



Examining Mental Health and Emotional Intelligence of Secondary Class Students - A Relational Study

KEYWORDS

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1.0 INTRODUCTION:

Education is a product of experience and is the process by which and through which the experience of the race i.e., knowledge, skills and attitude are transmitted to the members of the community. It is the process of helping the child to adjust to this changing world. Secondary education includes five years of schooling (excluding two years of higher secondary classes) i.e., standards VI to X with the children of 11- 15 age group. It is very clear that Secondary School Leaving Certificate (SSLC) is issued to a student at the end of completing ten years of schooling i.e., at the end of standard X, after passing a public examination.

According to Dr. D.S. Kothari (1966), "First public examination is to come at the end of first ten years of schooling and vocationalization at the secondary level at two points at the end of class VII and at the end of class "X" [Aggarwal J.C., 1997, P.142].

Hence, based on the marks obtained at this critical stage (SSLC), the pupil opts for different groups of studies such as Mathematics group, Computer Science group, and Science group, and Arts or Vocational group which will, in turn, prepare him for the future.

2.0 EMOTIONAL WELL BEING AND MENTAL HEALTH:

Kamau (1992) argues that an individual with good emotional wellbeing is one who is free from anxiety and disability symptoms. If the individual can establish relationships with others and cope well with life's demand, then his or her physical, mental, social and emotional well – being can be said to be complete.

As Selye (1946) reports, a good relationship among the members of a group is a key factor in individual and organizational health.

2.1 Definition of Mental Health:

Mental health is a state of being with conducive, harmonious and effective living (Bonney, 1960).

According to Farahbakhsh (2004), mental health is a state of mind characterized by emotional well – being, relative freedom from anxiety and disability symptoms, and a capacity to establish constructive relationship and cope with the ordinary demands and stress of life.

Hilgard (1957) states that a mentally healthy person is an adjusted person. This statement means that a person is not to be distressed by the conflicts he or she faces. The individual attacks problems in a realistic manner, accepts the inevitable, and understands and accepts his or her own shortcomings.

2.2 CHARACTERISTICS:

Even though many of us don't suffer from a diagnosable mental disorder, it is clear that some of us are mentally healthier than others. The study of the characteristics that make up mental health has been called 'positive psychology'. Here are some of the ideas that have been put forward as characteris-

tics of mental health:

Resilience:

The ability to bounce back from adversity has been referred to as "resilience." It has been long known that some people handle stress better than others.

The characteristic of "resilience" is shared by those who cope well with stress.

Balance:

Balance in life seems to result in greater mental health, - a need to balance time to spend socially with time spent alone. For example, those who spend all of their time alone may get labelled as "loners", and they may lose many of their social skills. Extreme social isolation may even result in a spilt with reality. Those who ignore the need for some solitary times also risk such a split. Balancing these two needs seems to be the key although we all balance these differently. Other areas where balance seems to be important include the balance between work and play, the balance between sleep and wakefulness, the balance between rest and exercise, and even the balance between time spend indoors and time spent outdoors.

Flexibility:

We all know that some people who hold very rigid opinions. No amount of discussion can change their views. Such people often set themselves up for added stress by the rigid expectations that they hold. Working on making our expectations more flexible can improve our mental health. Emotional flexibility may be just as important as cognitive flexibility.

Self – actualization:

We all know people who have surpassed their potential and others who seem to have squandered their gifts. We first need to recognize our gifts, of course, and the process of recognition is part of the path toward self – actualization. Mentally healthy persons are in the process of actualizing their potential.

Mental Well – being:

Mental wellness is generally viewed as a positive attribute, such that a person can reach enhanced levels of mental health, even if they do not have any diagnosable mental health condition. This definition of mental health highlights emotional well – being, the capacity to life, and the flexibility to deal with life's inevitable challenges.

3.0 Mental health and Emotional Intelligence:

Salovey et. al.,(1999) claims that individuals "who can regulate their emotional states are healthier because they accurately perceive and appraise their emotional states, know how and when to express their feelings, and can effectively regulate their mood states" (P.161). They suggest that there must be a direct link between Emotional Intelligence and physical as well as mental health.

Today, there has been an increasing interest in how emo-

tional reactions and experiences affect both physical as well as mental health. People with mental health problems are known to have emotional problems and difficulties with relationships. The people with mental health problems had a lower overall score for emotional information and regulating their emotions. The patients with substance – abuse problems and borderline personality disorder are the most impaired ones.

4.0 REVIEW:

Research has revealed an increasing incidence of depression and other mental health issues among youth (Jafar Shabani et al., 2010).

Taylor (2001) argued that if you are emotionally intelligent then you can cope better with life's challenges and control your emotions more effectively, both of which contribute to good mental and physical health. Furthermore, Duelwicz, Higgs, and Slaski (2003), examined the role emotional self - management such stress, distress, morale and poor quality of working life play in everyday life. They demonstrated that Emotional Intelligence was strongly correlated with both, physical and psychological health.

Many authors claimed and reported that there existed a significant relationship of emotional intelligence with mental health (Goleman, 1995; Salovey & Mayer, 1997, Baron 2005), since , emotional functions that include emotion, intelligence, and emotional intelligence can be used as possible instrument to increase individual's mental health.

Salovey (2001) states that the failure of emotional self – management leads to significant negative influences on health (E.g. excessive cardiovascular activity). He observed that people low on the dimension of EI, resorted to smoking, drinking and eating fatty foods as way of coping to emotional stress.

5.0 NEED FOR THE STUDY:

Several studies have reported the impact of Mental Health on the achievement of the students of different categories. Similarly Emotional Intelligence has also been studied in the school context to establish its effectiveness on the Emotional, Social and Intellectual behavior of the students of school education and higher education. However no study has yet been published in the region of Tamilnadu relating Mental Health and Emotional Intelligence of High school students.

The problem with Mental Health will have adverse effect on the physical, Emotional and Intellectual domains of the individuals. Likewise deficiency in Emotional Intelligence will pave way for the individual to lose his status in the peer group as well as in the social settings. As the Secondary Class Students are in a typical state that is at the threshold of the adolescent stage, proper development of Mental and Emotional well being is a much expected outcome of school education. Hence the present study which aims at examining the crucial psychological factors in High school students will provide valid information about the well being of the target population chosen for the investigation.

6.0 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

"EXAMINING MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE OF SECONDARY CLASS STUDENTS – A RELATIONAL STUDY".

7.0 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS:

Emotional Intelligence:

By this, the investigator means the scores obtained on the Emotional Intelligence scale developed by Anukool Hyde(2001).

Secondary Class Students:

By this, the investigator means all the 9th standard students studying in the High schools in Trichy.

Mental Health:

By this, the investigator means the scores obtained on the Mental Health Inventory developed by Jagdish and A.K. Srivastava (1993).

8.0 OBJECTIVES:

- To identify the Mental Health status of Secondary Class Students in the schools in Trichy in total and in terms of **gender**.
- To find the significance of difference in the Mental Health status of Secondary Class Students in total and in terms of their **gender and birth order**.
- To find the level of Emotional Intelligence of Secondary Class Students in Trichy in total and in terms of their **gender**.
- To find the significance of difference in Emotional Intelligence of Secondary Class Students in total and in respect of their **gender and birth order**.
- To find the significance of correlation between the Mental Health status and Emotional Intelligence of Secondary Class Students in total and in respect of **gender and birth order**.

9.0 POPULATION AND SAMPLE:

The population of the present study comprises all the secondary class students studying in the high schools in Trichy. From the list of schools, Five have been selected randomly. There after due stratification on gender 220 students were taken by random to form its sample .

10.0 RESEARCH TOOLS:

- Mental Health Status Inventory standardized by Jagdish and A.K. Srivastava (1993).
- Emotional Intelligence Inventory developed by Anukool Hyde et al., (2001).

11.0 COLLECTION OF DATA:

The investigator personally visited the selected schools in Trichy and approached the heads of the schools regarding the data collection. After getting the permission, the researcher explained the tools to the respondents personally. They were requested to respond to all the statements in each and every tool and return them promptly to the investigator. However seven of them were discarded because they were found to be incomplete. The filled – in tools were scored and the data were tabulated for analysis.

12.0 ANALYSIS OF DATA:

H_A: The Mental Health status of Secondary Class Students in total and in terms of their gender is high.

Table 12.1
Mental Health Status of Secondary Class Students and in terms of Gender

Gender	Poor		Average		Good	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Male	21	19.44	36	33.33	51	47.22*
Female	26	24.76	37	35.24	42	40.00*
Total	47	22.07	73	34.27	93	43.66*

*indicates level of mental health status

H₀: There is no significant difference in the mental health status of secondary class students with regard to gender.

Table 12.2
Difference in Mental Health Status of Secondary Class Students with regard to Gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD	Calculated 't' Value	Table Value	Remark
Male	108	158.64	12.05	0.11	1.96	NS
Female	105	158.81	11.41			

(df = 211)

S = Significant at 5% level: Ho is rejected

NS=Not Significant at 5% level: Ho is accepted

Ho: There is no significant difference in the mental health status of secondary class students with regard to Birth order.

Table 12.3
Difference in Mental Health Status of Secondary Class Students with regard to Birth Order

Birth Order	Mean	Calculated 't' Value	Table Value	Remark
First	159.60	1.99	3.04	NS
Middle	155.43			
Last	159.25			

(df = 2,210)

S = Significant at 5% level:

Ho is rejected

NS=Not Significant at 5% level:

Ho is accepted

H_A : The level of Emotional Intelligence of Secondary Class Students in total and in terms of their gender is high.

Table 12.4
Level of Emotional Intelligence of Secondary Class Students and in terms of Gender

Gender	Low		Average		High	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Male	25	23.15	30	27.78	53	49.07*
Female	19	18.10	41	39.05	45	42.86*
Total	44	20.66	71	33.33	98	46.01*

*indicates level of emotional intelligence

Ho: There is no significant difference in the emotional intelligence of secondary class students with regard to gender.

Table 12.5
Difference in Emotional Intelligence of Secondary class Students and in terms of Gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD	Calculated 't' Value	Table Value	Remark
Male	108	76.20	25.58	0.21	1.96	NS
Female	105	75.48	23.96			

(df = 211)

S = Significant at 5% level :

Ho is rejected

NS = Not Significant at 5% level: Ho is accepted

Ho: There is no significant difference in the emotional intelligence of secondary class students with regard to birth order.

Table 12.6
Difference in Emotional Intelligence of Secondary class Students and in terms of Birth Order.

Birth Order	Mean	Calculated 't' Value	Table Value	Remark
First	77.36	1.09	3.04	NS
Middle	70.73			
Last	76.35			

(df = 2,210)

S = Significant at 5% level :

Ho is rejected

NS = Not Significant at 5% level: Ho is accepted

Ho: There is no significant correlation between emotional intelligence and mental health status of secondary class students in total and in terms of their gender and birth order.

Table 12.7
Correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Mental Health Status of Secondary Class Students in total and in terms of Gender and Birth order.

Variables	N	Calculated 'r' Value	Table Value	Remark
Gender	Male	108	0.726	0.190 S
	Female	105	0.718	0.192 S
Birth Order	First	116	0.728	0.183 S
	Middle	40	0.752	0.312 S
	Last	57	0.679	0.262 S
Total	213	0.722	0.135	S

13.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION:

From (Table 12.1) it may be inferred that the Secondary Class Students in Trichy are enjoying good Mental Health as assumed, as **43.66%** of the sample falls under the "Good" category of Mental Health Status. Similarly the male and Female Secondary Class Students also are found to be good in the Mental Health status, as **47.22%** and **40%** of male and female Secondary Class Students fall under the good category of Mental Health status.

The finding is encouraging because the students at 9th standard level in the schools in Trichy must have been experiencing healthy atmosphere in the school environment as well as in their family setting. The conducive climate prevailing in the places of their study and living may be the prime factor causing good Mental status in the Students of Secondary Classes.

Connectedly it may be stated that the teaching - learning process adopted in the classroom, the student - teacher relationship, the peer - relationship etc., may be assisting the students to make use of the facilities and comforts available at home for effective learning.

However the Mental Health status of male and female students does not seem to differ significantly as per the **Table**

12.3. Similarly the Mental Health status of Secondary Class Students with regard to birth order does not seem to differ due to their position in the family, that is the first or middle or last position in the family does not help them much.

The correlation analysis has put forth the fact that Mental Health status and Emotional Intelligence of Higher Secondary students are Inter linked (**Table 12.4**). It is also the same in the case of the sub samples male students, female students, first born students, middle and the last born students. That is irrespective of the gender and birth order the Mental Health status of 9th standard students and their Emotional Intelligence are capable of interacting themselves, without any negative affect on the part of the students.

From the findings it may therefore be deduced that the Mental Health status and Emotional Intelligence are crucial factors for the Psychological and Sociological well being of the Secondary Class Students.

Conclusion:

The researcher would like to conclude that the favorable Psychological well being of Secondary Class Students is consoling and encouraging to teachers, parents and Educational authorities. However the positive aspect of this Mental and Emotional well being of students is not found to be properly channelised. Since the system and its functioning are good, the students have developed such good positive aspects. Therefore the researcher would like to suggest that still more competitive and challenging Cognitive, Affective and Psychomotor oriented activities may be formulated and given to such mentally and emotionally healthy individuals to boost up their achievement in different aspects in these three domains.

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