

Anxiety and Mental Health of Adolescents: A Study

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Abstract

The present study aims to investigate the relation between anxiety and mental health of adolescents. These were studied with respect to different demographic variables like gender, locality and academic stream. Sample included 150 randomly selected adolescents i.e. 75 male and 75 female adolescents from various colleges of Education at Rohtak . For obtaining the data on Anxiety and Mental Health, Sinha's Comprehensive Anxiety Scale by Sinha & Sinha (1955) and Mental Health Checklist (MHC) by Kumar P (1992) were used respectively. The findings of the study suggest that there lies significant difference in anxiety and mental health of male and female adolescents as well. It was further concluded that there lies a high co-relation between anxiety and mental health of adolescent.

KEYWORDS: Anxiety, Mental Health, Adolescents

The period of adolescence is of supreme importance in the life of human. It is the period in which a person gets physical, emotional and mental maturity. Adolescence is a time of emerging risky health behaviours, and many adult mental health disorders have their onset during this time period. The median age of onset of adult depression occurs at age 14 and anxiety disorders by age 11. Adolescents must learn how to cope with psychological stress, handle peer pressure, deal with their emotions, resolve conflicts, build bridges with friends and family, develop self-confidence, safeguard themselves from high pressure marketing strategies, particularly of the alcohol industry, as well as cope with other stresses like academic competition and a hankering for material gains. They need to have good mental health. Good mental health is more than just the absence of mental illness. It can be seen as a state of mental health that allows one to flourish and fully enjoy life. Everyone has both positive and negative experiences in life. The ability to cope with negative experiences varies greatly from one person to another and, in large part, determines whether people enjoy their lives. Mental health refers to our cognitive, and/or emotional wellbeing - it is all about how we think, feel and behave. WHO defines mental health as the concept as: a state of well being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her own community (WHO, 2007, p. 1). Individually, mental health affects our expressive, cognitive, perspective, relational, and coping abilities, undergirding our general health and wellbeing and capacity to integrate into and become productive members of society (Dwivedi & Harper, 2004). There are a number of personal and environmental factors which affect the mental health of adolescents. Among the different factors, anxiety is an important factor.

Anxiety is one of the major psychological variables which is considered as an important part of personality development. Anxiety also called **angst or worry** is a psychological and physiological state characterized by somatic, emotional, cognitive, and behavioural components. Psychologists find abnormal anxiety interferes in the organized behavioural sequence. It is the displeasing feeling of fear and concern (Davison, Gerald, 2008). The root meaning of the word anxiety is 'to vex or trouble'; in either presence or absence of psychological stress, anxiety can create feelings of fear, worry, uneasiness, and dread (Bouras & Holt, 2007). It is also associated with feelings of restlessness, fatigue, concentration problems, and muscle tension. Therefore, it acts like an adverse stimulus also for the development of students potentialities. Anxiety is considered to be a normal reaction to a stressor. It may help an individual to deal with a demanding situation by prompting them to cope with it. However, when anxiety becomes overwhelming, it may fall under the classification of anxiety disorder (National Institute of Mental Health, 2008). Generally it helps in improving the performance of an individual. It means anxiety should not cross its threshold value otherwise it will reach at abnormal level. Anxiety prevails when a person is at odds with himself. It can be defined in very general terms as a persisting distressful psychological state arising from our inner conflict. The distress may be experienced as a feeling of vague uneasiness, a feeling of being on the edge or as any of a variety of other feeling, such as fear, anger, restlessness, irritability, depression or other diffused and nameless feelings. This anxiety when crosses its threshold value, it adversely effects the process of adjustment. Barlow (2002) define anxiety as "a future-oriented mood state in which one is ready or prepared to attempt to cope with upcoming negative events.

Anxiety, thus, is a state of being troubled and uneasy. Anxiety has two major works-first, it warns against the problems that are to come in life and enables an individual to act and eliminate the experiences of pain. Second, anxiety indicates the problems which cause pain to the soul. Many people confuse anxiety with fear. However, fear is something that can be in front of you (i.e., a real danger), whereas anxiety is the paranoia of something out there that seems menacing but it may not be menacing, and indeed may not even be out there (Henig, Robin (9), The New York Times Magazine, rtvd. on 10 December 2012).

Rationale of the study

Anxiety is one of the most common psychological disorders in school aged children and adolescents worldwide (Costello Mustille, Exkanli, Keeler & Angold 2003). The prevalence rate ranges from 4.0% to 25 % with an average rate of 8.0% (Bernsteen & Borchardt, 1991, Bodd, Kostcanski, Gullone, Ollendirk & Shek, 2000). Anxiety is considered to be a universal phenomena existing across culture, although its contexts and manifestations are influenced by cultural beliefs and practices (Kleinman 1985, Guarnaccia, 1997). Despite the clinical focus on depression, youth anxiety disorders also are important because they are precursors to later development of depression (Chavira , Stein,2004). Though a number of investigators made efforts to study the effect of anxiety on various aspects of children but there is dearth of studies which try to study this effect on mental health at adolescent stage. So, the present investigators visualized a need to

study the effect of anxiety on mental health of adolescents with respect to different demographic variables like gender and locality.

Objectives:

1. To study anxiety among adolescents.
 - a) To find out the difference of anxiety among college students on the basis of gender.
 - b) To find out the difference of anxiety among college students on the basis of locality.

2. To study the mental health among adolescents.
 - a) To find out the difference of mental health among adolescents on the basis of gender.
 - b) To find out the difference of mental health among adolescents on the basis of locality.

3. To find out the correlation between anxiety and mental health among adolescents.

Hypotheses:

1. a) There is no significant difference of anxiety among adolescents on the basis of gender.
b) There is no significant difference of anxiety among adolescents on the basis of locality.

2. a) There is no significant difference of mental health among adolescents on the basis of gender.
b) There no significant difference of mental health among adolescents on the basis of locality.

- 3 There is no significant correlation between anxiety and mental health among adolescents.

Methodology:

It includes the following headings:

1. Method of study
2. Sample of study
3. Locale of the study

Method of study:

Descriptive survey method was adopted to study the present problem.

Sample:

For the present study, the investigator selected 150 students of age 14 to 17, out of which 75 were boys and 75 were girls. Out of 150 students, 75 students were from rural background and 75 students were from urban background.

Locale of the study:

The present study was done in Rohtak District.

Tools used:

For obtaining the data on Anxiety and Mental Health, Sinha’s Comprehensive Anxiety Scale by Sinha & Sinha (1955) and Mental Health Checklist (MHC) by Kumar P (1992) were used.

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES USED:

- t-test
- Correlation

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

From the collected data, firstly mean was calculated. After this, standard deviation and significant difference of each group was calculated with help of t-test to study the anxiety and mental health of adolescents.

Objective – 1: a) To find out the difference of anxiety among adolescents on the basis of gender.

Table - 1

t-value of anxiety among adolescents on the basis of gender

Gender	Group (students)	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value
	Male	75	24.52	9.66	5.05**
	Female	75	18.32	5.11	

** Significant at 0.01 level

By analyzing Table -1, we can interpret the difference of anxiety among adolescents on the basis of gender, calculated mean is 24.52 (male) and 18.32(female) respectively The standard deviation in case of the male students is 9.66 and in case of the female students is 5.11 and obtained ‘t’ value is 5.05, which is significant at 0.01 level of significance which means that there lies significant difference of anxiety among adolescents on the basis of gender.

Objective – 1: b) To find out the difference of anxiety among adolescents on the basis of locality

Table -1.1**t-value of anxiety among adolescents on the basis of locality**

Locality	Group (students)	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value
	Urban	75	24.21	9.76	4.82**
	Rural	75	18.43	4.78	

** Significant at 0.01 level

By analyzing Table -1.1, we can interpret that the difference of anxiety among adolescents on the basis of locality, calculated mean is 24.21 (male) and 18.43 (female) respectively. The standard deviation in case of the male students is 9.76 and in case of the female students is 4.78 and obtained 't' value is 4.82, which is significant at 0.01 level of significance which means that there lies significant difference of anxiety among adolescents on the basis of locality. So our hypothesis H1 (b) stating that there is no significant difference of anxiety among college students on the basis of locality is rejected.

Objective: 2 a) To find out the difference of mental health among adolescents on the basis of gender.

Table -2**t-value of mental health of adolescents on the basis of gender**

Gender	Group (students)	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value
	Male	75	19.06	2.42	5.16**
	Female	75	21.34	3.11	

** significant at 0.01 level

To compare the mental health of adolescents on the basis of gender, calculated mean is 19.06 (male) and 21.34 (female) respectively. The S.D. in case of the mental health of male students is 2.42 and in case of the female students is 3.11. Obtained 't' value is 5.16, which is significant at 0.01 level of significance which means that there exists significant difference between the mental health of male adolescents and female adolescents. So our hypothesis H2 (a) stating that there is no significant difference in the mental health of adolescents is rejected and it may be reframed as: There exists significant difference in the mental health of adolescents on the basis of gender.

a) Objective 2 (b) To find out the difference of mental health among adolescents on the basis of locality.

Table -2.1**t-value of mental health of adolescents on the basis of locality**

Locality	Group (students)	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value
	Urban	75	19.04	2.99	5.38**
	Rural	75	21.42	2.54	

** Significant at 0.01 level

The mean for the mental health of 75 urban adolescents has been calculated 19.04 and the mean for mental health of the 75 rural adolescents has been calculated 21.42, The S.D. in case of the urban students is 2.99 and in case of the rural adolescents is 2.54. To compare the mental health of adolescents on the basis of locality, calculated 't' value is 5.38, which is significant at 0.01 level of significance which means that there lies significant difference between the mental health of adolescents on the basis of locality So our hypothesis H2 (b) stating that there is no significant difference in mental health of adolescents on the basis of locality is rejected and it may be reframed as: There exists significant difference in mental health of adolescents on the basis of locality.

Table 3 Correlation B/w Anxiety and Mental Health of Adolescents

Variables	N	R
Anxiety & Mental Health	150	0.72

From the table 3, it is observed that the score of emotional maturity and mental health of adolescents was found to be 0.72 that means there exists high correlation between anxiety and mental health of adolescents. So, H3 stating that there is no significant correlation between anxiety and mental health of adolescents is rejected.

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULT

The main thrust of the present investigation was to study the emotional maturity and mental health of adolescents and their correlation. It is obvious from the findings that there is significant difference in the emotional maturity and mental health as well on the basis of gender and locality and a high correlation was found between emotional maturity and mental health of adolescents

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULT

The main thrust of the present investigation was to study the anxiety and mental health of adolescents and their correlation. It is obvious from the findings that there is significant

difference in the anxiety and mental health as well on the basis of gender and locality and a moderate correlation was found between anxiety and mental health of adolescents. Campbell & Rapee, 1994, Weiss & last, 2001 revealed in their studies on gender differences that girls are more anxious, have greater number of worries and higher level of generalized anxiety. Castello, eggee & Angold, 2003 and Craske, 2003 found the same results showing the significant difference of some variables with anxiety of college going students between male and female and also reported significant difference in anxiety level of urban and rural students.

Francisa and Jasmine (2012) reported that female higher secondary students have better mental health than male higher secondary students but found no significant difference urban higher secondary students and rural higher secondary students. However, Mayer et al (2008) found that adolescent boys have good mental health and better on interpersonal, adaptability and stress management skills than the adolescent girls. The result of the present investigation indicated a high correlation between anxiety mental health of adolescents. The results are in consonance with the results of Mattoo & Nabi (2012) that the children keep high academic anxiety which affects the physical and mental health of the adolescents adversely.

Conclusion

It is concluded that anxiety affects the mental health of adolescents and if not taken care of properly, may result in disorder. So, teachers and parents should bestow the quality time to adolescents to gain a better mental health.

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