. Findings of the study revealed that female adolescents have better mental health in comforts on to male ones. Above mentioned studies are supporting findings of present study that female adolescents have better mental health than male adolescents.

As Srivastava, Rai & Rai (1987)^[19], Taak (1999), Sharma (2006)^[18], Akhtar (2014)^[3], Deoli and Dimri (2014), Dhillo and Sharma (2014), More (2019) found that there is no significant difference between male and female adolescent. As females are more prone than males to suffer from mood and anxiety disorders such generalized anxiety disorder and depression. Additionally, some types of trauma, including sexual assault, which can have a long-term impact on mental health, may put females at higher risk.

According to the present study, no significant difference was found in mental health of urban and rural adolescents. The results of the present study go in line with the findings of Singh (2004) that there exists significant difference in students of high school with respect to gender; however mental health scores shows no significant difference with respect to locale. Sharma (2006)^[18] revealed that there exists no significant difference in six dimensions of mental health measures between urban and rural areas. Our study coincides with the study of Gulwinder (2015) which shows that there exists no significant difference between urban and rural adolescents. So, above studies are supporting to the findings of present study.

Findings and Conclusion

1. There is significant difference found between male and female adolescent in relation to their mental health. Female adolescents have better mental health than male adolescents.
2. There is no significant difference found between rural and urban adolescent in relation to their mental health, both are equal.

Educational implications

Any study into education is valuable if it has positive effects on education. Regarding the current inquiry, it can be asserted that important data on the various facets of

adolescent student’s mental health have been collected. Following are the educational implications of the present study:

- Teachers should know the areas where the students lack mental health and try to give better conditions for proper development in every sphere of life.
- Parents should be aware of school environment before getting their wards admitted to schools.
- Parents should be aware about family environment in support in their children.

Suggestions for further study

There is no meaning of research if it does not provide cause for the further investigation. In fact by universal opinion and experience, the solution of one problem tends to indicate many other unsolved problems, waiting for scientific probing. Every investigator after accomplishing his/her own piece of research may feel inspired to do more research through his/her own efforts, and may also feel greatly motivated to indicate new areas of research for others.

Some suggestions for further research are put forth as follows:

- The study as confined only to Budgam district of J&K. The present study, therefore, cannot claim to have comprehensiveness. Conclusions may not be universally valid. It is, therefore, suggested that study may be conducted on other districts of union territory, to establish the results fairly.
- The samples of only 580 adolescent students were considered. A study may be conducted on large population to search at very definite conclusions regarding mental health in relation to other constructs.
- Instead of taking preset variable other important variables such as personality, aptitude, achievement, school environment, motivation, emotional maturity and family environment may explored in relation to mental health.
- The study may be replicated on a large sample to find the reliability and validity of the present study.

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