



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Education

DIFFERENTIAL EFFECT OF FAMILY DISINTEGRATION ON THE CORRELATION OF MENTAL HEALTH TO LOCUS OF CONTROL AND SELF-EFFICACY OF ADOLESCENTS

KEY WORDS: Mental health, Internal locus of control, Self-efficacy, Adolescents, Broken family, Intact family

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ABSTRACT

The study aims to explore the relationship of mental health to internal locus of control and self-efficacy of adolescents, and further to explore the differential effect of family integration on the relationship. The descriptive correlational study collected data from a random sample of 1246 adolescent learners from different secondary schools of Kerala by administering standardized psychometric instruments. Statistical analysis brought out that both internal locus of control and self-efficacy of the adolescents from broken and intact families are significantly and positively correlated to their mental health. Significant differences were observed between adolescents from broken and intact families with respect to the correlation of mental health to internal locus of control and self-efficacy. Adolescents from broken families excelled their counterparts from intact families in the degree of relationship between the variables. The study revealed that the mental health of adolescents from broken families is more strongly influenced by their internal locus of control and self-efficacy than that of adolescents from intact families.

Introduction

Mental health, which today is recognized as an important aspect of one's total health status, is a basic factor that contributes to the maintenance of physical health as well as social effectiveness. Children need a happy and stable family environment and a conducive social network for their overall growth and development. In most of the societies, the family is the most valued system in almost all spheres of life and human living. Family is the only institution which provides the security and support without any rewards in return. The effectiveness of family functioning in conditioning the children's personality and social development has an outstanding importance (Maheshwari et al., 2020). Family integrity and happiness is crucial in the balanced personality development and maintenance of mental health of a child (Castro & Hernandez, 2004). Research shows that both overall family system functioning and parental behaviors are positively related to adolescent physical and mental well-being (Zhang & Wang, 2020; Langton & Berger, 2011; Paradis et al., 2011). Family structure was consistently found to be the deciding factor in a wide range of child behaviors that directly influence academic performance, including emotional and psychological distress, attention disorders, social misbehavior, substance abuse, sexual activity and teen pregnancy (Saikia, 2017; Anderson, 2014). Children from non-intact homes had higher rates of stress, depression, anxiety and low self-esteem, particularly as teenagers (Lan et al., 2019). Children of divorced parents are more likely to be disadvantaged. These children suffer from early behavioral and academic problems, early school leaving and poor mental health (Sigle-Rushton et al., 2004).

Mental health of an individual is composed of various complex factors as well as the interaction between physical, psychological and social agents (Rabani et al., 2011). Abraham (1984) found very high to low correlation between mental health status and more than a dozen of psycho-social variables in adolescents of Kerala. Bavojudan et al. (2011) based on their study on male drug abusers showed increased levels of general self-efficacy and internal locus of control will improve mental health. The manner in which these two psychological variables contribute to mental health of adolescents from disintegrated families could be better understood by comparing the association between the variables in children from broken families with that in children from intact families. This paper aims to study the relationship of internal locus of control and self-efficacy to mental health of secondary school students, and further

explore the differential effect of broken and intact families in the relationship.

Objective of the Study

The study had the following specific objectives in view:

1. To find out the relationship between mental health status and internal locus of control of adolescents from broken and intact families.
2. To compare the coefficients of correlation between mental health and internal locus of control of children from broken and intact families
3. To find out the relationship between mental health status and self-efficacy of adolescents from broken and intact families.
4. To compare the coefficients of correlation between mental health and self-efficacy of children from broken and intact families

Hypothesis of the Study

The following null hypothesis were tested in the study:

H₀1: There is no significant correlation between mental health status and internal locus of control of adolescents from broken and intact families.

H₀2: There is no significant difference between adolescents from broken and intact families regarding the degree of relationship between their mental health and internal locus of control.

H₀3: There is no significant correlation between mental health status and self-efficacy of adolescents from broken and intact families.

H₀4: There is no significant difference between adolescents from broken and intact families regarding the degree of relationship between their mental health and internal locus of control.

Methodology

Normative Survey method was adopted for the present study. A random sample of 1246 adolescent learners in the age range 13-16 were selected from the secondary schools of Ernakulam district in Kerala. The data required for the study were collected by administering three different tools, viz., the Mental Health Status Scale (Arjunan & Ross, 2016), and the Adapted Version of Rotter's Internal-External Locus of Control Scale (Arjunan & Ross, 2016), and the Perceived Self-Efficacy Scale (Schwartzter & Jerusalem, 1979). The tool was administered on the sample under standardized conditions and the data thus collected were analyzed using appropriate descriptive and inferential statistical techniques.

Analysis and Interpretation

The data collected from the sample were analyzed statistically to find out answers to the specific objectives taken up in the study. The details of the analysis carried out are presented below.

1. Correlation between mental health status and internal locus of control

The data and results pertained to the calculation of the coefficients of correlation between mental health status and internal locus of control for the total sample and sub-samples based on family type are given in Table 1.

Table 1: Relationship between mental health and internal locus of control of adolescents (Total sample and sub-samples based on family integrity)

Samples	N	r	SE _r	Sig.	rPOP	
					.05 level	.01 level
Total Sample	1246	0.367	0.025	.001	0.32 – 0.42	0.30 – 0.43
Broken Family	154	0.522	0.059	.001	0.41 – 0.64	0.37 – 0.67
Intact Family	1092	0.310	0.027	.001	0.26 – 0.36	0.24 – 0.38

The coefficient of correlation between mental health and locus of control (internal) estimated for the total sample of adolescents and the sub-samples based on family integrity reveals the presence of significant positive correlation between the variables in all the groups examined. The coefficient of correlation (r) estimated for the total sample of the adolescents is 0.367 (p<.001) with a standard error (SEr) of 0.025. The population values of the coefficient of correlation (rPOP) lie between 0.32 and 0.42 at .05 level of confidence interval and between 0.30 and 0.43 at .01 level of confidence interval. The estimates of coefficient of correlation show that there exists a low but significant positive correlation between mental health status and internal locus of control for the total sample of adolescents of Kerala. The values of the coefficients of correlation (r) obtained for the sub-samples under consideration are also positive and significant. The degree of relationship between the variables, however, is different in both sub-samples. While there is a substantial or marked relationship between mental health status and internal locus of control of adolescents from broken families, the estimated r-value denotes low relationship between the variables in the case of adolescents from normal families.

2. Comparison of adolescents from broken and intact families with respect to the relationship between mental health and internal locus of control

The coefficients of correlation between mental health and internal locus of control of adolescents from broken families and intact families are compared to find out whether the groups differ significantly with respect to the degree of relationship between the variables. Fisher's z-transformation test was used to find out the significance of the differences between the correlations in sub-samples compared.

Table 2: Comparison of the correlations between mental health and locus of control of adolescents from broken and intact families

Sub-samples	Statistical Indices				Z _{observed}	Sig.
	N	r	r _{correct}	z		
Broken family	154	0.522	0.52	0.576	2.977	.01
Intact family	1092	0.310	0.31	0.321		

The result of the Fisher's z-transformation test demonstrates that adolescents from broken and intact families differ significantly with respect to the degree of relationship

between their mental health and (internal) locus of control (Zobserved = 2.977; p<.01). A true difference exists between adolescents from broken families and intact families regarding the association between their mental health and locus of control. A closer observation of the coefficients of correlation between the variables shows that the relationship between the variables is stronger in adolescents from broken families compared to that in adolescents from intact families. Correlation between mental health status and self-efficacy

The data and results pertained to the calculation of the coefficients of correlation between mental health status and self-efficacy for the total sample and sub-samples based on family type are given in Table 3.

Table 3: Relationship between mental health and self-efficacy of adolescents (Total sample and sub-samples based on family integrity)

Samples	N	r	SE _r	Sig.	r _{POP}	
					.05 level	.01 level
Total Sample	1246	0.397	0.024	.001	0.35 – 0.44	0.34 – 0.46
Broken Family	154	0.533	0.058	.001	0.42 – 0.65	0.38 – 0.68
Intact Family	1092	0.348	0.027	.001	0.30 – 0.40	0.28 – 0.42

The coefficients of correlation between mental health and self-efficacy, calculated for the total sample of adolescents (r = 0.397; p<.001), and that for adolescents from broken families (r = 0.533; p<.001) and intact families (r = 0.348; p<.001) are all significant beyond .001 level. The estimated r-values show that there is significant and positive correlation between mental health and self-efficacy of adolescents from broken and intact families. The standard error of coefficient of correlation (SEr) for the total sample is 0.024 and the population value will fall between 0.35 and 0.44 at .05 level and between 0.34 and 0.46 at .01 level of confidence interval. The value of coefficient of correlation shows that there exists a significant positive correlation between mental health status and perceived self-efficacy of adolescents of Kerala, when the sample is taken as a whole. Furthermore, significant positive correlation is also obtained between mental health status and self-efficacy for the sub-samples of adolescents from broken and intact families. Whereas there is a substantial or marked relationship between the variables in the case of adolescents from broken family (r = 0.517), the relationship is found to be low (r = 0.329) in the case of individuals from intact families.

3. Comparison of the coefficients of correlation between mental health and self-efficacy of children from broken and intact families

The coefficient of correlation between mental health status and self-efficacy of the sub-samples based on family type of the adolescents were compared to find out the significant difference, if any, between the groups. The data and result of the analysis done in this context are presented in Table 4.

Table 4.35: Comparison of the correlations between mental health and self-efficacy of adolescents from broken and intact families

Sub-samples	Statistical Indices				Z _{observed}	Sig.
	N	r	r _{correct}	z		
Broken family	154	0.533	0.53	0.590	2.662	.01
Intact family	1092	0.348	0.35	0.365		

The result of the two tailed test of significance for the differences between two independent coefficients of correlation performed to compare the adolescents from broken and intact families with respect to the degree of

relationship between their mental health and self-efficacy is significant ($Z_{observed} = 2.662$; $p < .01$). It exposes that, adolescents from broken families differ significantly from their counterparts from intact families with respect to the relationship between their mental health and self-efficacy. Inspection of the values of the coefficients of correlation reveals that the relationship between the variables is significantly stronger in broken family than in intact family.

Conclusions

The correlational analysis revealed the presence of a significant and positive correlation between mental health and internal locus of control of adolescents. The null hypothesis, H01 is, therefore, rejected. Comparison of adolescents from broken and intact families with respect to the correlation between their mental health and locus of control exposed a significant difference revealing that the mental health of adolescents from broken families are more strongly influenced by their locus of control than that in adolescents from intact families. The null hypothesis formulated in this context, viz., H02 is, hence rejected. Significant positive correlations were also found to exist between mental health and self-efficacy of adolescents from broken and intact families. The null hypothesis, H03 is, consequently, rejected. A true difference was estimated between adolescents from broken and intact families regarding the association between their mental health and self-efficacy, leading to the rejection of hypothesis H04. Mental health of adolescents from broken families was found more deeply affected by their self-efficacy than that in adolescents from intact families.

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