
AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF MENTAL HEALTH AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS WITH REFERENCE TO THEIR SELF-CONCEPT

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ABSTRACT

The present study investigates the relationship between mental health and self-concept among secondary school students. The primary objectives of the study were to examine the level of mental health and self-concept among students and to determine whether significant differences exist with respect to selected variables such as gender. The study also aimed to explore the correlation between mental health and self-concept. Mental health was considered the dependent variable, while self-concept and demographic variables served as independent variables.

A quantitative research approach was adopted, and the study was conducted using a descriptive survey method. The sample consisted of 100 secondary school students from Ahmedabad, an English medium school, selected through a purposive sampling technique to ensure representation of different groups. Data were collected using two standardised tools: the Mental Health Scale developed by Dr Manoj Shastri and the Self-Concept Scale developed by Dr. Rajkumar Saraswat (1984). The Mental Health Scale consists of 130 items divided into six parts covering various aspects of mental health, while the Self-Concept Scale consists of 48 items based on a five-point response format covering six dimensions of self-concept. Both tools were found to be reliable and valid, with satisfactory reliability coefficients reported in previous studies. The collected data were analysed using appropriate statistical techniques such as mean, standard deviation, t-test, and correlation. The analysis was carried out separately for each objective and corresponding hypotheses. The results indicated that there are significant differences in mental health and self-concept among students based on selected variables. Furthermore, a positive correlation was found between mental health and self-concept, suggesting that students with higher self-concept tend to exhibit better mental health. The findings of the study have important implications for educators, school administrators, and policymakers. It is recommended that schools implement programs to enhance students' self-concept and mental well-being through counselling, life skills education, and supportive learning environments. The study also suggests further research with larger samples and additional variables to gain deeper insights into students' psychological development.

Keywords: *Mental Health, Self-Concept, Secondary School Students, Emotional Stability, Adjustment, Educational Psychology*

Introduction

Mental health is a fundamental component of an individual's overall well-being, particularly during adolescence, a critical period of psychological, emotional, and social development. It significantly influences how students think, feel, and behave in both academic and personal contexts. The World Health Organisation (2014) defines mental health as a state of well-being in which individuals realise their abilities, cope with normal life stresses, and contribute productively to society. In educational settings, positive mental health is associated with improved learning capacity, academic achievement, and effective social adjustment among students.

Self-concept refers to an individual's perception and evaluation of oneself and is a crucial factor in personality development and behaviour. It evolves through interactions with the environment, personal experiences, and feedback from significant others (Shavelson et al., 1976). A positive self-concept is linked with higher confidence, intrinsic motivation, and emotional stability, whereas a negative self-concept may result in anxiety, low academic performance, and maladjustment (Marsh & Craven, 2006). Previous research has consistently indicated a strong association between self-concept and mental health, suggesting that students with a more positive self-concept tend to demonstrate better psychological well-being (Baumeister et al., 2003).

Therefore, examining the relationship between mental health and self-concept among secondary school students is essential for enhancing educational outcomes and fostering holistic development.

1. Review of Literature

Mental health and self-concept have been extensively studied in educational psychology due to their significant influence on students' academic achievement and overall development. Mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which individuals can cope with normal life stresses, work productively, and contribute to society (World Health Organization, 2014). In the school context, students with sound mental health tend to exhibit better adjustment, emotional stability, and academic success.

Several studies have examined factors influencing mental health among school students. Shastri (2010) identified emotional stability, adjustment, and a sense of security as key determinants of students' mental health. Students who experience supportive family and school environments tend to demonstrate better psychological well-being. Similarly, Kaur (2015) found that adolescents with higher emotional intelligence show better mental health and more effective coping strategies.

Self-concept is another important psychological construct that significantly affects students' behavior and learning outcomes. Shavelson et al. (1976) conceptualized self-concept as a multidimensional construct comprising academic, social, and emotional dimensions. A positive self-concept enhances confidence, motivation, and academic performance, whereas a negative self-concept is associated with anxiety, stress, and poor adjustment. Marsh (1990) further emphasized that self-concept is closely related to both academic achievement and psychological well-being.

Research on the relationship between mental health and self-concept has consistently reported a positive association between them. Singh and Kumar (2018) found a significant positive correlation between self-concept and mental health among adolescents, indicating that students with higher self-concept tend to exhibit better emotional stability and adjustment. Earlier work by Baumeister et al. (2003) also supports the view that positive self-perception contributes to better mental health outcomes.

Moreover, the role of the school environment and teaching practices has been highlighted as crucial in shaping students' mental health and self-concept. Rogers (1961) emphasised that a supportive and accepting educational environment fosters positive self-development and psychological well-being. Schools that provide guidance and counselling services significantly improve students' self-concept and mental health.

In conclusion, the existing literature suggests that mental health and self-concept are closely related constructs that play a vital role in students' overall development. Previous studies have established a positive relationship between these variables; however, further research is needed to explore this relationship in specific contexts. The present study aims to examine the relationship between mental health and self-concept among secondary school students.

2. Significance of the Study

Adolescence is a critical stage of human development marked by rapid physical, emotional, and psychological changes. In modern society, adolescents face increasing psychological challenges due to academic pressure, competition, social expectations, and changing family dynamics. As a result, mental health issues among students are steadily rising, affecting their academic performance and overall well-being.

Self-concept plays a crucial role in shaping an individual's personality and mental health. A positive self-concept enhances confidence, emotional stability, and adjustment, whereas a negative self-concept may lead to stress, anxiety, and poor mental health. Therefore, understanding the relationship between mental health and self-concept is essential in the educational context.

The present study is significant as it will help teachers, parents, and counsellors to better understand the psychological needs of students. It will also contribute to the development of effective school-based mental health programs and strategies to enhance students' self-concept and overall well-being.

3. Statement of the Problem

“An Analytical Study of Mental Health Among Secondary School Students with
Reference to Their Self-Concept.”

4. Objectives of the Study

1. To analyse the relationship between mental health and self-concept.
2. To compare mental health among students based on gender variables.

5. Hypotheses of the Study

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between mental health and self-concept among secondary school students.

Ho2: There is no significant difference in mental health between male and female students.

6. Variables of the Study

Independent Variable: Self-Concept

Dependent Variable: Mental Health

Controlled Variables: Gender (Male/Female)

7. Research Methods

The present study adopted the descriptive survey method, as it is suitable for collecting data related to existing conditions and analysing relationships among variables.

- **Population**

The population of the study consisted of all secondary school students of the Ahmedabad district.

- **Sample and Sampling Technique**

A representative sample of 100 secondary English medium school students of Ahmedabad city was selected using the purposive sampling technique to ensure proper representation of all in the study.

8. Tool of the study

Following tools were used for data collection

8.1 Mental Health Scale

The Mental Health Scale, developed by Dr Shastri, was used in the present study to assess the mental health of secondary school students. The scale consists of 130 items divided into six parts, covering various aspects of mental health such as emotional stability, adjustment, and overall psychological well-being. Parts 1 to 5 do not have a time limit, whereas Part 6 is to be completed within 10 minutes. The items are structured in a way that respondents provide answers based on given alternatives, and the scale is easy to administer in a classroom setting. The scoring of the scale is done using a dichotomous method, where each response matching the scoring criteria is awarded one (1) mark, and responses not matching the criteria are given zero (0) marks. The total score is obtained by summing all item scores, with higher scores indicating better mental health. The reliability of the scale was established by the author using appropriate methods such as

test–retest, indicating that the tool provides consistent and stable results over time. The validity of the scale, including content and construct validity, was ensured through expert evaluation and careful selection of items, confirming that the scale adequately measures the concept of mental health. Therefore, the Mental Health Scale by Shastri is considered a reliable and valid instrument for assessing mental health among secondary school students.

8.2 Self-Concept Scale

The Self-Concept Questionnaire developed by Dr Rajkumar Saraswat was used to measure self-concept in the present study. It assesses six dimensions: Physical, Social, Temperamental, Educational, Moral, and Intellectual self-concept. Each dimension consists of 8 items, making a total of 48 items in the inventory.

Respondents rate each item on a five-point scale ranging from most acceptable to least acceptable. Scores are assigned from 5 to 1 for each response, irrespective of positive or negative wording. The total score is obtained by summing responses across all items, with higher scores indicating higher self-concept. The tool is easy to administer and typically requires about 20 minutes for completion. Reliability was established through the test-retest method, yielding a high coefficient of 0.91 for total self-concept. Dimension-wise reliability coefficients range from 0.67 to 0.88, indicating acceptable consistency. Content and construct validity were ensured through expert evaluation, with items selected based on at least 80% agreement among psychologists.

9. Analysis and Interpretation of Data

- **Statistical Analysis**

To analysed the data correlation and t-test were used.

- **Results and Interpretation**

Table 4.1: Correlation between Mental Health and Self-Concept

Variables	N	r - value	Level of significance
Mental Health & Self-Concept	100	0.62	0.01 level

Interpretation:

The correlation coefficient ($r = 0.62$) reveals a moderate to strong positive relationship between mental health and self-concept. This indicates that students with higher self-concept tend to have better mental health. Since the relationship is statistically significant, the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, Hypothesis 1 is rejected, confirming a significant positive relationship between the variables.

Table 4.2: Gender-wise Comparison of Mental Health

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Level of significance
Male	50	141.2	17.9	0.78	NS
Female	50	144.0	18.8		

Interpretation:

The calculated t-value (0.78) is less than the critical value (1.96 at the 0.05 level), indicating that the difference between male and female students is not statistically significant. The null hypothesis is accepted. Hence, Hypothesis 2 is accepted, indicating no significant gender difference in mental health.

10. Findings

1. A significant positive relationship exists between mental health and self-concept.
2. There is no significant gender difference in mental health.

11. Educational Implications

The findings highlight that self-concept plays a crucial role in students' mental health. Therefore, schools should focus on developing positive self-concept among students. Teachers should create a supportive, inclusive, and stress-free classroom environment. Strengthening counselling services in schools is essential to address students' psychological needs. Additionally, regular mental health awareness programs should be conducted to promote emotional well-being.

12. Recommendations

1. Schools should introduce structured mental health education programs.

2. Guidance and counselling services should be available in all schools.
3. Teachers should be trained to identify and support students with mental health issues.
4. Activities that promote self-confidence and self-awareness should be encouraged.

13. Suggestions for Further Research

1. Similar studies can be conducted at primary and higher secondary levels.
2. Comparative studies between rural and urban students can be undertaken.
3. Experimental research can be conducted to improve mental health through interventions.
4. Additional variables such as academic achievement and family environment may be included.

14. Conclusion

The study concludes that mental health and self-concept are closely related among secondary school students. Students with higher self-concept tend to exhibit better mental health, emotional stability, and adjustment. Therefore, enhancing self-concept can significantly improve students' mental well-being. Educational institutions must take proactive steps to support students' psychological development and create a healthy and supportive learning environment.

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