



## EFFECT OF TV VIEWING ON MENTAL HEALTH AMONG HIGH SCHOOL GOING CHILDREN

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### ABSTRACT

A study was conducted on 120 high school going children to find out the effect of gender, locality, type of management and TV viewing hours on their mental health. Mental health inventory developed and standardized by Reddy (1994) was used to assess the mental health of the subjects. Results revealed that there are significant differences between boys and girls, rural and urban, government and private management school students and the amount of time spent on TV viewing on their mental health. Boys adopted better mental health than girls; students residing in urban locality were better in their mental health; subjects hailing from private schools are good in their mental health and the student whose TV viewing hours are less, possess good mental health.

### KEYWORDS

Mental Health, Demographic Variables

### Introduction

In contemporary world, television is considered as an electronic carpet which seems to transport millions of persons each day to far off places. It is relatively a new medium that has made its impression on every aspect of our mundane life. It is bouncing its signal on space satellites and uses oceanic cables to transmit live telecast to its beneficiaries. This electronic medium ensures its visibility without any global discrimination. It is reported that television made its visibility more than sixty years ago. People were not only skeptical about it, but were also jealous, unkind and even hostile. Over a short span of time, however, it emerged as a remarkable medium of communication, entertainment and education. Over the past few decades it became a central dimension of our everyday activity and in our country it has grown at a phenomenal pace. In India, television was introduced 25 years after its invention and 30 years after its inception through Government efforts to introduce public service broadcasting. The idea was primarily to educate and give access to rural population. Today, an average Indian household has cable and satellite access and the viewer's gets information from local, national and global networks. The sheer number of channels gives him options of multiple natures. It is a powerful medium with extraordinary reach. No one can doubt its potential as a catalyst of social change. Even the perforation of cable and satellite television channels has penetrated in all corners of the country cutting across demographic and geographic barriers. It is generally believed that television has become a very powerful medium and its contact, no doubt, can change the likes and dislikes, learning and social habits.

In recent years increased attention has been focused by many professionals with regard to its impact on human lives at any stage of development. Television is considered to be potentially strong agent for children, adolescents and other family members, especially with its combined effects of audio and visual. The impact is more on adolescents because they are more impressionable than adults. Adolescence is a period during which teenagers feel the pressure of constructing an adult identity. One way of dealing with this pressure is to assemble a set of aspirations for the future. Young viewers watch television as a way of wishful identification and therefore, prefer television portrayals. It is now readily apparent that television can have a profound impact on children as well as on adolescent's development and behavior. Television programmes are

used to assist children and adolescents in various subject areas and are used along with other teaching materials, to give a well rounded approach to learning materials. This has proved successful as children prefer learning visually at a young age. Studies on various dimensions of television watching and its impact have been carried out by a host of investigators. Moderate amount of television viewing seems to be beneficial for reading. Besides, programs to promote literacy in young children have been found with positive impact on specific early literacy skills. Higher frequency television viewing is associated with attention problems and hyper-activity in pre-school children.

Mental health is defined as the successful performance of mental function, which results in productive activities, fulfilling relationships with other people, and the capacity to adjust to changes and cope with difficulties and hardships. From early childhood until late life, mental health is considered the spring board of thinking and communication skills, learning, emotional growth, resilience for recovering quick and self esteem. A person's mental health is subject to any variety of changes in life, either from genetic causes, to environmental stressors, or physical changes that may occur during their life time. Mentally healthy person is always productive and unalienated. He is always a person, who relates himself to the world lovingly, and who uses his reason to grasp reality objectively; who experiences himself as a unique individual entity, and at the same time feels one with his fellowmen; who accepts willingly the rational authority of conscience and reason; who in the process of being born as long as he is alive, and considers the gift of life the most precious chance he has. Here the values are humanism, individualism, freedom and rationality. Over the past few decades a number of studies have shown that gender, locality, type of management and TV viewing hours have adversely affects the mental health of the students. (Moss and Moss, 1978; Sarkar, 1979; Law, 1980; Shah and Sharma, 1984; Vello and Debra, 1986; Chakrabarthy, 1986; Lethakumari, 1986; Topper, 1989; Shah, 1989; Mishra, 1991; Youn, 1993; Manjuvani, 1995; Mdanda, 1997; Latha and Aggarwal, 1998; Mashile, 1999; Anand, 1999; Reddy et al 2002; Mayuri, 2003; Joshi and Bosh, 2004; Lalitha, 2006; Elizabeth, 2009; Muola, 2010; Kirankumar and Viswanath Reddy, 2010). For achieving sound mental health, one must have the desire to learn with full working abilities and talents, class room interaction, affiliation with others,

gender, locality of residence, facilities available in school and home environment etc. will influence a lot on learning and cognitive styles. Based on the previous literature an attempt is made to find out the impact of gender, locality of residence, type of management and the number of TV viewing hours on mental health of the high school going children.

**OBJECTIVES**

1. To find out whether is any significant differences between boys and girls with regard to their mental health.
2. To find out whether is any significant differences between rural and urban sample with regard to their mental health.
3. To examine the influence of type of management of subjects with regard to their mental health.
4. To investigate the effect of TV viewing on mental health among high school students.

**HYPOTHESES**

Based on the above objectives the following hypotheses are formulated for the present study:

1. There would be significant differences between boys and girls with regard to their mental health.
2. There would be significant differences between rural and urban students with regard to their mental health.
3. There would be significant differences between the government and private school going children with regard to their mental health.
4. There would be significant impact of TV viewing on mental health among school going children.

**TOOL**

A bio-data schedule was prepared seeking information about the respondents, sex, locality, class of study, type of school, number of TV viewing hours per day etc.

Mental Health Inventory developed and standardized by Reddy (1994) was used in the present study to assess the study habits of the subjects. The inventory consisted of 100 items and the items were divided into two broad categories: assets and Liabilities having 50 items in each category. (ASSETS: Close Personal Relationships, Inter-personal Skills, Social Participation, Satisfying Work and Recreation and Adequate Outlook and Goals. (LIABILITIES: Behavioral Immaturity, Emotional Instability, Feelings of Inadequacy, Physical Defects and Nervous Manifestations) The responses were scored with the help of the prescribed key for components of Assets and Liabilities. For assets number of 'YES' response was scored and for liabilities number of "NO" responses were scored. The test is a combination of both positive and negative items. Every individual gets two set of scores on the two components, namely Mental Health Assets and Mental Health Liabilities. Overall a high score on both sectors indicates good mental health status. A split half reliability of the inventory was established separately for assets and liabilities of the mental health inventory. The correlation for the two sub-divided tests was 0.79 and 0.59 for assets and liabilities respectively.

**SAMPLE**

The present study comprised 120 children, studying 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> classes in and around Tirupati rural and urban mandal high schools, Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh. Subjects from each mandal were divided into two groups, i.e., boys and girls and the schools were selected randomly. (4 government and 4 private schools) The subjects were within the age range of 13 to 15 years. Of the 120 subjects, 60 were boys and 60 were girls. From each category 60 from rural and 60 from urban were taken into consideration.

**PROCEDURE**

The subjects were met personally in their respective schools along with their class teacher (not less than twenty). Brief introduction was given, explained the purpose of the test and mobilized them that this test is no way concerned to their subjects. Mental health habits inventory questionnaire along with the bio-data was distributed and asked to fill the par-

ticulars. After completion of the bio-data, the subjects were directed how to mark either "YES" or "NO" per each item. The investigator checked them to find out whether the students were responding to the questionnaire properly or not. The time taken to complete the test was approximately 60 minutes. To test the hypotheses, the collected data is subjected to statistical treatment 't' test was applied to compare the boys and girls, rural and urban, government and private management school children and TV viewing 1 to 2 hours and more than 2 hours. The influences of each variable on mental health of the students are investigated and the results are presented in following tables.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Table-1 shows the means and SDs obtained by the boys and girls along with 't' values. The obtained 't' value 3.15, significant at 0.05 level, indicating that boys and girls differ in their mental health. The obtained mean difference clearly showing that girls are good in their mental health than boys. Hence the framed hypothesis that there would be significant difference between the boys and girls with regard to their mental health was accepted. The obtained 't' value 3.06, for locality is significant at 0.05 level, indicating that rural and urban students are differ in their mental health; urban students are better in their mental health than rural students. In case of the government and private school going children they significantly differ with each other. ('t'= 3.80 <0.05) suggesting that private school children secured better mental health than government school children. In the same way the obtained means and 't' values of the two categories of TV viewers are compared. The obtained 't' value 2.08 (significant at 0.05 level) indicates that TV viewing plays a predominant role on their mental health. Students whose viewing hours are in between 1-2 hours per day possess better mental health than the students whose TV viewing hours are more than 2 hours per day.

**Table: Significance of the difference between the means for Gender, Locality, Type of Management and TV viewing Hours**

Variable		N	Mean	S.D	t- value
Gender	Boys	60	45.51	5.65	3.15**
	Girls	60	48.85	5.92	
Locality	Rural	60	43.14	5.85	3.06**
	Urban	60	47.22	6.21	
Type of Management	Government	60	37.96	4.17	3.80**
	Private	60	42.23	5.31	
TV viewing	(1 to 2 hours per day)	60	47.09	5.75	2.08**
	(More than 2 hours per day)	60	45.03	3.96	

\*\* Significant at level 0.05 level

**Conclusion**

The results of the present study indicate that:

- Girls are good in their mental health compared to boys.
- Urban students possess better mental health than rural subjects.
- Private school going children possess good mental health than government school children.
- Children who are habituated to TV viewing i.e., more than two hours per day were found to be poor in their mental health.

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