

MENTAL HEALTH STATUS: A STUDY AMONG HIGHER SECONDARY STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Education is the totality of the process within which the students experiences are structured in order to promote desired learning. Education is a plan and procedure for the development of an individual. Education helps to attain the goal of life of an individual. Student period is one of the important periods in life to plan their future. To achieve the goals of their study, mental health of the student is one of the important factors. Health is the condition of being sound in body, mind or spirit and especially free from physical disease or pain. Health is essential for good living. A sound mental health leads to peace and happiness to an individual. If the mental health of the student is good he can adjust himself with others in the school, home and society and he has confidence about his studies and career. The investigator made an attempt to study the Mental Health Status among Higher Secondary Students and give suggestions to improve the Mental Health Status of higher secondary students.

Keywords: Mental Health, Mental Hygiene, Education, Higher Secondary Students, Conflicts, Anxiety, Self Actualization, Attitude towards the self, Integration, Autonomy, Perception of Reality, Environmental Mastery.

INTRODUCTION

The development of an individual depends on his health. If a person is not healthy he is unable to do his duties and responsibilities to his satisfaction that is why individual health is more important (Buckner, J.D., et al., 2010, Crews, C.K. et al., 2003). Oxford English Dictionary (1978) defines, "health is a soundness of body or mind, that condition in which its functions are duly and effectively discharged". WHO (1948) defines, "health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well being and not merely an absence of disease or infirmity". Education has to train the individual how to develop and preserve the individual health. Health is multidimensional. The important dimensions of health are physical, mental and social. Mental health is a condition and level of social functioning, socially acceptable and personally satisfying (Zolfaghari, A.R. et al., 2011). A mentally healthy person holds a realistic view of himself and enjoys freedom from inner conflicts and anxiety. (Gardner, H.1983, Jahoda, M.1950). He possess adequate self - reliance and self - direction. Mental hygiene is an art to preserve the mind against incidents and influences which would inhibit or

destroy its energy, quality or development (Anand. S.P , 1999). Good physical, mental and social health are necessary for an individual to attain his / her goal in life. (Biswas,D. & Agarwal, E. 2005). Higher secondary students are adolescents. Adolescents is a period of rapid growth and development. During this period there will be development in all aspects of their life physically, mentally and socially. Learning depends on many factors including good physical and mental health. (Eysenck ,H. 2000). If the higher secondary students are in good health they will score high marks in their public examination. So mental health of higher secondary students is one of the important factors to achieve their goal.

Objectives of the Study

1. To Study the Mental Health Status of Higher Secondary Students.
2. To Study the influence of Gender, Location of School, Type of school and Socio-Economic Status on the Mental Health Status of Higher Secondary Students.

Hypotheses of the Study

1. There will not be any significant difference between male and female higher secondary students for the

variables Attitude Towards the Self, Self-actualization, Integration, Autonomy, Perception of Reality and Environmental Mastery.

2. There will not be any significant difference between male and female higher secondary students for the variable Overall Mental Health Status.

3. There will not be any significant difference between students studying in the Rural and Urban schools for the variables Attitude Towards the Self, Self-actualization, Integration, Autonomy, Perception of Reality and Environmental Mastery.

4. There will not be any significant difference between students studying in the Rural and Urban schools for the variable overall Mental Health Status.

5. There will not be any significant difference between students studying in the Government and Aided schools for the variables, Attitude Towards the Self, Self-actualization, Integration, Autonomy, Perception of Reality and Environmental Mastery.

6. There will not be any significant difference between students studying in the Government and Aided schools for the variable overall Mental Health Status.

7. There will not be any significant difference among higher secondary students categorized on the basis of Socio-Economic Status for the variables, Attitude Towards the Self, Self-actualization, Integration, Autonomy, Perception of Reality and Environmental Mastery.

8. There will not be any significant differences among higher secondary students categorized as the basis of Socio-Economic Status for the variable Mental Health Status.

Methodology

Sample

The sample for the present investigation is drawn from Higher Secondary Students studying in different Higher Secondary Schools of Kanyakumari District in Tamil Nadu. The sample consisted of 1000 Higher Secondary Students comprising of 500 males and 500 females.

Tools

The following tools were used for the present study.

1. Mental Health Status Scale (Gireesan & Sananda Raj, 1988)

2. Personal Information Schedule.

Statistical Techniques Employed

1. The 't' test

2. One – way ANOVA (Analysis of Variance). ((Anastasi, A. & Urbina, S.(2003) ,(Best, J.W., & Khan, J.V (2005), (Kothari ,C.R(1986)).

3. Duncan Test

Result and Discussion

't' test Results

The 't' test was used to compare the students categorized on the basis of Gender, Locality of the School and Type of School for the variable mental health status.

From the Table 1 it was clear that the mean values obtained for the variable Attitude Towards the Self by males (N=500) and females (N=500) were 74.54 and 74.69 and the corresponding standard deviations were 9.73 and 9.84 respectively. The 't' obtained was 0.25, which was not significant statistically. Therefore it was clear that the male and female students had similar level of attitude towards the self. Interest to co-operate each other was the important factor for the positive attitude towards the self in students.

Variable	Gender	N	M	SD	t
Attitude Towards the self	Male	500	74.54	9.73	0.25
	Female	500	74.69	9.84	NS
Self actualization	Male	500	143.30	20.11	4.64**
	Female	500	148.84	17.63	
Integration	Male	500	73.60	9.20	1.26
	Female	500	72.81	10.53	NS
Autonomy	Male	500	66.19	8.29	1.02
	Female	500	65.66	8.30	NS
Perception of Reality	Male	500	67.58	9.08	5.18**
	Female	500	64.55	9.40	
Environmental Mastery	Male	500	72.01	9.52	3.55**
	Female	500	69.72	10.92	
Overall Mental Health	Male	500	73.01	9.01	4.01**
	Female	500	70.32	10.80	

NS - 't' is not significant statistically

** - 't' is significant at 0.01 level

Table 1. Data and Results of Students Categorized on the Basis of Gender (Male and Female) for the Variables Attitude towards the Self, Self actualization, Integration, Autonomy, Perception of Reality, Environmental Mastery and Overall Mental Health Status

The mean values obtained by male and female students for the variable 'self actualization' were 143.30 and 148.84 and the corresponding standard deviations (SD) were 20.11 and 17.63 respectively. The 't' obtained was 4.64 which was significant at 0.01 level. The results showed that there was significant difference between male and female students on self actualization. From the mean values it was clear that the female students had more self actualization than the male students.

The mean values for the variable 'Integration' obtained by male and female students were 73.60 and 72.81 and the corresponding standard deviations were 9.20 and 10.53 respectively. The 't' obtained was 1.26 which was not significant statistically. Therefore it was clear that male and female students had similar level of Integration. Integration is the most important factor in a school situation because they are equally conscious about the rights of others.

The mean value for the variable 'autonomy' obtained by males and females were 66.19 and 65.66 and the corresponding standard deviations were 8.29 and 8.30 respectively. The 't' obtained was 1.02 which was not significant statistically. This means that male and female students were similar in their autonomy, because they can take appropriate decisions in their educational setup.

The means for the variable '*perception of reality*' obtained by males and females were 67.58 and 64.55 and the corresponding standard deviations were 9.08 and 9.40 respectively. The 't' obtained was 5.18 which was not significant at 0.01 level. From the results it was clear that males had high level of Perception of Reality than the females. Male students had more ability to tolerate the stressful situations than the females. So the males had more perception of reality than the females.

The means for the variable 'environmental mastery' obtained by male and female students were 72.01 and 69.72 and the corresponding standard deviations were 9.52 and 10.92 respectively. The results indicated that there was significant difference between male and female students. The 't' obtained was 3.55 which was significant at 0.01 level. From the mean values it was clear

that the males had higher level of environmental mastery when compared to females, because they are confident with their achievements and carryout things according to their situations.

The means for the variable 'mental health' obtained by male and female students were 73.01 and 70.32 and the corresponding standard deviations were 9.01 and 10.80 respectively. The results indicated that there was significant difference between male and female students for the variable mental health. The 't' obtained was 4.01 which was significant at 0.01 level. From the mean values it was clear that males had higher level of overall mental health when compared to females, because females are facing more problems in their daily life.

Table 2 revealed that the mean values for the variable 'attitude towards the self' obtained by the rural school students (N=634) and urban school students (N.366) were 74.03 and 76.59 and the corresponding standard deviations were 9.63 and 10.22 respectively. The 't' obtained was 3.95, which was significant at 0.01 level. The result indicated that there was significant difference between rural and urban school students on the variable attitude towards the self. From the mean value it was clear that, the students studying in urban schools had higher level of attitude towards the self compared to students

Variable	Locality of the School	N	M	SD	t
Attitude Towards the self	Rural	634	74.03	9.63	3.95**
	Urban	366	76.59	10.22	
Self Actualization	Rural	634	146.47	19.84	0.75
	Urban	366	147.52	23.47	NS
Integration	Rural	634	72.97	9.26	0.77
	Urban	366	72.48	10.09	NS
Autonomy	Rural	634	65.99	8.78	0.74
	Urban	366	66.39	8.55	NS
Perception of Reality	Rural	634	65.29	8.77	2.81**
	Urban	366	66.92	9.02	
Environmental Mastery	Rural	634	70.21	9.90	0.03
	Urban	366	70.22	10.97	NS
Mental Health	Rural	634	65.29	8.77	2.81**
	Urban	366	66.92	9.02	

NS - 't' is not significant statistically

** - 't' is significant of 0.01 level

Table 2. Date and Results of Students Categorized on the Basis of Locality of the School (Rural and Urban) for the variables Attitude Towards the Self, Self actualization, Integration, Autonomy, Perception of Reality, Environmental Mastery and Overall Mental Health

studying in rural schools. The culture and life style of the students studying in urban and rural schools were not similar. The students studying in urban schools were interested to co-operate with the organizations in the society, so the students studying in urban schools had positive attitude towards the self than the student studying in rural schools.

The mean values for the variable 'self actualization' obtained by the students studying in rural and urban schools were 146.47 and 147.52 and the corresponding standard deviations were 19.84 and 23.47 respectively. The 't' obtained was 0.75 which was not significant statistically. The result indicated that students studying in rural and urban schools were showing no difference in the variable self actualization because they are satisfied with their academic activities.

The mean values for variable 'integration' obtained by the students studying in rural and urban schools were 72.97 and 72.48 and the corresponding standard deviations were 9.26 and 10.09 respectively. The 't' obtained was 0.77 which was not significant statistically. The result indicated that students studying in rural and urban schools show no difference in the variable integration.

The mean values for the variable 'autonomy' obtained by the students studying in rural and urban schools were 65.99 and 66.39 and the corresponding standard deviations were 8.78 and 8.55 respectively. The 't' obtained was 0.74, which was not significant statistically. The result indicated that students studying in rural and urban schools show no difference in the variable autonomy.

The mean values for the variable 'perception' of reality obtained by the students studying in rural and urban schools were 65.29 and 66.92 and the corresponding standard deviations were 8.77 and 9.02 respectively. The 't' obtained was 2.81 which was significant at 0.01 level. The result indicated that there was significant difference between students studying in rural and urban schools on perception of reality. From the mean values it was clear that the students studying in urban schools had higher level of perception of reality, compared to students

studying in rural schools. This may be due to the students studying in rural schools had limited facilities and the life style is also not modern. The students studying in urban schools were engaged in different activities and share jokes with others and spend their leisure time with their friends and exchange their ideas than the students studying in rural schools. So the students studying in urban schools had more perception of reality than the students studying in rural schools.

The mean values for the variable 'environmental mastery' obtained by students studying in rural and urban schools were 70.21 and 70.22 and the corresponding standard deviation were 9.90 and 10.97 respectively. The 't' obtained was 0.03 which was not significant statistically. The result indicated that the rural and urban school students were equal in the variable environmental mastery, because environmental mastery is based on interpersonal relationship, satisfying needs, caring, love, problem solving, ability to tolerate stress, etc. were similar in both the students coming from the rural and urban schools.

The mean values for the variable 'overall mental health' obtained by the students studying in rural and urban schools were 65.29 and 66.92 and the corresponding standard deviations were 8.77 and 9.02 respectively. The 't' obtained was 2.81 which was significant at 0.01 level. The result indicated that there was significant difference between students studying in rural and urban schools on mental health. From the mean values, it was clear that the students studying in urban schools had higher level of mental health compared to students studying in rural schools, because in urban schools students avail a lot of recreating facilities to develop their knowledge and skill.

Table 3 revealed that the mean values for the variable 'attitude towards the self' obtained by the students studying in Government (N-694) and aided schools (N-306) were 75.08 and 74.74 and the corresponding standard deviations were 10.05 and 9.62 respectively. The 't' obtained was 0.47, which was not significant statistically. The result indicated that there was no significant difference between students studying in Government and Aided schools on attitude towards the

self. From the mean values, it was clear that, the students studying in Government school had similar level of attitude towards the self compared to students studying in aided schools.

The mean values for the variable 'self actualization' obtained by the students studying in Government and Aided schools were 147.44 and 145.52 and the corresponding standard deviations were 21.32 and 21.00 respectively. The 't' obtained was 1.32 which was not significant statistically. The result indicated that the students studying in Government and aided schools were equal in the variable self actualization.

The mean values for the variable 'integration' obtained by the students studying in Government and Aided schools were 72.98 and 72.36 and the corresponding standard deviations were 9.59 and 9.52 respectively. The 't' obtained was 0.91 which was not significant statistically. The result indicated that the students studying in Government and aided schools were equal in the variable integration.

The mean values for the variable 'autonomy' obtained by the students studying in Government and Aided schools were 66.36 and 65.62 and the corresponding standard deviations were 8.39 and 8.01 respectively. The 't' obtained was 1.31, which was not significant statistically.

The result indicated that the students studying in Government and aided schools were equal in the variable autonomy.

The mean values for the variable 'perception of reality' obtained by the students studying in Government and Aided schools were 65.82 and 66.02 and the corresponding standard deviations were 9.05 and 8.55 respectively. The 't' obtained was 0.31, which was not significant statistically. The result indicated that there was no significant difference between the students studying in Government and aided schools in perception of reality. From the mean values, it was clear that the students studying in Government schools had similar level of perception of reality compared to the students studying in aided schools.

The mean values for the variable 'environmental mastery' obtained by Government and Aided school students were 70.31 and 69.97 and the corresponding standard deviations were 10.40 and 10.07 respectively. The 't' obtained was 0.47 which was not significant statistically. The result indicated that the Government and Aided school students were equal in the variable environmental mastery.

The mean values for variable 'Overall Mental Health' obtained by the students studying in Government and Aided schools were 72.29 and 68.86 and the corresponding standard deviations were 11.33 and 9.09 respectively. The 't' obtained was 1.31, which was not significant statistically. The result indicated that the students studying in Government and Aided schools were equal in the variable mental health. This may be due to family situation and school environment living favourable for their studies.

The Results of One-way ANOVA and Discussion

One way ANOVA was used to compare the students categorized on the basis of different Socio-Economic Status (high, middle and low) for the variables, Attitude Towards the Self, Self Actualization, Integration, Autonomy, Perception of Reality, Environmental Mastery and Overall Mental Health.

From the Table 4 it was clear that there were no significant

Variable	Type of School	N	M	SD	t
Attitude Towards the self	Government	694	75.08	10.05	0.47
	Aided	306	74.74	9.62	NS
Self actualization	Government	694	147.44	21.32	1.32
	Aided	306	145.52	21.00	NS
Integration	Government	694	72.98	9.59	0.91
	Aided	306	72.36	9.52	NS
Autonomy	Government	694	66.36	8.39	1.31
	Aided	306	65.62	8.01	NS
Perception of Reality	Government	694	65.82	9.05	0.31
	Aided	306	66.02	8.55	NS
Environmental Mastery	Government	694	70.31	10.40	0.47
	Aided	306	69.97	10.07	NS
Over all Mental Health	Government	694	72.29	11.33	1.31
	Aided	306	68.86	9.09	NS

NS – 't' is not significant statistically

Table 3. Date and Results of Students Categorized on the Basis of Type of School (Govt. and Aided) for the variables Attitude Towards the Self, Self actualization, Integration, Autonomy, Perception of Reality, Environmental Mastery and Mental Health

Variable	Source	Sum of squares	df	Mean squares	F
Attitude Towards the self	Between Groups	168.306	2	84.153	1.16 NS
	Within Groups	98146.794	997	98.442	
	Total	98315.100	999		
Self actualization	Between Groups	113.7960	2	56.898	1.02 NS
	Within Groups	57588.0880	997	57.761	
	Total	57701.8840	999		
Integration	Between Groups	44.567	2	22.284	4.11 NS
	Within Groups	91422.169	997	91.697	
	Total	91466.736	999		
Autonomy	Between Groups	43.337	2	21.669	3.17**
	Within Groups	68416.167	997	68.622	
	Total	68459.504	999		
Perception of Reality	Between Groups	973.314	2	486.657	6.22**
	Within Groups	78045.690	997	78.281	
	Total	79019.004	999		
Environmental Mastery	Between Groups	69.241	2	34.620	3.07 NS
	Within Groups	105870.600	997	106.189	
	Total	105939.841	999		
Overall Mental Health	Between Groups	69.241	2	34.620	3.07 NS
	Within Groups	105870.600	997	106.189	
	Total	105939.800	999		

NS – F ratio is not significant statistically
 ** – F ratio is significant at 0.01 level

Table 4. Comparison of Students Categorized on the Basis of different Socio-Economic Status (High, Middle and Low) for the variables Attitude Towards the Self, Self Actualization, Integration, Autonomy, Perception of Reality, Environmental Mastery and Overall Mental Health

difference among students categorized on the basis of different Socio-Economic Status (high, middle and low) in their level of attitude towards the self. The F ratio obtained was 1.16 (df = 997, 2) which was not statistically significant. The results revealed that students belonging to the different socio – economic status had similar level of attitude towards the self, because socio-economic status was not a part of academic skills, and the relationship between students.

There were no significant difference among students categorized on the basis of different socio-economic status (high, middle and low) on the study variable self actualization. The 'F' ratio obtained was 1.02 (df = 997, 2), which was not statistically significant. The results revealed that students belonging to the different socio-economic status had similar level of self actualization. Socio-economic status did not influence the self actualization of students.

There were no significant difference among students

categorized on the basis of different socio-economic status (high, middle and low) in their level of integration. The F ratio obtained was 4.11 (df = 997, 2), which was not significant statistically. The results revealed that students belonging to the different socio-economic status had similar level of integration.

There were no significant difference among students categorized on the basis of socio-economic status (high, middle and low) in their level of autonomy. The F ratio obtained was 3.17 which was not statistically significant. The results revealed that students belonging to the different socio economic status had similar level of autonomy.

There were significant differences among students categorized on the basis of different socio-economic status (high, middle and low) on the study variable perception of reality. The F ratio obtained was 6.22 (df = 2, 997) which was statistically significant at 0.01 level. The results showed that there were significant differences among the students belonging to the different Socio-Economic Status on the variable perception of reality. Post hoc comparison was done using Duncan test for identifying the differences existed among the group based on socio-economic status came out with the following results (Table.5)

From the Table 4, it was clear that there was no significant difference among students categorized on the basis of socio economic status (high, middle and low) on the study variable environmental mastery. The 'F' ratio obtained was 3.07 (df = 997, 2) which was not statistically significant. The results revealed that students belonging to the different socio-economic status had similar level of environmental mastery.

From the Table 4, it was clear that there was no significant difference among students categorized on the basis of socio-economic status (high, middle, low) on the study

Sl. No	Socio-Economic Status	N	Mean	1	2	3
1	High	415	67.00	()	...	*
2	Middle	543	65.20	...	()	...
3	Low	42	63.69	()

* - Indicated significant difference between the groups compared

Table 5. Results of Duncan Test for Perception of Reality: Comparison of the three Socio-Economic Status

variable mental health. The 'F' ratio obtained was 3.07 (df = 997, 2) which was not statistically significant. The results revealed that students belonging to different socio-economic status had similar level of mental health.

Table 5 revealed that there were significant differences in perception of reality among the difference socio-economic status in one comparison. The mean score obtained for high socio-economic status groups were 67.00, middle groups were 65.20 and low groups were 63.69. The results showed that high socio-economic status group had significantly higher level of perception of reality when compared with the low socio-economic status group but similar with the middle group. Results further revealed that the middle group had similar level of perception of reality compared with the high and low socio-economic status group. Therefore in this study, students belonging to the different socio-economic status had difference in their perception of reality in one out of the three comparisons.

Conclusion

The result of the study revealed that there were no significant difference between male and female higher secondary students on the study variables Attitude Towards the Self, Integration, Autonomy but there were significant differences between male and female higher secondary students on the study variables Self Actualization, Perception of Reality, Environmental Mastery and Mental Health Status. Male students had higher level of over all mental health status than female students.

There were no significant differences between Rural and Urban school students on the study Variables Self Actualization, Integration, Autonomy and Environmental Mastery. There were significant differences between Rural and Urban school students on the study variables Attitude Towards the Self, Perception of Reality and Overall Mental Health Status. Urban school students had higher level of over all mental health status than Rural school students.

The study revealed that there were no significant differences between students studying in Government and Aided schools on the study variables.

In comparison of students categorized on the basis of different Socio-Economic Status (high, middle and low) there were no significant difference among the students on all study variables except the variable Perception of Reality. In the variable Perception of Reality there were differences among the students.

Suggestions

Students Mental Health mainly depends on the favourable home environment, school environment and social environment. Based on the study the investigator gives the following suggestions.

1. Male Higher Secondary Students had high level of Mental Health than female students. This is due to the fact that the female students face a lot of problems in their day to day life. Parents, Teachers and School Counselors should encourage the female students and give necessary guidance and counseling at a right time and help them to solve their problems.
2. The Rural School students had low level of Mental Health Status than Urban School students. So the school authorities should take necessary steps to improve the Mental Health Status of Rural School students by providing proper recreation facilities and guide them an how to spend their leisure time in a useful way. The Rural School Teachers, counselors and parents should give necessary guidance and counseling to their students at a right time that will help them to solve the problems that arise in their study and daily life.
3. Appreciate the creativity of the students and bring out their talents.
4. Encourage the students to do socially useful productive work during their leisure time.

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