

**Vol. 3/24  
2016**



IMPACT FACTOR SJIF 4.889

**ISSN 2278-8808**

**Peer Reviewed, Referred**

SPECIAL ISSUE

**SCHOLARLY  
RESEARCH JOURNAL FOR  
INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES**

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IMPACT FACTOR SJIF 2014 = 4.889

ONLINE ISSN 2278-8808

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*AN INTERNATIONAL, PEER REVIEWED, QUARTERLY*

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Published & Printed By

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**SCHOLARLY RESEARCH JOURNALS,**

Shivkrupa Residency, S. No. 5/14, Flat No 10, Dattnagar, Near Telco Colony Ambegaon (Kh), Pune.

Maharashtra. 411046. India. Website: [www.amiteshpublishers.in](http://www.amiteshpublishers.in) , [www.srjis.com](http://www.srjis.com)

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**Edition** : MAY-JUNE , 2016

**ISSN** : 2278-8808

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**Published & Printed By**  
**SCHOLARLY RESEARCH JOURNALS**

*S. No-05/14, Shivkrupa Residency, F.No-10, Telco Colony, Datta Nagar, Ambegaon (kh), Pune-46*  
**website-** [www.srjis.com](http://www.srjis.com), **email-** [dryashdnet@gmail.com](mailto:dryashdnet@gmail.com), **Email-** [editor@srjis.com](mailto:editor@srjis.com)

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## **THE EFFECTS OF MINDFULNESS MEDITATION ON ADOLESCENTS: A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS**

**Swati Netravalkar**

There is an overwhelming array of research being done on mindfulness meditation and its benefits. The findings on non-clinical adolescent population from the developed countries are encouraging, although they largely involve experimental and quasi-experimental research. This dearth in qualitative research on the experiences of Indian college-going adolescents as they go through mindfulness meditation has stimulated the need to understand them better. The present study sought to explore the effects of mindfulness meditation on adolescents, through a thematic analysis of participant responses to interviews, which were held with the participants, after they attended a 1 week workshop on mindfulness meditation, during which they were instructed to learn formal mindfulness meditation techniques in the workshop and practice mindfulness in all daily activities, followed by 4 days of home-based meditation practice. Participants were 8 adolescents (mean age: 18.38) who had no previous experience of mindfulness meditation. Several themes were identified from the transcribed interview data, showing positive expectations from the workshop which were linked to beneficial effects like improved concentration, thought clarity and decision-making, emotional regulation through focus on breath and calming down, perceived self-confidence, spiritual values( e.g., compassion, tolerance, mind-body awareness, and others) and mindful attitude, feeling energized, perceived relationship skills( e.g., calming others in distress, understanding others better). However, as beginners, the participants reported difficulties like distracting thoughts and images, surge in disturbing memories, and bodily discomfort, which, they felt, kept reducing as their practice improved. In addition to the themes related to benefits, it was also observed that the group experience of meditation was perceived positively by the adolescents, since it involved sharing, motivating and following similar others. Thus, mindful meditation seems promising in improving adolescents' sense of well-being, especially when they practice in groups.



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## Introduction

Since the last two-three decades positive psychology has become a growing field. Its proponents largely deal with empowering people to deal with life's stressors by developing inner resources. In this quest, many psychologists have come up with various techniques to help individuals improve their well-being and quality of life. One of the several techniques that is often used to help people is mindfulness-meditation. Research has been burgeoning in the area of mindfulness-based meditation interventions. These meditation interventions in psychological practice often involve systematic skill training in focusing attention. This is often accomplished through focused self-regulation of breath, posture and rhythms of consciousness (Ireland, 2012). "Mindfulness", as defined by Kabat-Zinn (2003, p. 145) is "the awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally to the unfolding of experience." According to Sharma (2011), mindfulness meditation involves expanded awareness of ongoing experiences, without analyzing our thoughts about those experiences. While practicing mindfulness, individuals often develop "mindful qualities", such as patience, acceptance, gratitude and others (Snyder and Lopez, 2007)

Mindfulness meditation, as an intervention, has been used to treat several psychiatric conditions. Different mindfulness approaches such as mindfulness-based stress reduction program, mindfulness-based cognitive therapy, acceptance and commitment therapy and such others have demonstrated acceptability and feasibility with clinical population. This is especially seen with reference to the adolescent population. Burke (2010), in her review of published studies, showed that mindfulness meditation approaches have been studied on adolescents using experimental, quasi-experimental, and single subject designs with different dependent measures like substance abuse, sleep disturbance, externalizing disorders, Prader-Willi Syndrome, obesity, anxiety and mood disorders. Although methodological limitations existed in some studies, most of the studies reviewed showed significant positive outcomes. The positive changes were seen in sleep quality, substance use, neuro-cognitive measures, attention, reduced aggression, reduced anxiety and depressive symptoms and so on.

Positive outcomes of mindfulness meditation were seen as much in clinical participants as they were demonstrated in non-clinical samples of adolescents. For example, self-rated anxiety, social skills and academic achievement of adolescents seemed to have improved (Burke, 2010). Even in a non-clinical adult sample, Mazzuchelli, Rees and Kane (2009) showed that there were significant improvements in psychological distress and several indices of well-being, suggesting that mindfulness meditation can protect individuals against



mental health problems. Some of the initial research on mindfulness meditation with the youth has also shown its benefits extending to well-being, such as development of affiliative trust, oneness motivation and spirituality (Snyder and Lopez, 2007). Another meta-analysis on mindfulness-based interventions in school demonstrated that experimental studies show strong effect sizes in cognitive domain as well as psychological variables such as stress, coping and resilience (Zenner, Herrnleben-Kurz and Walach, 2014)

Adolescence is a period of upheavals caused by different developmental changes that many of them find difficult to deal with. There are stressors experienced by them in different areas of life, such academics, relationship with peers, parents, siblings, partners, teachers, and the school or college. They often have to take decisions which may be confusing to them. Many a times due to the overwhelming stress in their lives there may be an onset of many psychiatric disorders. And therefore this period of challenges may need the adolescent to develop the relevant inner resources to cope effectively with stress. Different interventions are used with this population, such as Mindfulness-based interventions as we have seen so far have demonstrated efficacy and acceptance with the adolescent population, clinical as well as non-clinical. However, so far most studies are experimental, or quasi-experimental in nature that obscure an in-depth view of an adolescent's experience, while they go through mindfulness meditation.

Although existing qualitative literature on mindfulness meditation with a comprehensive discussion of subjective experiences of participants has appeared (Mason and Hargreaves 2001; Dobkin 2008; Morone, Lynch, et al. 2008; Kerr, Josyula and Littenberg 2011; Mackenzie, Carlson, et al. 2006), almost all the studies deal with clinical adult population, mostly from the western society. Since, there is a dearth of qualitative research done on the experiences of non-clinical adolescent participants, from the eastern society, specifically Indian society, the researcher studied college-going students (adolescents) from Mumbai, to explore their journey through mindfulness-meditation using a thematic analysis.

## **Methods**

### ***Participants***

Eight participants were a part of this study. Participants were adolescents (mean age: 18.38), 6 females and 2 males, who had no previous experience of mindfulness meditation. They were all students of a suburban college in Mumbai whom the researcher had approached through social media and classroom interaction. Ten students had initially enrolled themselves for the study, however, two of them were unwell due to which they dropped out before the study began. Individuals interested in participating were scheduled to meet the

researcher in order to orient them about the study and to establish that they had no previous training in mindfulness meditation and had not sought psychiatric services in the past, since the researcher was interested in studying a non-clinical sample which was naive to mindfulness meditation. Purposeful sampling, thus, was used to draw a sample that consisted of those adolescents who were inexperienced in mindfulness meditation, without any past or ongoing psychiatric treatment, interested, willing to contribute their experiences and had given their informed consent. This helped the researcher study each participant in-depth for the qualitative analysis.

### ***Procedure***

Subjects participated in a 7-day brief workshop on mindfulness meditation, during which they were instructed to learn formal mindfulness meditation techniques for 60 minutes on each of the 7 days, and practice mindfulness in all daily activities, followed by 4 days of home-based meditation practice. The workshop on mindfulness meditation included elements from the work of Jon Kabat-Zinn (2003) on Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction Program and the writings of Thich Nhat Hahn et al. (2001; 2008; 2010) on mindfulness meditation.

The techniques used in the workshop were: 1. Body-scan meditation, which comprised guided instructions given to participants to focus attention on each area of the body, with non-judgmental awareness. 2. Sitting meditation, where participants were meditating with a focus on breathing in a sitting position. 3. Eating meditation or Savoring, in which participants were instructed to eat slowly with a focus on every sensation, without any judgment. 4. Walking meditation involved slow mindful walking, being aware of every sensation as they walked in a natural rhythm. 5. Music meditation consisted of focused attention on the different instrumental sounds being played on a CD.

In addition to the techniques that were taught to participants in the workshop, they were also instructed to practice mindfulness in their daily activities, which involved observation of their own sensations and/or breathing throughout the day (e.g., slow mindful brushing, eating, and so on). They were told to practice any one or two of the meditation techniques for four days at home after the workshop was over, while they were simultaneously practicing mindfulness informally throughout the day.

At the end of the workshop and meditation practice at home, the participants were interviewed using a semi-structured interview, to gauge the participants' subjective experience of mindfulness meditation and whether they observed any changes in themselves. The interview started with open-ended questions such as "Tell me about your experience of mindfulness meditation." Probes tried to uncover aspects like their motivation to participate,

changes observed by them during the workshop and after the workshop in themselves, and such others. Ending questions focused on their learning from the workshop, their personal growth post-workshop, and their suggestions.

This interview format was designed to elicit participant information, which they perceived as significant enough to be shared. All the interviews were video and audio recorded with their prior consent. A verbatim written record was also taken while interviewing them.

### ***Analysis of data***

The interview data was analyzed using thematic analysis, with a realist approach of reporting participants' accounts in their own words. An advantage of this qualitative method is that it is flexible, which enables a wide range of interpretation from data. (Braun and Clarke, 2006) Themes were allowed to emerge from the data in an inductive way, with no pre-existing coding scheme. The data were transcribed verbatim, coded and the codes were later organized into recurrent patterns. Two coders independently identified words, phrases, ideas in the entire data which were semantically coherent and coded them. They, then, placed the codes into categories, which were named as the broad themes and sub-themes, after ensuring consistency and consensus in coding and theme generation. The level at which the themes were analyzed was semantic, because the researcher wanted to explain the experiences of the participants in a simple and straightforward manner, extracting themes from the explicit content of the transcribed data.

## **Results and Discussion**

### ***Emerging themes***

Four main themes with certain key sub-themes were identified from the interview transcripts of the adolescent participants. The first theme was 'positive expectations of participants from the mindfulness meditation workshop'. The second theme was 'perceived beneficial effects of the mindfulness meditation workshop'. The third theme was 'difficulties experienced by participants during the meditation practice'. And the fourth theme was 'positive perception of group experience of meditation'.

### **Positive expectations of participants from the mindfulness meditation workshop.**

Positive expectations of participants from the workshop describe their initial thoughts and beliefs about what the workshop would be and how it would benefit them. It was observed that many of the participants had the belief that meditation would help them in some way such as in focusing, feeling better, and so on. Since the participants, being students, had vacations, when the research was conducted, had free time and were, therefore, willing to learn something new. One participant elucidated how she was initially drawn to the

workshop, by interest, curiosity and a need to learn to focus, which would help her in her future career.

When my friend told me about this, I, not being a student of psychology, was interested and curious to know about positive psychology and mindfulness meditation; especially because I am appearing for UPSC I thought meditation might have benefits, like focusing.

Another participant explicated his expectations in terms of the potential benefits he had believed about meditation such as stress management, improved problem-solving ability, and tranquil quality of meditation.

When I thought about meditation, I understood that people who are stressed feel better when they do meditation. They feel positive energy, vibes, no tension and ideas to deal with problems. It improves health and helps the body be still. Stillness is important. It makes us patient and stable...I wanted to do things that would help me solve my problems, disturbing thoughts.

Another participant perceived that meditation can give her a philosophical perspective.

I had done it (yoga) before, but I had done it a long time ago. Meditation gives me an eye for things- a philosophical side.

Besides, being interested, and looking for benefits of meditation, some participants also had other motives for joining the workshop and adhering to mindfulness meditation, such as being motivated by the instructor (researcher) or liking the instructor, who had taught some of them and the presence of peers. In adolescence, instructors and peers, being some of the important role models, can influence their decision of participating in such activities.

One of the participants mentioned how peer presence had an influence on her motivation to join and adhere to meditation.

One reason for attending (meditation workshop) was selfish. This was an opportunity to get to meet my friends, so I just grabbed the opportunity.

Instructor related motivation was also seen in two of the female participants.

I joined because I like the instructor.

Instructor motivated me to join. I thought it would be interesting...I trust you and since you have asked me to join, it must be good.

This reflects that their initial positive inclination toward mindfulness meditation and this workshop motivated them to continue to attend the sessions as well as practice it on their own. This not only helped them follow the instructions, but also adhere to the entire workshop. Although Kabat-Zinn (1990) suggested that suspending judgment and not looking for benefits is the most useful expectation to have while joining meditation, it was observed

that positive expectations such as getting benefits out of mediation, like improved focus and stress management, built up an excitement to be a part of the study among the adolescent participants.

### **Perceived beneficial effects of the mindfulness meditation workshop.**

A perceived beneficial effect of the mindfulness meditation workshop would comprise a positive change or effect participants perceive to have occurred in themselves as a result of the workshop, on behavioral, emotional, physical, cognitive, spiritual and social levels.

One of the cognitive benefits that the participants discussed was *improved attentional skill set*, which many of them termed “improved concentration”. It was observed that many of them reported reduced multi-tasking. One of the participants narrated his experience as follows:

I became still, calm, and relaxed. My multi-tasking reduced. I have become more observant.

One of them described the development of a calm focus.

During sessions my concentration improved. I sensed that my nostrils were switching (while breathing alternating). I had no thoughts.

A participant explained how her alertness and observation showed improvement.

I could concentrate, eat properly. Not in a hurry. I can see improvement in concentration. I am alert now...I listen to lyrics too, not just the music.

In many of the participants’ accounts, it was observed that because of improved attention and self-observation, they also reported eating better, which has implications for adolescents’ health and mental health, e.g. dealing with adolescent malnutrition and body image related disturbances. One of the participants described thus.

Later, in the sessions, my concentration improved. I would concentrate on one task at a time.

I eat properly and switch off the TV (while eating).

*Improved concentration*, in terms of general attentional skills, has been demonstrated even in individuals with externalizing disorders, like ADHD (Burke, 2010). In the non-clinical population, Moore et al (2012) have demonstrated that even brief mindfulness meditation practice can neuro-cognitively improve self-regulated attentional efficiency.

On the cognitive level, another benefit that participants perceived was *thought clarity and improvement in decision making*, which involves understanding one’s own thoughts clearly and knowing the direction of one’s own future efforts.

One participant described this perceived change in him, in terms of improved observation, reduced confusion and improved decision making as follows:

I have become more thoughtful, stable and clear (in my thoughts). I observe better, with calmness inside. I have unconsciously started developing 'sakshibhav'...I have better clarity. I took advice when needed. My decision making improved. I understood that you can observe yourself, when you get sensations. Your focus can improve. It reduces confusion.

This improved observational skill toward oneself due to meditation, irrespective of the valence of the affect experienced by participants, was also seen in a qualitative study of Kerr, et al (2011).

Another participant also mentioned how meditation brought about a change in her self-awareness and clarity about future decision making.

I understood the positives and negatives in me. My positives can overcome difficulties in the path. I had confusion about changing college. I was scared about new people, new college. I didnt want to accept the change. Now, I am clear that I can accept the challenge, make new friends...I am back on track now. I understand my priorities and what to do next.

With reference to thought clarity and improved decision making, Mackenzie, et al. (2007) and Mason and Hargreaves (2001) have shown, similarly, that increased self-awareness was observed among the adult participants, which involved analysis, evaluation, and seeing life situations more clearly. This helps them make decisions by implementing this understanding into the future. Thus, we see the participants experiencing thought clarity which led to improved decision making.

On the emotional level, a sub-theme that emerged was *emotional regulation*, which involves reduction of negative emotions like anger, anxiety, and sadness. It also involves enhancement of positive emotions such as happiness, calmness, and increased stress tolerance.

One of the participants narrated how she could calm herself and control her anxiety by focusing on her breathing and being mindful of her inner state.

I was relaxed. My past memories, bad thoughts reduced. When train travelling is annoying, I can easily manage by diverting my mind to breathing. I now sense a calm state of body. It helps to know the heart beat-scared, surprised-monitor emotions to balance. When I concentrate on breathing, my body and mind become stable, calm. My thought frequency is similar even now, but the thought style has changed. It is more positive. I had mood swings initially. Now I am calm and settled, not nervous or anxious... Now I have learnt to control my emotions, thoughts. I became conscious of my patience. My worry or chain of negative thoughts has reduced.

Another participant also informed that there was reduced irritation, feeling of calmness and stress management by controlling her mind.

When I practiced, it helped reflecting, feeling calm, irritation during summer reduced. My anger was reduced. If I calm down, other things or people don't disturb me so much. Handling stress is better. I motivate myself to cheer up. Focus on breathing makes things seem positive. One has to focus and control the mind... It helps well. Generally, in the evenings I would feel a certain tension. Nobody knew about it, although I felt it. Now, I feel a change, by gently getting my mind back in control.

A lot of participants described that their anger had reduced, their stress was under control and due to a focus on breathing, and they could calm themselves. Their heightened self-awareness helped them regulate emotions by recognizing them early, through a process of monitoring bodily sensations. Chambers et al (2009) suggest that mindfulness meditation helps develop the meta-cognitive skill to choicelessly allow emotions and thoughts to come and go, which, further, is linked to a gap between awareness and these mental events. This gives the mind autonomy to consciously choose adaptive strategies that suit a person's interests. This may further enhance personal well-being and a sense of meaningfulness in life. Chambers et al (2009) also cite neuro-cognitive evidence regarding how emotional regulation takes place in which neural circuits or brain areas get altered as a consequence of mindfulness meditation practice. Their review also adds that even brief practice of mindfulness meditation can bring about these positive changes in individuals.

The fourth beneficial effect was the *development of self-confidence* in participants, the feeling that they are capable of bringing control in their lives, a sense of empowerment.

A participant explained in the context of a life event, how she noticed a change in her self-confidence due to mindfulness meditation.

My confidence was lost due to one incident. My family was hurt because of me. I tried gaining confidence by competing (in events/competitions). I joined kung fu for that. It helped me, but a pleasant confidence came after mindfulness meditation...I saw a positive change after doing meditation... Mindfulness meditation gave me strength and confidence in myself. I feel lively and look forward to initiating (a change). I feel like that now. I could see the positive side in me. You can do something. It feels good, confident.

Another participant showed a similar shift in his sense of empowerment as follows:

During the first session I thought – will I be able to do it? My attitude is negative usually. After sometime I become confident... After the sessions I was chatting with the other participants, I shared my experience with my mom. I gained confidence that I can teach something. I felt self-confident, positive... After the workshop, I learnt to try and not give up. My dad also encouraged this idea.



Many of the participants stated that they felt a sense of mastery over their own thoughts and feelings, a sense of control over stress and empowerment. This is again reflected in the work of Chambers et al (2009), wherein we see that a sense of autonomy in choosing how to react adaptively and controlling distressing feelings, would indeed create a feeling of empowerment due to more purposeful and functional behavior. This certainly has implications for mental well-being.

A fifth sub-theme that emerged was the development of a *spiritual attitude*, which comprises an attitude of calm acceptance, detachment from outcomes of endeavors, and compassion.

A participant described the practice of mindfulness meditation in these terms:

No action disturbed me. It was helping me relax... you just cannot do anything about certain things. It will happen the way it is going to happen. Do your deeds, not let it affect you. Observe its effects. If attached I get hurt. Mid semester, a guy troubled me. I tried to change him, but it affected me. Now, I am detaching myself from such people, events.... Now, I accept change. I felt I could accept challenges.

According to another participant, her compassion improved.

Initially I would reject tasteless food, but eating meditation helped me to be more compassionate and accepting toward food. Although, some difficulty would remain in eating, but now I am appreciative of efforts.

Another participant revealed how she experienced a positive change in her, and how she came to feel a sense of gratitude.

I could see reduction of nightmares that would be stuck in my mind, their intensity reduced...now, I am mindful. I open up to positives, blessings of life.

These views of the participants show that the practice of mindfulness meditation may support spiritual growth. *Spiritual attitude* or the development of spirituality was seen, not in terms of any religious behavior or thought process, but in terms of compassion, acceptance, and a sense of gratitude. Except one participant, no other participant explicitly stated this as his/her goal or motivation for joining the meditation workshop, however, most of them experienced this change in them, moreover, due to the development of non-judgmental openness to different experiences, in the process of learning mindfulness. This is seen in adults too, even with health or mental health difficulties (Mason and Hargreaves 2001; Burke 2010; Mackenzie et al. 2007; Dobkin 2007; Shapiro, Schwartz and Santerre 2002)

Another beneficial effect that most of the participants experienced was *feeling energetic*. This involves feeling fresh, rejuvenated, and active.

One participant described his inner state in the following way:



I felt body scan was very interesting. I was feeling heat in my body. I was relaxed, but, energized...I felt active and fresh now...I don't feel sleepy that often, especially after the last session.

Another participant stated that she felt physically energetic.

My stamina improved. Initially, I used to be tired, now there is improvement. Often post-meditation session most participants feel immediate physical and mental invigorating effects (Morone et al. 2008). According to Buddhist practice of mindfulness meditation, relaxation of the mind is often an effect of this exercise, however, psychologists suggest that it reduces arousal, which lead to neuro-physiological benefits (Chambers, et, al. 2009)

The seventh sub-theme that emanated from participant responses was *perceived relationship/social skill set*. This involves calming others when distressed, having patience with others, and interacting with others.

A participant narrated an incident in which she exhibited this social skill.

My grandpa was about to get hospitalized when my mom was hyper. But, I was calm and it helped me support my mom.

Another participant described how he could keep his calm and be patient with his friends.

On the fourth day, (in the workshop), my friends and I had planned to go out. I started planning accordingly. But, later I got irritated because they were late. I could control my irritation. I started calming myself down with music meditation...I have learnt to be patient after the workshop.

A participant also said that her interactions with her family improved.

I started interacting more at home (after meditation).

According to Chambers et al. (2009), "emotional regulation generally refers to the process of modulating one or more aspects of an emotional experience or response". This would also engender the interpersonal domain, thus it may have implication for transferrable skills between people, such as a mother and child. Therefore, some of the participants showed this emotional regulation skill in interpersonal situations.

### **Difficulties experienced by participants during and after the meditation workshop.**

Difficulties experienced by a participant, during and after the meditation workshop, entail negative experiences or challenges like distracting thoughts and images, disturbing memories, and physical discomfort.

One participant described how she initially experienced *distracting thoughts*, i.e. thoughts that overpowered the mind to the extent that it was difficult to focus, which rendered the meditation practice challenging.

Initially, there were a lot of thoughts. It was not easy to sit still. Things in the surroundings also distracted. After practicing, negative thoughts reduced. It is difficult to forget past negative experiences; initially it is difficult to control or balance. Now, I have learnt to control emotions and thoughts and stay in the present and focus on it.

Most of the participants attested to this negative experience as *current stressors* in their lives took over their thought process and distracted them in the initial few sessions. A participant described how a stressor was engrossing her.

During body scan meditation I had thoughts about my ailing mom. I was in the same thought process.

*Disturbing memories* which were sad or disappointing (in mood), of past negative experiences, often made it difficult for participants to meditate, as stated by one of the participants.

Sometimes, I felt alone during meditation. Bad memories, sad, disappointing kept coming.

Many also claimed experiencing *physical discomfort and uneasiness* while meditating, such as stiffness, itchiness, and aches. Some participants who had certain ailments like asthma, swollen tonsils found it especially challenging to focus.

One such account is as follows:

While sitting, in meditation, my back pain distracted me. I had a problem in breathing, not comfortable in sitting meditation. I had breathing problem because I have asthma, so it was difficult to concentrate.

General restlessness and discomfort was described by the following participant:

It was difficult to sit still in meditation. There was pain in the back, itchiness in the nose, (and my) legs were numb. In the meditation, back, lower back, leg, (and) calf pain later reduced.

These difficulties were also observed in Mason and Hargreaves' (2001) participants' initial negative experiences, which they slowly overcame in the course of practice as they learnt mindfulness skills.

**Positive perception of group-experience of meditation.** Positive perception of group experience of meditation refers to participants' feeling of comfort in the group and inclination toward the group experience of meditation. Members felt that that being in a group reduced stressors such as loneliness, increased their bonding and a collective identity as a meditation

group, and motivated them to adhere to the workshop on each of the days despite challenges, such as ill-health.

One participant shared how the group experience reduced negative feelings in her.

While practicing alone, bad memories would pop up. When with the group, I never think that way...In class it's more comfortable because my friends were there...I need company, otherwise I feel lonely and lost.

Another participant discussed how a collective identity as a meditation group provided her comfort to practice.

In the group, it was nice. Listening to people's experiences was good. I felt that people are meditating similar to me. This is my first time of meditation, so group meditation is better.

For many participants, being in the meditation group helped them focus well because of guided instructions, assurance of proper method being followed in the group due to which their motivation and adherence to the meditation workshop was high, as discussed by the following participant:

Being in a group motivated me. Left to myself, discipline, commitment reduces. I procrastinate when practicing alone. If I am motivated, I will do it alone, if not I'll do it with the group.

Another participant spoke on similar lines about the group experience.

There is confidence that others are there. Doing it with them is good. We don't do it honestly when alone. With the group it happens properly.

Thus, it was seen that the group practice of meditation was perceived positively by participants as they would attend the workshop, since it provided a supportive environment to practice meditation, built close connections with others and inspiration to continue to hold on to the practice. They developed a sense of community and stability, where they built bonds with others in a similar developmental stage of life. This was evident in some of the earlier qualitative studies (Mackenzie, et al. 2006; Mason and Hargreaves, 2001) as well.

### **Conclusion**

Through this qualitative inquiry, several themes were unearthed from participant responses to interviews, which reflected their subjective experiences of mindfulness meditation. It was observed that the adolescent participants went through a lot of changes as they underwent this process of mindfulness at the psychological, physical and spiritual levels.

In sum, mindfulness meditation did show promising effects on naïve adolescent college-going participants even after a brief practice. This was guided by their positive expectations about this exercise and the benefits it would yield. These positive expectations were seen

being translated into an excitement and motivation to participate in the mindfulness meditation workshop, which stimulated their adherence to the workshop to some extent. This adherence was also supported by group practice in the workshop, as a collective identity started developing in the participants.

Beneficial effects of mindfulness meditation, attested by participants, were many. These were - better attention, thought clarity, emotional regulation, self-confidence, improved relationship/social skills and others, for which many of the participants gave acknowledgment. Previous research also demonstrated similar effects, and projected better light on the mechanisms of these benefits, such as neuro-physiological benefits, as discussed above.

Since the participants were beginners, they had negative experiences, such as distractions and discomfort. However, it was also observed that many of them gradually overcame these difficulties with practice, and determination. Often, they came up with solutions to these problems themselves, such as pushing adamant thoughts away to focus on the present experience. These solutions often emanated from the creation of an observant/mindful self.

Given that this study has its limitations, being a small-scale qualitative research with a small sample, that only studied adolescents, it is hoped that the findings of this study opens up avenues for future research on non-clinical population of different developmental stages of many different cultures to gain an insight into their experiences, difficulties and ways of enhancing their well-being, as an important goal of positive psychology.

This study also has the potential of being taken up within another qualitative methodological framework, such as a grounded theory, to create a theoretical model that explains the mechanisms at play as non-clinical Indian adolescents experience mindfulness meditation as a novel concept and method of practice.

### **Acknowledgement**

I would sincerely like to thank Kapila Khandvala College of Education, Mumbai, for giving me the opportunity to work on a paper with an interesting topic, as also for organizing an enlightening national workshop on positive mental health. After attending the workshop, I was inspired by Dr. Mahendra Sharma's hands-on training on mindfulness meditation, which enabled me to practice it myself, see the benefits, and fuelled the urge to work on the same topic. I also deeply thank counseling psychologist and researcher Ms. Akshata Sawant for coding the transcribed data, as a second coder. In addition, I am grateful to all the student participants, who shared their experiences with the researcher.

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**A CORRELATIONAL STUDY ON 'HAPPINESS' AND 'SELF-EFFICACY'  
QUOTIENT AMONG THE ADOLESCENTS OF PAWAR PUBLIC SCHOOL,  
CHANDIVALI**

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**Abstract**

*Positive Psychology has gained a lot of attention in the scientific community in the past decade. Mental health practitioners have realized that instead of training your brain and thoughts 'not' to do something, it works wonders when it is trained to 'do' or 'think' using the person's strengths. Instead of overemphasizing person's weaknesses or limitations, it is scientifically proven that working on your strengths and counting on them even in challenging situations improves feeling of happiness and self-efficacy. A lot of research is done in recent times on students, especially adolescents, on various parameters of Positive Psychology. This study aims at finding relation between happiness and self-efficacy, among the adolescents. Two tests selected for this study are Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ) developed by psychologists Michael Argyle and Peter Hills at Oxford University. The other test is Mindfulness-Based Self-Efficacy Scale – Revised (MSES-R), developed by Bruno A. from CayounMiCBT Institute, University of Tasmania. These two tests were selected because happiness and self-efficacy are very important in the process of growing up, for an adolescent. The study was conducted on 125 girls and boys of Grade 9 and 10, studying in the school. These grades were selected as stress starts building up from Grade 9 and reaches its peak by Grade 10. The OHQ and MSES-R tests were administered as part of the pilot project under the Life Skills Programme, to do a correlational study between happiness and self-efficacy score.*

**Key words:** *Adolescents, Happiness, Self-efficacy, Positive Psychology, Positive wellbeing*



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**Introduction**

Positive Psychology is the scientific study of individual strengths that help the person to perform well. It is the study of happiness and wellbeing. Traditionally, the focus of Psychology has been on dysfunction, i.e. people with mental illness or other psychological problems and how to treat them. Positive psychology, in contrast, is a relatively new field that examines how ordinary people can become happier and function to their fullest potential. Positive psychology is the study of the conditions and processes that contribute to the flourishing or optimal functioning of people, groups, and institutions. (Gable, Shelly L.; Haidt, Jonathan; 2005) Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi define Positive Psychology as "the



scientific study of positive human functioning and flourishing on multiple levels that include the biological, personal, relational, institutional, cultural, and global dimensions of life." The first generation Psychologists had focused three important functions: curing mental illness, helping people become more productive and IQ assessment for selection or elimination. Post WWII, the primary focus of psychology shifted to Clinical treatment and abnormalities. The humanist thinkers such as Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow helped regain interest 'happiness' and the positive aspects of human nature.

In 1998, Seligman was elected as the President of the American Psychological Association and positive psychology became the theme of his term. Today, Seligman is widely viewed as the father of contemporary positive psychology. In 2002, the first International Conference on Positive Psychology was held. In 2009, the first World Congress on Positive Psychology took place in Philadelphia. Some of the concepts studied by Positive Psychology are happiness, mindfulness, flow, hope, positive thinking and resilience. Research on Positive Psychology has shown that people are generally happy. Wealth does not always equate to happiness. Some of the best ways to deal with failure are to develop social support system. Work satisfaction and happiness are important factors for well-being. Most importantly, the research shows that people can 'learn' to be happier by developing optimism, gratitude and altruism.

### **Literature Review**

Does Happiness Lead to Success? Numerous studies (Lyubomirsky, Sonja; King, Laura; Diener, Ed - 2005) show that happy individuals generally are successful on various fronts in their life, such as marriage, health, work etc. Study on the benefits of frequent positive affect suggest that the happiness-success link exists not only because success makes people happy, but also because positive affect stimulates success. Three classes of evidences -cross-sectional, longitudinal and experimental - were documented by the researchers to test their model. The results reveal that happiness is linked to various successful outcomes as well as behaviors leading to success.

In a study on gratitude and subjective well-being in early adolescence with a specific focus on examining gender differences (Jeffrey J. Froh, Charles Yurkewicz, Todd B. Kashdan; 2009), development of gratitude was examined among 154 students to identify benefits from its experience and expression. Students completed measures of subjective well-being, social support, prosocial behavior and physical symptoms. The study found positive association between gratitude and positive affect, life satisfaction, optimism, social support and prosocial behavior.

Happiness among children and adolescents is studied extensively in combination with various variables. Veenhoven (1995) defined happiness or life satisfaction as the degree to which one judges the quality of one's life favorably. Happiness is a strong measure of subjective well-being. The study of subjective well-being, human strengths, and positive psychological outcomes is growing exponentially (Kahneman, Diener, & Schwarz, 1999; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). It has resulted in the creation of new measures based on clear definitions, strong theoretical foundation, and rigorous methodology.

Perceived parental rearing style, self-esteem and self-criticism were studied by Helen Cheng and Adrian Furnham (2004) as 'Predictors of Happiness'. This study tried to check, to what extent parental care, self-esteem and self-criticism predicted self-rated happiness in a normal, non-clinical population of young people in their late teens and early 20s. Three hundred and sixty-five participants completed four questionnaires: Parental Bonding Instrument, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, Society and the Adolescent Self-Image and Self-Criticism Questionnaire and the Oxford Happiness Inventory. Regressions showed self-esteem (the positive five items) to be the most dominant and positively correlated with happiness. Maternal care was a significant correlate of both self-esteem and self-criticism. Maternal care was the only direct correlate of happiness when paternal and maternal rearing styles were compared together suggesting that the warmth showed by mothers towards their children was particularly beneficial in increasing the offspring's scores on self-reported happiness.

John Maltby, Liza Day, Louise Barber (2005) examined the relationship between forgiveness and happiness using a two-dimensional model of happiness (hedonic and eudaimonic happiness). Hedonic happiness also means striving for maximization of pleasure (positive affect) and minimization of pain (negative affect). On the other hand, eudaimonic happiness focuses on the person as a fully functioning entity where happiness or good life is much beyond the 'pleasure seeking' act. Two hundred and twenty four United Kingdom students were administered the Enright Forgiveness Inventory, The Depression-Happiness Scale and the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire – Short-form. The findings suggest that forgiveness accounts for statistically significant variance, though quite low, in both hedonic and eudaimonic happiness and the relationships may vary depending on which aspect of happiness is being considered.

In a study on spirituality, religiousness and happiness in children (Mark D. Holder, Ben Coleman and Judi M. Wallace; 2008), the relation between spirituality and happiness was assessed in 320 children aged 8–12 from public and private (i.e. faith-based) schools. Children's spirituality, but not the rituals related to the faith they follow (e.g., attending



church, praying, and meditating), was strongly linked to their happiness. Children who were more spiritual were happier. Spirituality accounted for between 3 and 26% of the unique variance in children's happiness depending on the measures. Temperament was also a predictor of happiness, but spirituality remained a significant predictor of happiness even after removing the variance associated with temperament. These results suggest strategies to enhance happiness in children.

A longitudinal study on self-efficacy beliefs as determinants of positive thinking and happiness among adolescents, examined the concomitant and longitudinal impact of self-efficacy beliefs on subjective well-being in adolescence, namely positive thinking and happiness (Gian Vittorio Caprara; et. al.; 2006). For this study, positive thinking was seen as the latent dimension underlying life satisfaction, self-esteem and optimism. Happiness was defined as the difference between positive and negative affects, as they are experienced in different day to day situations. The findings confirm that affective and interpersonal, social self-efficacy beliefs do have their impact on positive thinking and happiness both concurrently and longitudinally.

### **Method**

The purpose of this study is to find relation between happiness and self-efficacy among the adolescents. These two variables are selected because, as developmental psychologists have described, adolescence as the stage of 'turmoil' and 'identity conflict'. This is the age when students are under a lot of stress related to their social life, academic achievements, aspirations and growing urge for independence and identity. The Oxford Happiness Questionnaire and Mindfulness-Based Self-Efficacy Scale – Revised (MSES-R) were administered as part of the pilot project under the Life Skills Program, to do a correlational study between happiness and self-efficacy score. Purpose of this study is to conduct an intervention program based on happiness, gratitude, mindfulness and forgiving, which are the concepts of Positive Psychology and subjective well-being.

For the purpose of this study, happiness is defined as a mental or emotional state of well-being marked by positive or pleasant emotions that also get reflected in positive actions. For the sake of this study, we have accepted the definition of self-efficacy by Psychologist Albert Bandura. He has defined self-efficacy as one's belief in one's ability to succeed in specific situations. Sense of self-efficacy can play a major role in how the person takes on the challenges.

**Participants:**

The study was conducted on 125 girls and boys of Grade 9 and 10, studying in the school. These grades were selected as stress starts building up from Grade 9 and reaches its peak by Grade 10. Out of 125, some of the entries were disqualified due to incomplete data. Finally, entries from 109 students (65 boys and 44 girls) in the age group of 14 to 16 (Grade 9 and 10) were selected for further data analysis.

**Research Design:**

This is a correlational study on the students' happiness and self-efficacy. Happiness Quotient and Self-Efficacy score of the students from Grade 9 and 10 are compared to analyze the correlation between the two.

The research hypotheses:

- There will be a positive correlation between Happiness Quotient and Self-Efficacy score of the students.
- There will be no significant difference between the Happiness Quotients of male and female participants.
- There will be no significant difference between the Self-Efficacy scores of male and female participants

**Measures:**

Two tests selected for this study are Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ) and Mindfulness-Based Self-Efficacy Scale (MSES-R). The Oxford Happiness Questionnaire is developed by Michael Argyle and Peter Hills of Oxford Brookes University, and originally published in 2002 in the Journal of Personality and Individual Differences. It is a measure of 'subjective well-being' or happiness. This is a self-reporting questionnaire containing 29 items that are marked from 1 to 6 on the extent to which the participant agrees or disagrees with the statement. Some of the statements are reversed to nullify participants' biases.

Mindfulness-Based Self-Efficacy Scale – Revised (MSES-R), developed by Bruno A. Cayoun (MiCBT Institute, University of Tasmania), is also a 22 item self-reporting questionnaire, where participants give their responses from 0 to 4, 0 being 'not at all agree' and 4 as 'completely agree'. This client-rated questionnaire is also used to measure the change in levels of perceived self-efficacy before, during, and after mindfulness-based therapy programs. It is used for both clinical and research purposes, with the advantage of measuring the consequences, rather than just the processes, of mindfulness training. The lower the score, the lower self-efficacy is in using mindfulness skills. Thus, practicing

mindfulness techniques should increase the scores, both on sub scales and in total. The MSES was originally a 35-item self-report questionnaire constructed to measure the change in levels of self-efficacy before, during and following mindfulness-based therapy programs. The MSES-R is a shorter (22-item) version that is based on the psychometric data collected from a community sample (N = 521). It is a valid and reliable measure, with a 6-factor structure. The test has six subscales of self-efficacy. Emotion Regulation (subscale 1) relates to an involuntary or subconscious emotional response that is well modulated and falls within the expected normal range of responses. Equanimity (subscale 2) relates to the ability to normalise difficulties and prevent reactivity. Social Skills (subscale 3) relates to social abilities in the broader sphere of interaction. Distress Tolerance (subscale 4) also relates to emotional responses, it is a voluntary one, which inhibits avoidance of discomfort. Taking Responsibility (subscale 5) relates to clarity of interpersonal boundaries and locus of control. Interpersonal Effectiveness (subscale 6) relates to the ability to connect with others within the intimate sphere of relationships. These have all been identified as important skills that improve with mindfulness in the literature. This scale also has some of the items in 'reversed' format to nullify biases.

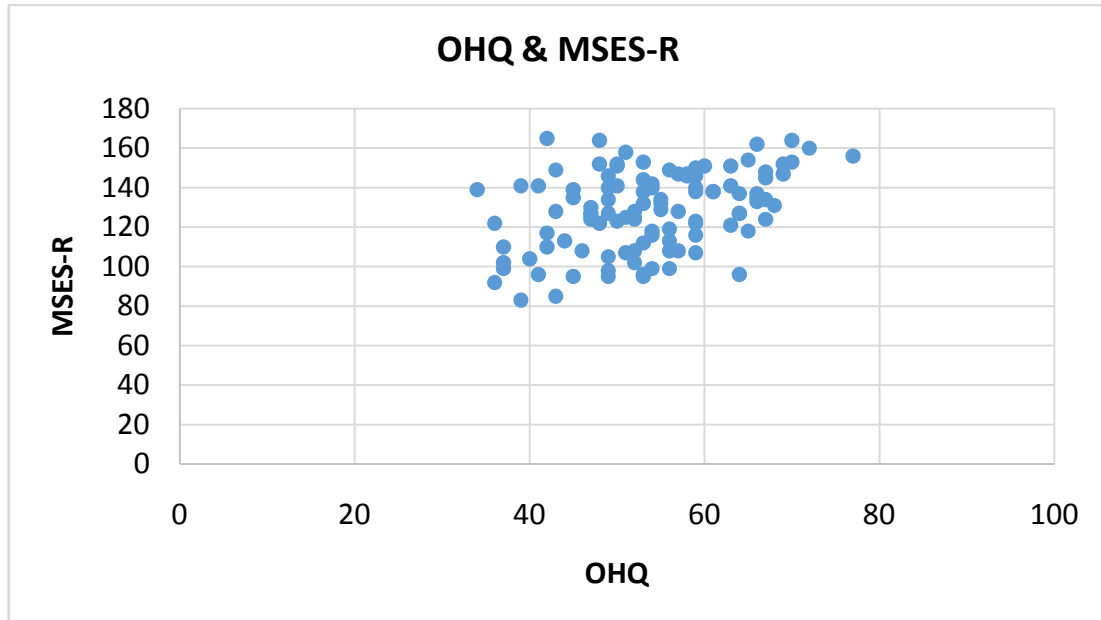
These two tests were selected because happiness and self-efficacy are very important in the process of growing up, for an adolescent. Their attributes and meanings of these concepts also may differ depending on the situation, family and peer influence. Also, the two tests can be used at regular intervals in the course of further study to examine the impact of intervention strategies based on the concepts of Positive Psychology. They will provide a rich source of 'pre-post' data for further analysis.

**Procedure:**

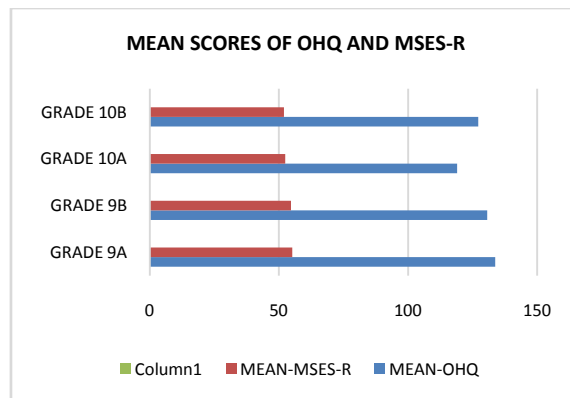
The tests were administered as part of the pilot project under the Life Skills Programme, to study the relation between happiness and self-efficacy. The self-report questionnaires were distributed to the students during Life-Skills Programme in four small groups as per the divisions (9A, 9B, 10A, 10B). The instructions were given to the group and repeated if required. Each statement was read out one at a time, to ensure that all the participants understood the statements and marked their responses honestly. All the questionnaires were marked with participants' grade and roll number to avoid any bias while scoring. Raw scores were further analysed statistically using computerised programmes.

**Results:**

The Happiness Quotient (HQ) and Self-Efficacy score (SE) were calculated from the participants’ responses on the two tests. The following scatter-gram (Figure 1) shows the correlation between the two scores ( $r$  0.04).



**Figure 1:** Positive correlation between Happiness and Self-efficacy



**Figure 2:** Comparison of mean OHQ scores and mean MSES-R scores

Mean OHQ and mean MSES-R scores of the four sections are compared in the above graph. Though SE scores differ very marginally, the mean Happiness Quotient of 9A seems to be greater than that of the other sections. Though mean HQ of the three sections falls in the range of 4.5 (9A=4.56, 9B=4.52, 10B=4.4), the mean HQ of 10A is significantly lower (4.09).

**Table 1: Mean, SD and 'r'**

TEST	BOYS (N=65)	GIRLS (N=44)
MSES-R	MEAN SE =52.46	MEAN SE = 55.97
	SD=10.6.66	SD = 8.49
OHQ	MEAN HQ = 4.46	MEAN HQ = 3
	$\sigma = 17.67$	$\sigma = 0.7$
<i>r</i>	0.04	

The mean self-efficacy score of boys is 52.46 and of girls is 55.97. Mean HQ of boys is 4.46 and that of girls is 3.

### Discussion

The correlation between Happiness Quotient and Self-Efficacy score is 0.04 (Figure 1, Table 1). Though not statistically significant, it supports first hypothesis to the extent that there is 'positive correlation' between happiness and self-efficacy. This is an important data to compare at further intervals as the intervention programme begins.

Mean Happiness Quotient of male participants is 4.46 and that of females is 3 (Table 1). Score in the range of 4 to 5 means the person is pretty happy. The score of 3 is rather neutral – neither happy nor unhappy. It is interesting to see that the happiness score of boys is significantly more than the happiness score of girls. There can be various possible reasons for that – socio-cultural, biological or academic. There is scope for further research in this area. At the same time, the value of  $\sigma 17.67$  shows the presence of skewed data in HQ of boys. Boys seem to have higher average happiness score but the data is skewed, with a lot of variation in their scores. The second null hypothesis is rejected as there is significant difference between the happiness score of boys and girls.

The third hypothesis is supported by the mean scores on MSES-R of boys and girls (Table 1). Mean SE of boys (52.46) and girls (55.97) are not statistically significant, proving the hypothesis. The measure of self-efficacy needs to be further studied in the context of the impact of intervention program based on mindfulness and positive wellbeing.

The next phase of this study is to design and conduct an intervention programme based on the concepts of Positive Psychology and Wellbeing. The results from this pilot study are the base for the intervention programme that guides students to practice the ideas of 'Positive Psychology' to deal with stress and work on strengths. The intervention will involve mindfulness-based practices like yoga and meditation, along with other techniques of Positive Psychology, like savouring, building your strengths, gratitude, forgiveness, going beyond self, etc. The two tests administered at regular intervals and at the end of the intervention

programme should generate important data for comparative study and to check the impact of intervention.

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## A STUDY OF LIFE SKILLS AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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### **Abstract**

*Education plays an important role towards the overall development of human beings. School education helps in the formation of a sound personality in the child. School education can broadly be classified as elementary (class I to VIII) and secondary (IX-XII) education. Today, more and more societal pressures, greater complexity, uncertainty and diversity, rapid changes in the environment and continued deprivation put student's lives facing an uncertain future. Life skills are an essential for students who are the future of our country. Life skills are psychosocial competencies and contribute greatly to achieving psychological, social and mental well-being. WHO, UNICEF and UNFPA listed 10 skills as the most essential. Five skills which are decision making, problem solving, critical thinking, effective communication, and self-awareness have been particularly considered for the present study.*

**Keywords:** *Life skills, decision making, problem solving, critical thinking, effective communication, and self-awareness*



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### **Introduction:**

In the fast paced modern world, the younger generation is prone to conflicts, stress related problems, anxiety etc. To prevent these problems and to lead the citizens of tomorrow to a bright future some intervention is required. Life skill is such an intervention that will help to deal with such problems. To guide the younger generation through such a critical phase of life the teachers have to play an important role as they have to continuously interact with adolescents. Therefore the teachers should be aware of the life skill education and have a positive attitude towards it. Only then the teachers will be able to help adolescents deal with the problems.

Life skills, according to the World Health Organization, are abilities of individuals to adapt and develop positive behaviors that empower them to manage challenges in their day-to-day lives. Essentially, life skills are capabilities that help individuals strengthen themselves against the realities of life. Life skills are important as they enable individuals to think



rationally and take positive actions to ensure personal well-being and productive social relationships. Life skills, sometimes called basic skills, are the skills that are used in leading a successful life.

Adolescence, the second decade of life, is a period of rapid development, when young people acquire new capacities and are faced with many new situations that create not only opportunities for progress, but also risk to health and wellbeing (World Health Organization, 1998).

#### Life Skills – An Overview

- a) Self awareness: It is a probe into ones own self, in relation to the surroundings in which we live. It is an unbiased assessment about ones character, capacity, capability, competency, desire and dislikes.
- b) Communication: It is the most important part of the life skill education. Communication is the process by which information and understanding transfer from one person to other.
- c) Critical Thinking: It is the ability to analyze information and experiences in an objective manner. Critical thinking is making objective judgments about choices and risks.
- d) Decision making: Decision making is to choose from the varied options based on the existing knowledge of the topic under consideration keeping in mind the positive and negative consequences of each of the option.
- e) Problem solving: Enables us to deal with the problems in our life in a constructive manner.

#### Need

Adolescence is the transition period where adolescents face problems of various kinds. Life skills help adolescents translate knowledge, attitudes and values into healthy behaviour, such as acquiring the ability to adopt healthy behaviour that improve their lives in general. B.Ed. students are prospective teachers who have to continuously deal with adolescents. They have to help students to develop the life skills and thus enable them to face the challenges of life and succeed. But to help students develop life skills the B.Ed. students should be aware of the importance of life skill and have a positive attitude towards it. Hence the researcher decided to study the level of life skills in prospective teachers.

#### Aim of the Study:

- The major aim of the present research was to study the life skills among secondary school students

#### Objectives of the Study:

- To compare the life skills among secondary school students on the basis of standard in which they are studying.



- To compare the life skills among secondary school students on the basis of gender.
- To compare the life skills among secondary school students on the basis of family structure.

### **Hypotheses of the Study:**

Following null-hypotheses were formulated to test the hypotheses.

- There is no significant difference between the life skills among secondary school students in terms of standard in which they are studying.
- There is no significant difference between the life skills among secondary school students in terms of gender.
- There is no significant difference between the life skills among secondary school students in terms of Type of family structure.

### **Methodology of the study:**

The present study is of the descriptive method as it deals with secondary school students' *present* level of the life skills. In the present study comparative type of method were used.

The Comparative part of the study is used to compare the life skills among secondary school students on the basis of Gender, Type of Family Structure, and standard in which they are studying.

### **Sample and Data Collection:**

A sample of 100 (50 from VIII and 50 from IX Standard of Secondary Schools Students) was surveyed. The method of sampling used was simple random sampling.

### **Tools for Data Collection:**

The following tool was used by the investigator:

- Rating Scale

(Based on Skills for Everyday Living by Perkins & Mincemoyer (2003))

### **Techniques of Data Analysis:**

The following descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were used for data analysis:

- i) Descriptive Analysis (with Mean and Standard Deviation )
- ii) Inferential Analysis (with t-test)

### **Analysis & Interpretation:**

The answer sheets of life skills were scored and responses of the students for each statement was separately analysed & interpreted and details are given below.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the life skills among secondary school students in terms of standard in which they are studying.

**Table No. 1: Mean Differences of VIII & IX standard students of Secondary School**

Standard	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value	LOS
VIII	45	92.578	13.677	0.746	NS
IX	55	93.436	12.519		

Table values: 2.021 at 0.05 level and 2.704 at 0.01 levels. Table 1 reveals that the computed t – value (0.746) is less than the table value. It is not significant at both the levels. Hence above stated null hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between the life skills among secondary school students in terms of gender.

**Table No. 2: Mean Differences of Male and Female students of Secondary School**

Gender	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value	LOS
Male	51	94.941	12.494	0.1389	NS
Female	49	91.082	13.335		

Table values: 2.021 at 0.05 level and 2.704 at 0.01 levels. Table 2 reveals that the computed t – value (0.746) is less than the table value. It is not significant at both the levels. Hence above stated null hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference between the life skills among secondary school students in terms of Type of family structure.

**Table No. 3: Mean Differences of Nuclear and Joint Family Structure of Secondary Schoolstudents**

Type of Family Structure	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value	LOS
Nuclear	75	92.24	13.327	0.258	NS
Joint	25	95.48	11.854		

Table values: 2.021 at 0.05 level and 2.704 at 0.01 levels. Table 3 reveals that the computed t – value (0.746) is less than the table value. It is not significant at both the levels. Hence above stated null hypothesis is accepted.

### Findings:

- There is no significant difference between the life skills among secondary school students in terms of standard in which they are studying.
- There is no significant difference between the life skills among secondary school students in terms of gender.

- There is no significant difference between the life skills among secondary school students in terms of Type of family structure.

### **Conclusion**

Life skills are abilities by which an individual can be helped to become successful in living a dynamic and rewarding life by instilling in him, intrapersonal qualities such as self-awareness, self-esteem and self-confidence, which will make him aware of his strengths and weaknesses. As a result, the individual is able to recognize opportunities at hand. Rational decision-making and appropriate Problem-solving comes natural to him. He has good control over his emotions and feelings, and he has optimum knowledge of relaxation techniques as well.

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## PERCEPTIONS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' WELL-BEING AND SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS

Ms. Gomathi Jatin Shah

### Abstract

Twenty-first century has evolved into an era of cut throat competition, where every individual is aspiring high and wants to be at par excellence with the 'competing others'. Each one wants to be 'The Unique Identified Individual'. In such a demanding era, excellence is a challenge, difficult to attain by considering a stereotype conventional pathway pertaining to a single aspect or discipline in an isolated manner. Concurrently it is inevitable that technology has considerably pervaded the lives of students leaving hardly any time for them to connect to their near and dear ones. Are these students capable of coping with today's challenges? , Are these students satisfied and happy with what they are doing to thrive for success? , Are they stressed out and prone to mental hardships very often? etc. are some of the few questions that keep nagging the researcher. This led to raise the question of students' well-being, which is of utmost importance for flourishing. In view of the above discussion, this paper captures students' perceptions of their well-being and social connectedness. A quantitative research design is used to determine the relationship between well-being and social connectedness and results are discussed.

**Keywords:** Twenty-first century, Well-Being, Social Connectedness, Students



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### Background of the study

Globalisation, Informatisation, Innovation etc. are the different terms that are often heard of in any field that you come across. The rise of a global society, driven by technology and communication developments are shaping children, the future citizens of the world into 'global citizens', intelligent people with a broad range of skills and knowledge to apply to a competitive, information based society.<sup>1</sup> The twenty-first century has been gripped by unseemingly challenging complexities. This era has evolved into an era of cut throat competition, where every individual is aspiring high and wants to be at par excellence with the 'competing others'. Each one wants to be 'The Unique Identified Individual'. In such a

<sup>1</sup> Chinnamai,S. (2005). *Effects of Globalisation on Education and Culture*. Paper presented at ICDE International Conference

demanding era, excellence is a challenge, difficult to attain by considering a stereotype conventional pathway pertaining to a single aspect or discipline in an isolated manner.

Educational plans or aspirations are considered an important indicator of adolescents' educational attainment (Wilson and Wilson, 1992).<sup>2</sup> The field of education has become highly competitive and equally demanding. Students' life has become extremely stressful, with ample opportunities on one hand and extreme anxieties on the other. This has led to underachievement, unhappiness, pessimism, depression, suicides, and many more unacceptable behaviors. This has led to decline in mental health of adolescents. Students' feeling of well-being is significant for their social improvement and personal growth.<sup>3</sup> Thus there is an urgent need to focus on the well-being of adolescent students if we are looking forward to a healthy human civilization at large.

Over and above, adolescents are among the most enthusiastic users of social networking and social media.<sup>4</sup> Abrams et al. (2011) have reported that digital mediums have a disabling effect on belonging.<sup>5</sup> With the advent of technology, social networking like twitter, face book, Whatsapp, etc. have engulfed the lives of these teenagers at an alarming rate gradually leading to decreased personal face-to-face interaction with the near and dear ones, especially parents at home, teachers at school and peers.

Social connections can systematically contribute to elements of adolescents' psychosocial wellbeing, such as levels of anxiety, loneliness, and depression (Caplan, 2003).<sup>6</sup> Social relationships have also been found to be important predictors of subjective wellbeing (Myers, 2000) and meaning in life (Hicks & King, 2009; Lambert et al., 2010).<sup>7</sup> Concomitant with well-being, there is also need to pay attention to the adolescents' social connectedness in their social milieu.

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<sup>2</sup> Hawley, M.E. et al. (1996). Predictors of educational aspirations among adolescent gifted students of colour. *Journal of career development*, 23(2), 97-109.

<sup>3</sup> O'Brien, M. (2008). *Well-being and Post-Primary Schooling; A review of the literature and research* (NCCA Research Report no. 6) Retrieved from [http://www.ncca.ie/uploadedfiles//Curriculum/post-primary/wellbeing/Well-being\\_report\\_en.pdf](http://www.ncca.ie/uploadedfiles//Curriculum/post-primary/wellbeing/Well-being_report_en.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Allen, K.A., Ryan, T., Gray, L. D, Dennis, M.M. & Waters, L. (2014). Social Media Use and Social Connectedness in Adolescents: The Positives and the Potential Pitfalls *The Australian Educational and Developmental Psychologist* 31 (1), 18–31.

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<sup>6</sup> Allen, K.A., Ryan, T., Gray, L. D, Dennis, M.M. & Waters, L. (2014). Social Media Use and Social Connectedness in Adolescents: The Positives and the Potential Pitfalls *The Australian Educational and Developmental Psychologist* 31 (1), 18–31.

<sup>7</sup> *Positive relationships* Retrieved from <https://www.ggs.vic.edu.au/.../PositiveRelationshipsResearchSummary.pdf>

### **Need of the study**

The researcher incidentally happened to interact very frequently with a handful of students who went to the same school in her vicinity. These children belonged to the 'so-called' good families well-known to the researcher. Most of the students staying away from home for tuitions, not mingling with friends, a few of them displaying unexpected behaviours, some of them with a feeling of sadness and pessimism most of the time, caught the attention of the researcher. This gave rise to a number of questions in the mind of the researcher regarding these students' coping abilities, satisfaction in life, their vulnerability to daily stress. Hence the researcher was inclined to capture the perceptions of these students' well-being and social connectedness and study their relationship. She chose to select students of std. IX from that particular school because of a few reasons. Majority of students of this grade normally go to tuitions outside of school, and this age is highly susceptible to stress, anxieties, pressure on one hand while aiming for high goals on the other. In view of helping them out if the need arose, this particular school was chosen for the study.

### **Aim of the study**

- To study the well-being of secondary school students in relation to their social connectedness

### **Objectives of the study**

1. To find the relation between well-being of secondary school students and their social connectedness

### **Hypotheses of the study**

1. There is no significant relation between the well-being scores of secondary school students and their social connectedness scores

### **Operational Definitions of the key terms**

**Secondary School Children** are those, who are in the age group between 13 and 16 years.

**Social Connectedness** is operationally defined as the adolescents' perception of a feeling of closeness to their family, teachers and peers and feeling loved and respected by them and reciprocating in the same manner.

Social connectedness includes the following dimensions-

- Family connectedness
- School connectedness
- Peer connectedness

**Family connectedness** is operationally defined as the extent to which the adolescents, feel attached to their parents and siblings and have frequent interactions with them.

**School connectedness** is operationally defined as the extent to which the adolescents, share close relations with teachers at school and have a favourable attitude towards their school along with interest in learning.

**Peer connectedness** is operationally defined as the extent to which the adolescents, bond with their friends, share with them a relation of mutual respect and frequently interact with them.

**Student well-being** is operationally defined as the extent to which the adolescents perceive a feeling of happiness and enjoyment in most of the tasks in their educational process and an optimistic attitude towards their future and a feeling of sense of purpose in life.

### **Scope and Delimitations of the Study**

**Scope:** The present study is an effort to study the well-being and social connectedness of secondary school students and their relationship.

**Delimitations:** The present study is delimited to only 48 students studying in English medium school located in Vidyavihar.

### **Research Methodology**

This study used the descriptive research design, which facilitated collection of data from respondents through questionnaires. In the present research study, correlational method has been used to measure the strength and direction of relationship between well-being and social connectedness of secondary school students.

### **Research Instruments**

Tools for well-being and social connectedness were adapted from the existing tools and developed by the researcher. The reliability of well-being questionnaire was found to be 0.6 and of social connectedness to be 0.86.

### **Results**

#### **Descriptive Analysis of data of well-being and social connectedness of secondary school students**

The following table gives the measures of central tendency and variability of the well-being of secondary school students

**Table 1** descriptive Analysis of Well-Being Of Secondary School Students

N	Mean	Median	Mode	SD
48	61.8125	62	68	7.0881

The mean of the distribution is 61.8125 and the median is 62. The mean is lesser than the median by 0.1875. The mode of the distribution is 68 which is greater than mean by 6.19. This indicates a marginal difference between the mean, the median and the mode and hence the distribution appears to be near normal. Thus, the sample selected is representative of the population.

The following table gives the measures of central tendency and variability of the social connectedness of secondary school students

**Table 2 Descriptive analysis of social connectedness of secondary school students**

N	Mean	Median	Mode	SD
48	191.125	195	208	21.4669

The mean of the distribution is 191.125 and the median is 195. The median is greater than the mean by 3.875. The mode of the distribution is 208, which is greater than mean by 0.77. This indicates a marginal difference between the mean, the median and the mode and hence the distribution seems to be near normal. Thus, the sample selected is representative of the population.

### **Inferential Analysis of data of well-being and social connectedness of secondary school students**

**Table 3 Coefficient of correlation between well-being and social connectedness of secondary school students**

Variable	N	R	Significance
Well-being			
Social Connectedness	48	0.6781	Significant

The above value greater than 0 indicates a positive association; that is, as the value of one variable increases, so does the value of the other variable. This indicates a linear relation between social connectedness and well-being of the students.

The above value of correlation indicates a moderate level of correlation between well-being and social connectedness of the students.

### **Discussion**

Throughout the first 70 years of research, there was a common assumption that adolescence was a time of “storm and stress” (Hall, 1904). However, since that time, these generalized assumptions have been challenged. Data suggest that for most, the transition from childhood to adulthood is relatively smooth (Arnett, 1999).<sup>8</sup> Yet today, we tend to look at teens as the ‘problem child’ rather than an asset to our future probably because we are exposed to a blurred image of what the teens undergo, their capabilities and what they fall short of. These

<sup>8</sup> *Adolescence* Retrieved from <http://www.education.com/reference/article/adolescence1/>



adolescent kids are going to be future adults and it is very important to gain an understanding of their well-being and the various factors that go into nurturing their well-being.

Well-being is achieved through engaging in relationships with self, and other, and through the inter-action with the environments where the child finds him or herself.<sup>9</sup>

Family provides significant support to adolescents, & connectedness with the family was found to be favorable for adolescent development (Santrock 2010, 149).<sup>10</sup> Children who shared close relations with their family have frequent interactions with their parents and share a feeling of warmth as against those who are not connected. They are able to confide in their parents and thus share all their experiences without any inhibition. Adolescents have strong needs to be liked and accepted by friends and the larger peer group, which can result in pleasurable feelings when they are accepted or extreme stress and anxiety when they are excluded and disparaged by peers (Santrock 2010, 313).<sup>11</sup> Friends prove to be a treasure of resources when it comes to planning future goals of education. Shared experiences of friends aid each other in overcoming the obstacles that come in their way. Closeness with peers acts as additional catalyst to enhance the well-being of students. Sulkowski, Demaray, and Lazarus (2012) highlight the importance of the connection between school support and student well-being for practicing school psychologists.<sup>12</sup> A supportive environment in the school, close relationships with teachers foster a positive and favourable attitude towards school. Students enjoy school activities and are motivated to participate in most of the activities of school. This boosts their overall well-being.

Several studies attest the research and belief in the importance of connectedness for well-being. Paul E. Jose, P.E., Ryan, N., & Pryor, J. (2012), in a study designed to investigate whether or not social connectedness predicted psychological well-being over time concluded

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<sup>9</sup> Gill, S. (2009). Monitoring and Promoting Well-Being in Education Principles and possible approaches to child well-being indicators (Working Paper - Education for Well-Being Europe Consortium). Retrieved from [http://www.ghfp.org/Portals/ghfp/publications/gill09\\_monitoring\\_promoting\\_wellbeing.pdf](http://www.ghfp.org/Portals/ghfp/publications/gill09_monitoring_promoting_wellbeing.pdf)

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<sup>11</sup> Kafle, A. & Thakali, M. (2013), *Social Relations in Adolescence: Roles of Parents and Peer Relationship in Adolescent Psychosocial Development*, Bachelor Thesis, Kemi-Tornio University of Applied Sciences

<sup>12</sup> Haddock, A.D., Dodds, R., & Wigginton, R. (2014), School Connectedness and Well-Being. From Science to Practice. *American Psychological Association*, Retrieved from <http://www.apadivisions.org/division-6/publications/newsletters/science/2014/12/school-connectedness.aspx>

that youth who reported higher levels of social connectedness at one point in time would subsequently report higher well-being.<sup>13</sup> Results of the present study indicated a direct association of students' well-being with their social connectedness thus supporting earlier research findings.

The significance of students' social connectedness and well-being cannot be underscored in any circumstances. The researcher noticed that the earlier observations about the few students of the same school in her vicinity were not quite matched with the results yielded by the study conducted on a larger sample of the same school. There could have been probably various reasons for this incongruence. The following reasons may be likely –

- Parents of these children were both working and were not at home most of the time. Maybe the students did not feel connected to home or family as much as their other fellow students.
- Perhaps most of the time, being out for tuitions spared hardly any time for these kids to play or interact with friends or connect with them.
- Presumably too much of load and pressure of tuitions and school may not instill positive attitude towards school thus disconnecting them from school
- Apparently students' behavior and attitudes may be result of their disconnectedness in either of the systems in which they are embedded or the interlinking of multiple systems.

The researcher felt that assumedly this lack of connectedness in the lives of these kids doesn't pave way for their well-being and may in turn hinder the promotion of connectedness in any context. The researcher in her capacity as an educator decided to talk to these kids personally and help them to nurture healthy connections and instill positive attitudes.

### **Limitations of the study**

The sample is restricted to a small sample from one school from a locality. Hence results of the study may not be applicable to a varied setting. The study has not taken into consideration the reciprocity of well-being and social connectedness. It may be possible that students' well-being can promote social connectedness or vice-versa. Also connectedness in the individual context like family, school and peer could have been explored in-depth. Each individual context may carry its pros and cons. Connectedness in a particular context may buffer connectedness in the other or act as a mediator for the other context. A qualitative

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<sup>13</sup> Jose, P.E., Ryan, N., & Pryor, J. (2012). Does Social Connectedness Promote a Greater Sense of Well-Being in Adolescence Over Time? *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 22(2), 235–251. doi: 10.1111/j.1532-7795.2012.00783.x

analysis into the study by further extending the study's findings may unleash various unknown factors or mediators responsible in the study. Despite these shortcomings, it cannot be denied that well-being and social connectedness of secondary school students play a very important role in their development as good human beings in their future.

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## DEVELOPMENT OF MODULES FOR DECISION MAKING SKILLS AMONG STUDENT-TEACHERS

**Aradhana Gokhale & Anna Fernandes, Ph. D.**

### Abstract

*Teacher Education system is an important vehicle to improve the quality of school education. The revitalization and strengthening of Teacher Education is a powerful means for the upliftment of educational standards in the country. It inculcates the skills and competencies among the student-teachers and makes them professionally competent to meet the demands of the society. Teacher educators play an important role in developing abilities, knowledge, skills and values of future teachers. The interaction and dissemination of knowledge between teacher and student is a prime basis of capacity building. There are various components of Capacity Building and one of them is Decision Making Skills. The present paper is focussing on the Development of Modules for Decision Making Skills among Student-Teachers. The purpose of this paper is to identify how training and development program impact student-teachers towards developing their decision making skills.*

***Keywords:** decision making skills, values and decision making, priorities, Recognizing decision patterns, Decision making process.*



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### **Introduction:**

We make decisions every single day. Some are simple, others are more complex. Some of the decisions will be so routine that we make them without giving them much thought. But difficult or challenging decisions demand more consideration. These are the sort of decisions that involve:

- **Uncertainty** – Many of the facts may be unknown.
- **Complexity** – There can be many, interrelated factors to consider.
- **High-risk consequences** – The impact of the decision may be significant.
- **Alternatives** – There may be various alternatives, each with its own set of uncertainties and consequences.
- **Interpersonal issues** – You need to predict how different people will react.

When we are making a decision that involves complex issues like these, you also need to engage your problem-solving, as well as decision-making skills. It pays to use an effective,

robust process in these circumstances, to improve the quality of your decisions and to achieve consistently good results.

Decision-making is a key skill in the workplace, and is particularly important if you want to be an effective leader. Whether you're deciding which person to hire, which supplier to use, or which strategy to pursue, the ability to make a good decision with available information is vital. It would be easy if there were one formula you could use in any situation, but there isn't. Each decision presents its own challenges, and we all have different ways of approaching problems.

So, how do you avoid making bad decisions – or leaving decisions to chance? You need a systematic approach to decision-making so that, no matter what type of decision you have to make, you can take decisions with confidence.

### CONCEPT OF DECISION MAKING

**Decision making** can be regarded as the mental processes (cognitive process) resulting in the selection of a course of action among several alternative scenarios. Every decision making process produces a final choice. The output can be an action or an opinion of choice.

Decision-making skills and techniques underpin most aspects of management. Deciding something means making a choice or coming to a conclusion. This involves a wide range of personal and interpersonal skills, including fact finding, logical thinking, creativity, analytical ability, sensitivity to others and assertiveness. Decision making also relies on a thorough knowledge of a variety of techniques and processes.

The key steps in making a decision

- Setting objectives
  - Collecting information
  - Identifying alternative solutions
  - Evaluating options
  - Selecting the best option
- Improving Decision Making

### Need of the Study:

Studies conducted on decision-making skills on Exploration and study into the factors determining the decision-making of college students in career, the extent of teacher participation in decision-making in secondary schools in Zimbabwe, Career decision making among gifted students: The mediation of teachers and Reconsidering grades as data for decision making: More than just academic knowledge. However, no research has been conducted on student-teachers of B.Ed. Hence, researcher proposes to develop the capacity building among the student teachers on the basis of these components.

**Significance of the Study:**

The findings of the study will be useful to teacher educators, Principals, all stakeholders of educational system and parents.

This study will give guidelines to the educationists working in the area to plan and design different educational strategies, programs and approaches to develop capacity building of student-teachers in all aspects.

Principals can adopt certain programs in collaboration with the teacher educators.

Teacher Educators can implement modules of capacity building for student-teachers in which they are lacking. Teacher educators can also make different headways in their teaching which will help the student-teachers to make learning enjoyable and meaningful. They can also motivate student-teachers to approach their goal systematically; help in development of skills which can help to develop capacity building.

The study will also enable parents in general to develop a positive attitude to deal with student-teachers.

**Aim of the Study:**

- The major aim of the present research was to develop the modules of the decision making skills for capacity building among student-teachers

**Objectives of the Study:**

- To compare the Pre Test and Post Test mean scores of the Decision making Skills as a Component of Capacity Building of the experimental group.

**Hypotheses of the Study:**

Following null-hypotheses were formulated to test the hypotheses.

- There is no significant difference between pre test and post test mean scores of the Decision making Skills as a Component of Capacity Building of the experimental group.

**Methodology of the study:**

The Experimental method was employed in this study. 40 student teachers were randomly selected and Modules was used on experimental group. Pre-test, post-test on experimental group was followed.

**Sample and Data Collection:**

A sample of 40 B. Ed. student-teachers (Unaided teacher education institutions affiliated to the University of Mumbai) was surveyed. The method of sampling used was Random sampling.

**Tools for Data Collection:**

The following tools were used by the investigator:

(a) Decision Making Skill Scale (Pre test and post test) was prepared

(b) Module for Decision Making Skill was prepared

### **Preparation of Tools**

(a) **Decision Making Skill Scale(Pre test and post test):** This scale is prepared by the investigator.

(b) **Module for Decision Making Skill:** Activities are performed to develop Decision Making Skills among B.Ed student-Teachers which include storytelling, Game, Case Study, Solving situations.

### **Administration of Test**

#### **a) Administration of Decision Making Skill Scale Pre Test**

Before administration the Module for Decision Making Skill investigator has implemented Decision Making Skill Scale for B. Ed. students. Pre test is used as Decision Making Skill Scale.

#### **b) Administration of Module for Decision Making Skill**

A Module for Decision Making Skill was based on Establishing a Positive Decision-Making Environment, Generating Potential Solutions, Evaluating Alternatives, Deciding, Checking the Decision and Communicating and Implementing.

#### **c) Administration of Decision Making Skill Scale Post Test**

After administration of the Module for Decision Making Skill investigator has implemented the Decision Making Skill Scale for B. Ed. students to find out the level of Decision Making Skill.

### **Techniques of Data Analysis:**

The following descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were used for data analysis:

iii) Descriptive Analysis (with Mean)

iv) Inferential Analysis (with t-test)

### **Findings and Conclusions:**

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between pre test and post test mean scores of the Decision making Skills as a Component of Capacity Building of the experimental group.

**Table No. 1 : Comparison of Pre & Post Test Means Scores of the Experimental Group**

Experimental Group	No. of Student - Teacher	Mean	't' Value
Pre - Test	40	56.37	
Post - Test	40	60.67	9.46

Significant at 0.01 levels.



The above table shows that there is significant differences between the pre test and post test mean scores of the experimental group as revealed by the 't' value (9.46) which is significant at 0.01 level.

The better performance of the experimental group in the post test is clearly noticed when it is compared with its pre test performance. This is a definite indication of the effectiveness of the application of Module for Decision Making Skill.

### **Suggestions for Improving Decision Making:**

We can take several basic steps to improve the decision making process at their establishments.

- **Improve the setting.** Organizing (focused agenda, clear questions, current and detailed information, necessary personnel) can be a very helpful step in effective decision making. Pay attention to planning and seek closure.
- **Use Logical Techniques.** Decision making is a simple process when approached in a logical and purposeful manner. Institutions that are able to perceive the problem, gather and present data, intelligently discuss the data, and implement the decision without succumbing to emotionalism are apt to make good ones that will launch the firm on a prosperous course.
- **Evaluate decisions and decision making patterns.** Evaluation tends to focus the attention, and make individuals and teams more sensitive to what they are actually doing in their decision making tasks. Evaluation is especially helpful in today's institutional environment because of the interdependency of individuals and departments in executing tasks and addressing goals.
- **Determine appropriate levels of decision making.** Institution need to make sure that operational decisions are being made at the right level. Keys to avoiding micromanagement and other decision making pitfalls include: giving problems their proper level of importance and context; addressing problems in an appropriate time frame; and establishing and shifting decision criteria in accordance with business goals.

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## ATTITUDE TOWARDS STRESS AMONG SCHOOL STUDENTS OF S. S. C. BOARD

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*Stress should be a powerful driving force, not an obstacle.*

**- Bill Phillips**

### Abstract

*Stress is a part of everyone's daily life. It means that the person cannot cope with the demands put forward by his or her work, which is opposite to their expectations of rewards and success. It affects both the person concerned and the relationships he or she forms in the society be it with family or friends. One has to be aware of the problem well in advance to be able to deal with it. The main causes of childhood and teen stress are negligence of parents, high expectations in academic or other performances, abused childhood, growing up tensions and demand for familial responsibility etc. Stressed children show signs of emotional disabilities, aggressive behaviour, shyness, social phobia and often lack interest in otherwise enjoyable activities. Present paper focuses on the stress among seventh standard school students of S. S. C. Board. The objectives are to study and compare the level of attitude towards stress among boys and girls.*

**Key Words:** Stress, Attitude, Students



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### Introduction

In today's time stress is unavoidable. Every one of us experiences it at times and in different ways. Enough stress can keep one on toes which helps to rise to a challenge. But too much stress can have shocking effects on our health contributing too many problems including heart diseases, high blood pressure, stroke, depression and sleep disorders.

Stress is associated with distress, kind of burden, pressure and hardships. Basically stress is wear and tear which our body experiences as we adjust to our continually changing environment.

According to Lazarus (1961) – Stress is an internal response of the individual to pressure, when pressure experienced is greater than normal abilities.

### ***Purpose of the Study***

Today's competitive world demands good quality in every field. Schools and students are no exception to it. Stress and its effect redefine a child's life in many ways. It is important to know how students experience stress and how they cope up. The students, teachers and parents try to reduce and control the negative effects of stress on their health and their academic performance. The researcher has selected the problem due to its relevance and need in today's learning environment. The researcher has attempted to find out the level of students attitude towards stress among school students.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The following are the objectives formulated by researcher for the present study.

1. To study the level of attitude towards stress among 7<sup>th</sup> standard students of S. S. C. Board.
2. To study the level of attitude towards stress among 7<sup>th</sup> standard girls students of S. S. C. Board.
3. To study the level of attitude towards stress among 7<sup>th</sup> standard boys students of S. S. C. Board.
4. To compare the level of attitude towards stress between girls and boys of 7<sup>th</sup> standard students of S. S. C. Board.

### **Hypotheses of the Study**

1. There is no significant difference in the level of attitude towards stress between the girls and boys of 7<sup>th</sup> standard students of S. S. C. Board
2. There is no significant difference in the level of attitude towards stress between the boys of Division A and Division B of 7<sup>th</sup> standard.
3. There is no significant difference in the level of attitude towards stress between the girls of Division A and Division B of 7<sup>th</sup> standard.

### **Scope of the Study**

The study mainly focuses on the level of attitude towards stress. It includes only two English Medium Schools of South Mumbai of S. S. C. Board. The study is restricted only to 7<sup>th</sup> standard students.

### **Delimitations of the Study**

The study is restricted to schools of south Mumbai only. Only two English medium schools are included in the study. The study is limited to students of standard seventh only. The study does not include students from other boards like I.C.S.E, C.B.S.E, International Schools or students studying in other vernacular medium.

**Research Design**

The method adopted for a study depends upon the nature and purpose of the study. The present research surveys the attitude of seventh standard school students. The sample comprised of two schools of S. S. C. Board of south Mumbai. The sample comprised of 200 school students of seventh standard (100 boys & 100 girls). For the present study, the researcher has used the Descriptive method of the quantitative type. The researcher has used a standardized tool prepared by Dr. Zaki Akhtar.

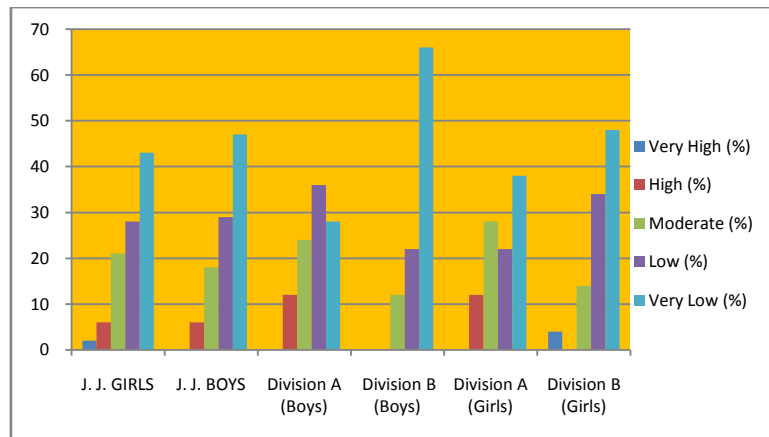
**Table 1 Stress Level Scores**

RAW SCORE		STRESS LEVEL
BOYS	GIRLS	
204	210	VERY HIGH STRESS
192	203	
186	199	
180	196	
177	194	
172	191	HIGH STRESS
166	189	
164	188	
161	184	MODERATE STRESS
159	180	
157	178	
153	175	
151	169	
148	165	LOW STRESS
141	161	
138	160	
135	156	
127	150	VERY LOW STRESS
115	141	

**Table 2 Percentage of level of attitude towards stress among 7<sup>th</sup> standard students**

Category	Very High (%)	High (%)	Moderate (%)	Low (%)	Very Low (%)
J. J. GIRLS	2	6	21	28	43
J. J. BOYS	0	6	18	29	47
Division A (Boys)	0	12	24	36	28
Division B (Boys)	0	0	12	22	66
Division A (Girls)	0	12	28	22	38
Division B (Girls)	4	0	14	34	48

**Fig. 1 Showing Percentage of level of attitude towards stress among 7<sup>th</sup> standard students**



From table 2 and Figure 1,

- 47% boys of J. J. Boys School have very low attitude towards stress where as 43% girls of J. J. Girls School have very low attitude towards stress.
- Another interesting fact, maximum percentage of students of Division B (66% Boys & 48% Girls) have very low attitude towards stress.
- Also another remarkable fact, maximum percentage of students of Division A (24% Boys & 28% Girls) have moderate level of attitude towards stress.
- Few percentage of students (2% of J. J. Girls School & 4% Girls of Division B) have very high attitude towards stress.

**Testing the Hypotheses** - In the present study, each hypothesis was tested by using the t – test.

**Table 3 Relevant statistics of mean scores of stress among school children**

Hy	Groups	N	df	Mea n	SD	SE a	t (cal)	t(ta b)	L. of Sig.
1	J. J. BOYS	100	198	147.44	16.61	2.42	6.05	1.96	S
	J. J. GIRLS	100		162.09	17.62				
2	Division A (Boys)	50	98	144.16	19.18	3.27	2.01	1.96	S
	Division B (Boys)	50		150.72	12.93				
3	Division A (Girls)	50	98	160.08	16.19	3.52	1.14	1.96	NS
	Division B (Girls)	50		164.10	18.89				

- From the preceding table for hypothesis 1, it is evident that the calculated t-value is 6.05, which is significant at 0.05 level with df = 198. It reflects that mean scores of stress between boys and girls differs significantly. The null hypothesis states that there is no significant difference in the level of attitude towards stress between the girls and boys of 7<sup>th</sup> standard students of S. S. C. Board is rejected. Further the mean score of girls level of

attitude towards stress is 162.09 which is significantly higher than that of boys level of attitude towards stress whose mean score is 147.44. It may therefore be said that girls level of attitude towards stress were found to possess significantly higher as compared to boys.

- From the preceding table for hypothesis 2, it is evident that the calculated t-value is 2.01, which is significant at 0.05 level with  $df = 98$ . It reflects that mean scores of stress among boys towards stress differs significantly. The null hypothesis states that there is no significant difference in the level of attitude towards stress between the boys of division A and division B is rejected. Further the mean score of boys of division B, whose level of attitude towards stress is 150.72 which is significantly higher than that of boys of division A level of attitude towards stress whose mean score is 144.16. It may therefore be said that boys of division B, whose level of attitude towards stress were found to be significantly higher as compared to boys of division A.
- From the preceding table for hypothesis 3, it is evident that the calculated t-value is 1.14, which is not significant at 0.05 level with  $df = 98$ . It reflects that mean scores of stress among girls towards stress does not differ significantly. The null hypothesis states that there no significant difference in the level of attitude towards stress between the girls of Division A and Division B is accepted.

### **Major findings**

1. The null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the level of attitude towards stress between the girls and boys of 7<sup>th</sup> standard students of S. S. C. Board is rejected.
2. The null hypothesis that there no significant difference in the level of attitude towards stress between the boys of division A and division B is rejected.
3. The null hypothesis that there no significant difference in the level of attitude towards stress between the girls of Division A and Division B is accepted.

**Conclusion:** From the findings it may be concluded that girls level of attitude towards stress were found to possess significantly higher as compared to boys. It can be inferred that in modern time students have taken stress as an accomplice in their lifestyle. Also boys of division B, whose level of attitude towards stress were found to be significantly higher as compared to boys of division A. Therefore, students showing very high attitude towards stress need to get counseled by a counselor and they must undergo appropriate treatment as prescribed by the counselor. Visiting a counselor may prove beneficial for those having high attitude towards stress i.e. high care needs to be taken. Similarly, students having moderate

attitude towards stress should be immediately attended by the parents, teachers or a counselor. Whereas, students having low attitude towards stress must have a close look at the things that they need to be aware of.

### **Mathematical Equation for STRESS**

$$\begin{array}{r} \text{Life} + \cancel{\text{Love}} = \text{Happy} \\ \text{Life} - \cancel{\text{Love}} = \text{Sad} \\ \hline 2\text{Life} = \text{Happy} + \text{Sad} \\ \text{Life} = \frac{\text{Happy} + \text{Sad}}{2} \\ \text{Life} = \frac{1}{2}\text{Happy} + \frac{1}{2}\text{Sad} \\ \text{That's Real Life, Enjoy it} \end{array}$$

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## **A STUDY OF POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH AT WORK PLACE FOR HARMONIOUS DEVELOPMENT OF WORK CULTURE**

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**Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success. - Henry Ford**

### **Abstract**

*This paper focuses on the need of positive psychology at work place. Positive psychology in the workplace is about shifting attention away from negative aspects such as work violence, stress, burnout, and job insecurity. Positive psychology can help create a working environment goal of promoting positive affect in its employees. It is important to examine the role of: helping behaviours, team building exercises, job resources, job security and work support. The new emerging field of Positive Psychology helps to creatively manage organizational behaviours and to increase productivity in the workplace through applying positive organizational forces. In the broad sense traditional psychology has not specifically focused on the implementation of positive psychology methods in the workplace. The recent research on job satisfaction and employee retention has created a greater need to focus on implementing positive psychology in the workplace.*



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**Introduction:** - Positive Psychology is the scientific study of human flourishing, and an applied approach to optimal functioning. It has also been defined as the study of the strengths and virtues that enable individuals, communities and organisations to thrive. Positive Psychology is grounded in the belief that people want to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives, to cultivate what is best within them, and to enhance their experiences of love, work, and play.

### **Why the Workplace Needs Positive Psychology?**

It is no secret that the 21st Century workplace is a different world. Developments in technology have paved the way for any number of changes, including globalization, the rise of the knowledge worker, and the creation of significantly more niche markets. The net result is high competition and a strong focus on customizing products and services to individual needs. In order to keep up with such a fast-paced system, companies have needed to rely

more heavily on creativity and innovation, and capitalize on the unique intellectual and personal strengths of their employees. In turn, this requires an organizational structure that allows for more cross-talk and flexibility, task designs that take advantage of human capital, and an organizational strategy that gives the company a unique, competitive edge. The rapid changes in a high-tech world create significant uncertainty in markets, and this requires creative solutions and the ability to move with the tide, buck the trend, or create a new current. In all cases, this requires strategic decisions that shape the goals and mission of the company, which will in turn affect the company's structure, human capital needs, and management practices, etc. In this highly-competitive business milieu, companies are looking for the methodologies that will turn "good" into "great". To do this, organizations need to germinate the right capacities in the form of people who can develop a company's products, competitive edge, strategic plan, and so on. But, this leads to a number of new issues in management. For example, it is no longer so much a matter of getting employees to do their work, but rather how to get them to do good work, or their best work. Today, companies need all of their employees to be creative, which requires employees to be motivated, and to put their all into their work.

**In this regard a research study was conducted** in order to find the opinions of Teachers regarding their working conditions, Problems and happiness level at workplace

**Objective of the study:**The main objectives of study are:

- 1) To know the reasons behind selecting the job and job satisfaction.
- 2) To examine the basic reasons behind ill mental health of the teachers.
- 3) To know their problem at workplace.
- 4) To study their reasons work satisfaction.
- 5) To find out solutions for harmonious work culture.

**Location of Study Area:** -The study has been conducted in Andheri (w) Mumbai, Area

**Method:** - Survey Method Use for the Study

**Sample:**-Our total sample size is 70. Samples are chosen randomly from areas mentioned above.

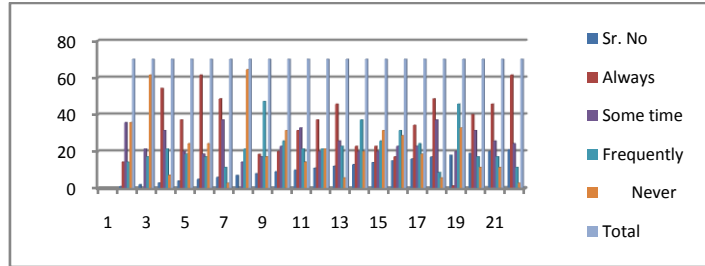
**Tools and techniques:** -The questionnaire prepared is a combination of structured and unstructured questions. To know the opinions of the respondents 'their feelings reasons, emotionsto see the positive psychology at work place.

**Procedure:-**

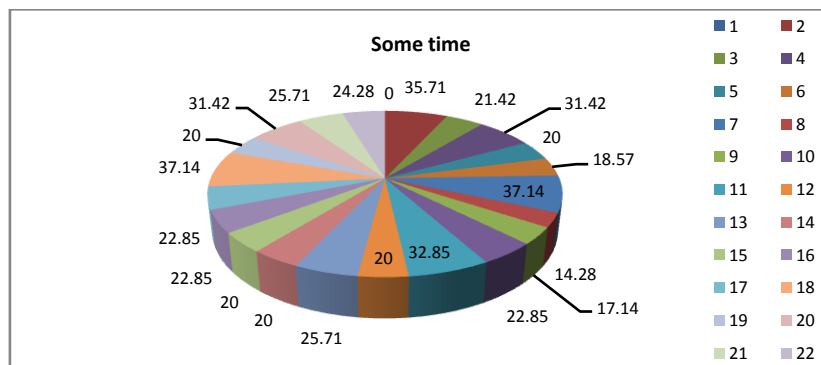
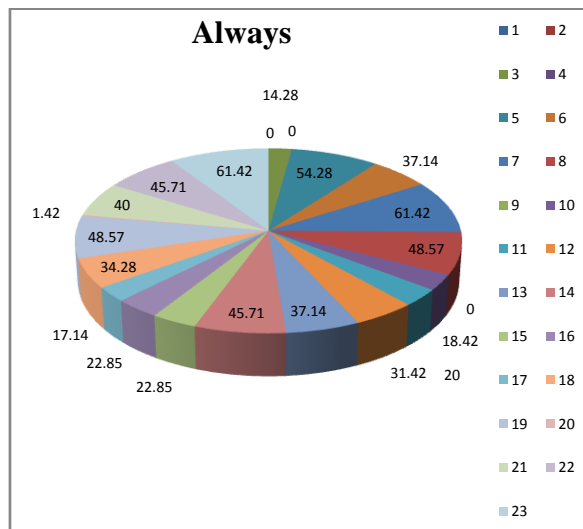
Researcher had tried the tested tools for study. The researcher had investigated the reasons behind selecting the job and job satisfaction. Reasons behind ill mental health of the teachers.

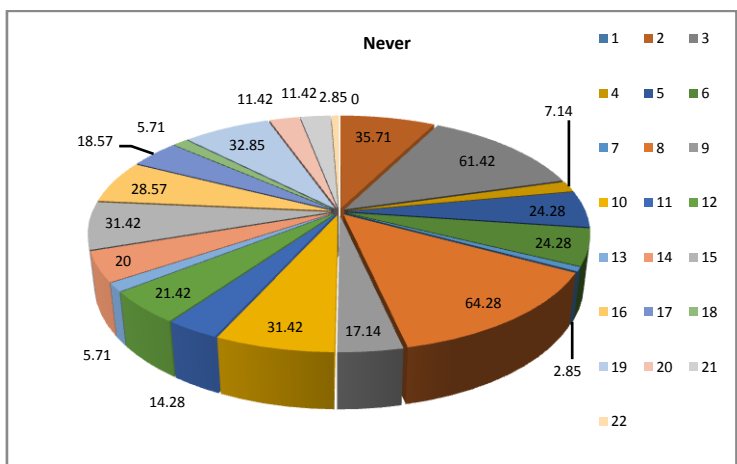
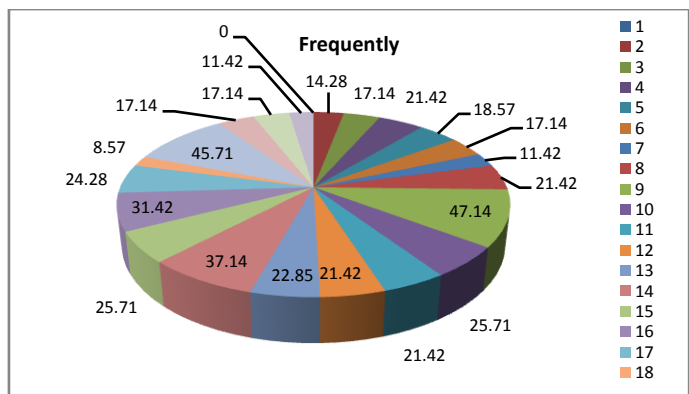
Study their reasons work satisfaction. Solutions for harmonious work culture. On the basis of responses gathered through questionnaire researcher had found out the conclusions. Bar graph and pie chart shows responses of the participants.

**Responses of teachers in numbers**



**Analysis of data: - Percentage**





Seventy respondents have been taken for this survey. Q.1 shows response for you are always right and others are wrong 14% respondent said always, 35% said sometimes, 14% said frequently and 35% said never, it shows dominant behaviour of respondent and its effects on the mental health of individuals. Q.2 shows response for continuous disliking about people 15% said sometimes, 21% said frequently and 61% said never, it shows steel adjustment feelings are less in the respondent’s behaviour.Q.3 shows response for many times teachers are worried for work 54% respondent said always, 20% said sometimes, 18% said frequently and 24% said never, it shows majority teachers are worried for workload.Q.4 shows response for teachers that they are losing their temper easily 61% respondent said always, 18% said sometimes, 17% said frequently and 02% said never Q 7 shows response for 14% respondent said sometimes, 21% said frequently and 64% said never, it shows unhappiness at work place makes teachers aloof from the work.Q.12 shows response for getting often pain in head at work place 45 % respondent said always, 25% said sometimes, 22% said frequently and 05% said never, it shows that 95% teachers getting pains in head often at work place.Q14 shows response for fluctuation of teachers mood and depression to elation 22% respondent said always, 20 % said sometimes, 25% said frequently and 35% said never, it shows large number of teachers are having fluctuation of mood at work place. Q.21shows response for

student's constant mental strain makes teachers mental health bad 61% respondent said always, 24% said sometimes, 11% said frequently and 02% said never, it shows students constant mental strain is increase. Q.21 shows response for you are always right and others are wrong 1% respondent said always, 35% said sometimes, 14% said frequently and 31% said never, it shows large number of teachers are having pressure at the at workplace

Above mention data shows that all tea teachers are having mental illness at work place.

Positive psychology is an extension of mainstream psychology intending to increase wellbeing & satisfaction

- It intends to improve health & prevent illnesses as well treat them
- It has witnessed widespread acceptance and welcome since its inception
- Research support is still accumulating, but current findings are promising.
- Positive psychology expands the view of psychological health beyond the absence of symptoms and disorders and provides hope that a healthy, fulfilled, and productive life is possible for all.

#### **Relationship between positive psychology and mental health:-**

In today's world, society is facing extremely tough challenges in the form of global warming, natural disasters, economic recession, unprecedented homelessness, terrorism and the draining continuation of war. With all this sadness and horror, where in the world does a science based on testing happiness, wellbeing, personal growth and 'the good life' fit into the modern-day agenda? New science of positive psychology, which aims to 'understand, test, discover and promote the factors that allow individuals and communities to thrive' Positive psychology focuses on wellbeing, happiness, flow, personal strengths, wisdom, creativity, imagination and characteristics of positive groups and institutions.

Positive psychology concentrates on positive experiences at three time points: (1) the past, centring on wellbeing, contentment and satisfaction; (2) the present, which focuses on concepts such as happiness and flow experiences; (3) the future, with concepts including optimism and hope. Not only does positive psychology distinguish between wellbeing across time points but it also separates the subject area into three nodes: 1. the subjective node, which encompasses things like positive experiences and states across past, present and future (for example, happiness, optimism, wellbeing); 2. The individual node, which focuses on characteristics of the 'good person' (for example, talent, wisdom, love, courage, creativity); and 3. The group node, which studies positive institutions, citizenship and communities.

**Pressure, stress and Performance:-**

**Managing psychological well-being at work:-**

**Burden pressures** -Role ambiguity, Work Relationships, Job insecurity, Resource & Communication, Control and autonomy, Work relationships, Work life balance, Work over load Job security, Pay and benefits

**Challenge pressures** -Workload, Time pressure, Job scope, Responsibility, Hard goals (achievable, specific), Pay & benefit, Well-managed change, High workload Increased responsibility & control.

**Advice for employers on workplace adjustments for mental health conditions**

Advice for employers on workplace adjustments for mental health conditions at any one time, one in six adults<sup>1</sup> will be experiencing a mental health condition. It is crucial that employers are playing a full part in supporting job retention and return to work for people with such conditions. In many cases simple and cost-effective workplace adjustments can make a big difference and can allow people with mental health conditions to keep in touch with the working world and live healthy and productive lives.

The adjustment needed could be a change in practice or workload. These guidance notes are intended to help employers think through the kinds of adjustments at work which they can make for people with mental health conditions. They include practical advice and links to other resources which might help them to support job retention and return to work.

The key thing to remember is that everyone's experience of mental ill health is different – so two people with a diagnosis of depression may have very different symptoms and need different adjustments. According to the Act a person is defined as disabled if they have a mental or physical impairment that has a substantial long term effect on their normal day to day activities. A person is also protected under the Act if they have been affected in this way in the past but have been well for some time. There are 'best practice' arguments too. Evidence has shown that good work is beneficial for mental health and well-being and that - for people with a mental health condition - work can aid recovery. However, stigma and lack of understanding, as well as lack of knowledge about how to support people in the workplace, means that a large number of people with mental health conditions remain unemployed. Anyone who wishes to work should be able to do so through making work more accessible.

**Measuring and controlling work - related stress**

**Relationship problems with superiors**

The most common reason for office stress is dealing with difficult boss. But this may be far easier to solve by improving communication skills. Having a sincere conversation may make

a difference. Sometimes, the boss may set unreal targets, where an honest discussion can bring out what deadlines can be met. Tasks that are not part of an employee role or skill set can also cause stress. One area that presents an opportunity for conflict for the personality-disordered individual concerns the hierarchical nature of organizations.

### **Relationship problems with colleagues**

Another reason could be difficult colleagues or co-workers. Dealing with a difficult co-worker can be a bit more difficult as their performance is often pitted against oneself. This again has to be resolved by an amicable discussion, concluded by a mutual agreement. One can explain to the colleague as how a team can have far more benefits than indulging in rivalry. But if things are getting out of hand, it should be brought to the notice of the superior concerned.

### **Work family conflict**

Families are struggling to cope with an increasingly complex world. Individuals are struggling to find the right balance between work and family responsibility. Domestic issues can affect work where balancing work and home by allotting adequate time for both can help reduce stress.

### **High demand for performance**

Unrealistic expectations, especially in the time of corporate reorganizations, which, sometimes, puts unhealthy and unreasonable pressures on the employee, can be a tremendous source of stress and suffering. Increased workload, extremely long work hours and intense pressure to perform at peak levels all the time for the same pay, can actually leave an employee physically and emotionally drained. Excessive travel and too much time away from family also contribute to an employee's stressors.

### **Job insecurity**

Organized workplaces are going through metamorphic changes under intense economic transformations and consequent pressures. Reorganizations, takeovers, mergers, rightsizing and other changes have become major stressors for employees, as companies try to live up to the competition to survive. These reformations have put demand on everyone, from a CEO to a line manager.

### **Suggestions:-**

Because this is such a fundamental contribution to an institutions bottom line, organizations will need the research findings of positive psychologists who are finding ways to develop, harness, and apply creativity. Recent research has analysed the processes through which group member's work together to produce creative works, the characteristics of highly



creative, field changing individuals and the possibility that people can develop these characteristics to a greater or lesser extent.

### **Happiness at work**

Despite a large body of positive psychological research into the relationship between happiness and productivity, **happiness at work** has traditionally been seen as a potential by-product of positive outcomes at work, rather than a pathway to success in business.

### **Workplace success**

Happiness often precedes measures of success. Research demonstrates there is a relationship between happiness and workplace success. Happy people earn more money, display superior performance, and perform more helpful acts which typically exemplify success at work. Positive affect leads to improved workplace outcomes. When individuals experience positive effect, they become more motivated to invest time and effort, and overcome obstacles when pursuing their career goals, in part because they believe they have more control over attaining their career goals.

### **Culture**

Workplace happiness has been skewed by popular culture. Work is depicted as both bad and good; children and adults have been encouraged to emphasize the negative and downplay the idea that jobs can actually contribute to happiness. Instead, people are prone to thinking that work only leads to unhappiness. Work itself is a key to happiness and ultimately redemption. People are focused to goal attainment to the point that they neglect to feel happy in the journey.

### **Work engagement**

The notion of employee engagement is based on a positive psychology approach, whereby employees are fully engaged and enthusiastic about their work. Employee engagement correlates with some organizational tactics, such as human resource policies and procedural justice. Engagement also correlates with positive outcomes such as growth, lower costs, and lower absenteeism. Work engagement is important to the positive organizational scholarship field because engagement can lead to a number of positive outcomes, such as in role and extra role performance, client satisfaction, proactively, adaptively, and creativity.

### **Conclusion:-**

The principle aim of Positive Psychology has been to correct this imbalance by propelling the field into supplementing its hard-won knowledge about suffering and mental illness with a great deal more knowledge about positive emotion. Positive psychology represents a commitment to the sources of psychological wellness, such as positive emotions, positive experiences, positive environments, and human strengths and virtues. The multitudes of research and new, developing information detailing the possibility of positive psychology at work often deals with reporting workplace safety, employee engagement, productivity, and overall happiness. Moreover, understanding the significance of a healthy work environment

can directly provide and contribute to work mastery and work ethic. Motivation, researchers have learned, helps to keep a reinforced sense of both discipline and a higher perception which then yields to higher levels of efficiency for both employees and employers.

At last I would like to say **“If positive mental health is there, Personal and social environment is there, and it Nurtures You, Me, and We.”**

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## THE EFFECT OF MINDFULNESS AMONG B.ED STUDENT-TEACHERS

Mrs. Bushra Shaikh

### Abstract

*Over the past decade, training in mindfulness—the intentional cultivation of moment-by-moment non-judgmental focused attention and awareness—has spread from its initial western applications in medicine to other fields, including education. This paper reviews mindfulness training for B.Ed Student-Teachers. In this article, we explore several components through which mindfulness meditation exerts its effects: (a) attention regulation, (b) body awareness, and (c) change in perspective on the self. Cultivation of mindfulness, the nonjudgmental awareness of experiences in the present moment, produces beneficial effects on well-being. Mindfulness meditation has therefore increasingly been incorporated into psychotherapeutic interventions.*

**Keywords:** *Mindfulness, attention regulation, body awareness, and change in perspective on the self.*



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### Introduction:

Teacher and his education are very significant aspects of any nation. The education gives a new shape to the individual and the nation as well. It is a well known saying that teacher is the nation builder. The quality of teacher education programme needs to be up graded. Teacher education has not come up to the requisite standards. Teachers are not able to think critically and solve the issue related to teaching methods, content, organization etc. teacher education programme needs a comprehensive reform and restructuring curriculum of teacher-education programme needs to be revised according to changing needs of society. Rates of depression, anxiety and stress are rising on teacher-education course in India. For that, proposed remedies are numerous. And one that is garnering growing attention is meditation and mindfulness meditation in particular.

The aim is simple: to pay attention – be "mindful". Mindfulness is a way of paying attention to, and seeing clearly whatever is happening in our lives. It will not eliminate life's pressures, but it can help us respond to them in a calmer manner that benefits our heart, head, and body. It helps us recognize and step away from habitual, often unconscious emotional and physiological reactions to everyday events. It provides us with a scientifically researched

approach to cultivating clarity, insight, and understanding. Practicing mindfulness allows us to be fully present in our life and work, and improve our quality of life.

### **What does mindfulness involve?**

According to Jon Kabat-Zinn, "mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way; on purpose, in the present moment, and non judgmentally."

Mindfulness practitioners learn how to pay attention on purpose by practicing specially developed mindfulness meditation practices & mindful movements. With practice, practitioners learn to slow down or stop brain chatter and automatic or habitual reactions, experiencing the present moment as it really is.

When practicing mindfulness, everyone, however much they practice, will experience thought screeching in to their heads uninvited. This is fine - it's just what brains do, but how we respond to these thoughts is important.

If we start to think about the thought, or get annoyed with ourselves for not being able to retain our focus, it stops us paying attention and takes us away from the present moment. If we just acknowledge the thought and let it go **without judgment**, we retain our focus on being in the **present moment**.

As with all new skills, the more we practice it, the easier it becomes. Canadian psychologist, Donald Hebb coined the phrase "neurons that fire together, wire together". In other words, the more we practice mindfulness, the more we develop neuro-pathways in the brain associated with being mindful, which make it easier to be fully in the present moment.

By learning to experience the present moment as it really is, we develop the ability to step away from habitual, often unconscious emotional and physiological reactions to everyday events, see things as they really are and respond to them wisely rather than on auto pilot.

### **Need and Significance of the Study:**

Research on mindfulness in adults suggests that sustained mindfulness practice can enhance attention and emotional self-regulation and promote flexibility, pointing toward significant potential benefits for both teachers and students. Early research results on three illustrative mindfulness-based teacher training initiatives suggest that personal training in mindfulness skills can increase teachers' sense of well-being and teaching self-efficacy, as well as their ability to manage classroom behavior and establish and maintain supportive relationships with students. Since 2005, 14 studies of programs that directly train students in mindfulness have collectively demonstrated a range of cognitive, social, and psychological benefits to both elementary (six studies) and high school (eight studies) students. These include improvements in working memory, attention, academic skills, social skills, emotional

regulation, and self-esteem, as well as self-reported improvements in mood and decreases in anxiety, stress, and fatigue. The educational goals, target population, and core features of ten established mindfulness-based curricula are described. Finally, the need for more rigorous scientific evidence of the benefits of mindfulness-based interventions in K-12 education is discussed, along with suggestions of specific process, outcome, and research-design questions remaining to be answered.

The research base for the usefulness of mindfulness in improving the physical and psychological health and wellbeing of adults is reasonably strong. Mindfulness has been shown to address physical health problems directly, and is effective in reducing pain, high blood pressure, in improving the symptoms of physical conditions such as psoriasis and fibromyalgia. Mindfulness has also clearly been shown to be effective in improving mental health too, addressing problems such as substance abuse, stress, anxiety and recurrent depression, and to improve sleep

**Aim of the Study:**

The major aim of the present research was to study the effect of mindfulness among B.Ed student-teachers.

**Objectives of the Study:**

- To compare the Pre Test and Post Test mean scores of the experimental group.

**Hypotheses of the Study:**

Following null-hypotheses were formulated to test the hypotheses.

- There is no significant difference between the pre test and post test mean scores of the experimental group.

**Methodology of the study:**

The Experimental method was employed in this study.50 student teachers were randomly selected and mindfulness meditation therapy was used on experimental group. Pretest, posttest on experimental group was followed.

**Sample and Data Collection:**

A sample of 50 B. Ed. student-teachers (Unaided teacher education institutions affiliated to the University of Mumbai) was surveyed. The method of sampling used was convenient sampling.

**Tools for Data Collection:**

The following tools were used by the investigator:

Questionnaire :-

Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire was used for the study.

### Procedure:

After the arrangement for the experimental group a pretest was administered on the group. Then the processes of mindfulness meditation were implemented on the experimental group. The experimentation lasted for one week for one hour daily. When the experimentation came to an end the posttest was conducted in the groups.

### Techniques of Data Analysis:

The following descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were used for data analysis:

- v) Descriptive Analysis (with Mean and Median)
- vi) Inferential Analysis (with t-test)

### Findings and Conclusions:

The following table no. 1 shows that there is a significant difference between the pre test and post test mean scores of the experimental group.

**Table No. 1 : Comparison of Pre & Post Test Means Scores of the Experimental Group**

Experimental Group	No. of Student - Teacher	Mean	't' Value
Pre - Test	50	107.96	
Post – Test	50	143.5	1.3744

Significant at 0.01 levels.

The above table shows that there is significant differences between the pre test and post test mean scores of the experimental group as revealed by the 't' value (1.3744) which is significant at 0.01 level.

The better performance of the experimental group in the post test is clearly noticed when it is compared with its pre test performance. This is a definite indication of the effectiveness of the application of Mindfulness Meditation.

### Discussions and Suggestions:

The findings of the present study suggest that there is significant differences between the pre test and post test mean scores of the experimental group. The would be the was conducted at peak stage of the B.Ed Course that was before the one week of internal exam. It was really the stress buster for the student- teachers. They were really feeling relived after the session.

### Conclusion:

There is reasonably strong evidence for the positive impact of mindfulness on a wide range of mental and physical health conditions, on social and emotional skills and wellbeing, and on learning and cognition.

### Mindfulness for Student –

Teachers is easy to carry out, fits into a wide range of contexts, is enjoyed by both students and teachers, and does no harm. Well conducted mindfulness interventions can improve the mental, emotional, social and physical health and wellbeing of young people who take part. It has been shown to reduce stress, anxiety, reactivity and bad behaviour, improve sleep and self-esteem, and bring about greater calmness, relaxation, the ability to manage behaviour and emotions, self-awareness and empathy.

Mindfulness can contribute directly to the development of cognitive and performance skills and executive function. It can help student –

teachers pay greater attention, be more focused, think in more innovative ways, use existing knowledge more effectively, improve working memory, and enhance planning, problem solving, and reasoning skills. It also show that Student –

Teachers who are mindful, either through their character or through learning, tend to experience greater well-being, and that being more mindful tends to accompany more positive emotion, greater popularity and having more friends, and less negative emotion and anxiety.

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## AN INTERVENTIONAL STUDY BASED ON POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY TO PROMOTE ADOLESCENTS' MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

**Madhur Gupta, Ph.D.**

### *Abstract*

*The present study evaluated a positive psychology school-based intervention aimed at enhancing mental health and well being to empower adolescents in a school in South Bangalore. 50 ninth grade students participated in this intervention program were assessed pre- to post-test modifications in psychological symptoms and distress and in targeted well-being factors. The findings showed significant decreases in general distress, anxiety and depression symptoms among the adolescents' participants. In addition, the intervention strengthened self esteem, and optimism, and reduced interpersonal sensitivity symptoms. These results demonstrate the potential benefits of evidence-based positive-psychology interventions for promoting school-children's mental health, and point to the crucial need to make education for well-being an integral part of the school curriculum.*



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### **Introduction**

#### **A Dual Perspective of Mental Health at Schools**

The last two decades were characterized by increasing pressure to improve student achievements through high academic accountability emphasis. This focus has expanded since the 1990s, with the education reform in the United States that has created a pervasive tendency worldwide towards standards, assessment and accountability as major milestones for increasing student achievement (NCLB 2001). As a result, curriculum goals have become more academic and skill-oriented, and social and emotional components of educational programs have taken the back seat to increasingly rigorous academic demands (Hargreaves 2003). Over the course of the past decade, the impetus for preventive interventions to respond to mental health problems has been reinforced by epidemiological research that showed excessive levels of mental health conditions among children and youth (Twenge et al. 2010). According to an Indian Survey of mental health, the prevalence of mental disorders among adolescents younger than 18 years is 11.7 % for any disorder, 8.1 % for internalizing disorders and 4.8 % for externalizing disorders (ICMR, 2010). Additional studies suggest that higher levels of subjective well-being among schoolchildren correlate with better

relationships with parents, teachers, and peers (Gilman and Huebner 2006). These outcomes highlight the potential benefits of incorporating education for well-being in the school curriculum.

The Indian Survey of Mental Health among Adolescents reported that at least 11.7 % of adolescents were diagnosable with a mental disorder (ICMR, 2010). In this same period of time the field of positive psychology has made significant progress in understanding youth trajectories toward improved well-being and positive mental health outcomes (Duckworth et al. 2005). Despite the potential contribution of the science of happiness and positive psychology to prevention science, there is a shortage of empirically validated positive psychology interventions to reduce mental health symptoms and increase well-being in schoolchildren. The present study contributes to ongoing studies in the area of school-based prevention of mental health problems by reporting the effects of a novel positive psychology intervention to adolescents in a school in South Bangalore.

### **Promoting Positive Mental Health in Adolescents**

Numerous studies published during the last decades have provided evidence for the important role that well-being plays in the lives of adolescents (Deiner 1984, 2000; Lyubomirsky 2001). Well-being is largely conceptualized as a whole that is integrated by cognitive and emotional components. The cognitive component includes positive evaluations of different areas of life, and the emotional component is characterized by a dominance of positive emotional experiences (Deiner 200). Positive supportive relationships are the foundation of resilience and subjective well-being (Wang et al. 2003). The purpose of the last factor in the intervention was to promote positive relationships with friends, family and other members in the community, and to encourage the creation of positive school environments. The intervention presented in the current study was conducted by the researcher. It was established to assist adolescents by applying and making the knowledge that the academic world has accumulated in the field of positive psychology. The study was implemented on the student population of a secondary school in the South Bangalore. 50, 9th grade students participated in a 1 month intervention program and an evaluation process from March 2015 to April 2015. The researcher employed a longitudinal repeated measures design that assessed pre- to post-test modifications.

### **The Aims of the Study**

a) To examine whether adolescence participating in the intervention program predicted better mental-health outcomes. It was expected that the participants in the intervention would

exhibit an increase from pre-to post-intervention in self-esteem, optimism, life satisfaction, and lower levels of psychological distress and mental health symptoms.

b) To investigate whether intervention efficacy differed in terms of socio-demographic background characteristics.

### **Sample**

At the beginning of the study two secondary schools in Bangalore were randomly selected from the list of all secondary schools in Bangalore. In the second stage, one of the schools, whose principal agreed for this positive mental health intervention program was selected for the study. In total, 50 students from 9th grade participated in the positive psychology intervention program. Students were mostly Hindus (90 %). 6 % of the adolescents reported Orthodox levels of religious observance, 29 % traditional, and 65 % were secular. In addition, 47 % of the study population reported middle socioeconomic status, 30 % high SES, and 23 % low SES. Participants also provided responses to questions regarding family status (53 % lived in a two-parent family, 46 % lived in a joint family).

### **Tools**

#### **1. Socio-Demographic Schedule**

The adolescents in this study were given a socio-demographic data schedule requesting background information. This included self-report questions about gender, age, grade, participant's religion, and socio-economic status that were determined by a set of income thresholds and household size.

#### **2. Brief Symptoms Inventory**

The adolescents' mental health was measured by the Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI) (Derogatis and Spencer 1982). The BSI, the abbreviated version of the SCL-90-R, comprises 53 self-report symptom items rated on a 4-point Likert scale to identify clinically relevant psychological symptoms in adolescents and adults. The BSI was designed for adolescents and reports norms from that age. The inventory provides distress indices and symptom load assessment on 10 subscales—somatization, obsessive-compulsive, interpersonal sensitivity, depression, anxiety, hostility, phobic anxiety, paranoid ideation, psychotic ideation and miscellaneous.

#### **3. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE; Rosenberg 1965)**

The RSE is a 10-item unidimensional measure of a person's overall evaluation of his or her worthiness as a human being. The RSE is the most widely used measure of self-esteem and requires respondents to rate items on a 4-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). The RSES contains an equal number of positively (e.g.,

people feeling satisfied with life) and negatively (e.g., people feeling they are failures) worded items. After reversing the negatively worded items of the RSE, responses are summed to generate scores ranging from 10 to 40, with lower scores indicating lower self esteem. The RSE (Rosenberg 1965) had a coefficient alpha of 0.77.

### **Methodology**

The intervention program included Students' training workshop, led by the researcher, clinical psychologist, trained in group dynamics and in positive psychology; this phase included 5, 2-h long group sessions in the school, and these 50 students and few teachers took part in it. In order to encourage implementation, increase its effectiveness and standardize it, a student's note book was created, which included class plans for each of the 5 sessions. The program included activities, discussions, reading poems and stories and viewing movie clips dealing with core elements of positive psychology. For example, to address the gratitude component, students were instructed to list up to five or more things that they felt most grateful for in the past week, and shared their written reflections of gratitude and positive experiences with their classmates. Students were also encouraged to write gratitude letters to people who had affected their lives in a positive way and send them to these individuals. After completing one month's program of positive psychology intervention program, the adolescents were examined the effectiveness of a positive psychology school-based intervention program

### **Statistical Analyses**

The main analyses were designed to explore the longer-term relationships between intervention condition and mental health outcomes, simple mean and SD were used.

### **Results**

#### **a) Mental Health Status at the Beginning of the Study**

Results from the mental health variables analyses indicated that many of the student-level characteristics were associated with students' mental health symptoms at the beginning of the study. After accounting for other factors in the model, students in poverty reported higher levels of general distress (GSI mean difference = 0.13, sd = 0.17), higher levels of depression symptoms (mean difference = 0.12, sd = 0.21), and higher levels of anxiety symptoms (mean difference = 0.14, sd = 0.24). Children in joint households also had higher GSI levels (mean difference = 0.13, sd = 0.25), higher depression symptoms (mean difference = 0.16, sd = 0.30), and higher anxiety symptoms (mean difference = 0.15, sd = 0.30) than those in two-parent homes. There were also initial score differences by gender. Males showed decreased GSI levels (mean difference = -0.11, sd = 0.21), lower depressive symptoms (mean difference

=-0.12, sd = 0.23), and lower interpersonal sensitivity symptoms (mean difference =-0.16, sd = 0.36) than females at the beginning of the study. However, males showed increased initial anxiety levels than females (mean difference = 0.14, sd = 0.30).

The student-level characteristics were also associated with students' positive mental health at the beginning of the study. Students whose families were below the poverty level and students in joint households reported significantly lower levels of self-esteem. Males reported higher self-esteem, as compared to females.

### **b) Changes in Mental Health after Intervention**

The study for changes in mental health in adolescents after 5 intervention sessions revealed that on average, participation in the intervention program was associated with fewer mental health symptoms over. Comparison of the general distress index (GSI) levels and the BSI symptom indices to adolescents population norms (for the GSI:  $M = 0.79$ ,  $SD = 0.55$ ) revealed slightly higher levels of psychological symptoms ( $Z = 0.03-0.15$ ) in the intervention. In this intervention study, symptom levels decreased below the normative average. The overall effect sizes were in the small-to-moderate range (mean change =-0.06, sd = 0.15) but most of them were educationally significant. There were no significant interactions between the student-level demographic characteristics and type of intervention as regards changes in mental health.

### **Discussion**

The current study measured changes in mental health symptoms, subjective well-being and self-perception indicators, comprising self-esteem among adolescents participating in a positive psychology intervention program. The links among demographic and background characteristics and changes in mental health was also investigated. It was predicted that by the end of the month long intervention program, participation in the intervention program would lead to better mental health outcomes among the students. Findings indicated a spectrum of mental health changes across the short-term effects of the program. The findings indicate that adolescents in the intervention group showed decreases over time in anxiety and interpersonal sensitivity symptoms. In addition, the participants showed decreases in general distress and depression symptoms. This school-wide approach was developed in order to foster a common positive and supportive language among students, between teachers and students. Thus, the intervention could form a platform of resilience that allowed adolescents to thrive. Many of the benefits were made possible by targeting the intervention directly to classrooms. We assumed that teachers' ability to make positive changes in their own lives

was a crucial component to garner commitment, enthusiasm and empathy in implementing the program in their classrooms.

### **Conclusion**

This study joins to a growing body of work that suggests that positive-psychology interventions within schools (Hawkins et al. 1999; Solomon et al. 2000) can improve adolescents' mental health and well-being. Incorporation of positive psychology elements into school curricula can bring about a decisive change in the role of school from an academic institution that focuses on imparting knowledge and skills to a holistic institution that meets a wide range of children's and adolescents' needs in various areas of life through coordinated socio-emotional and academic learning. However, for the effects to be sustained and extensive, I believe that it is extremely important to weave positive psychology throughout the core school curriculum in Mathematics, Language Arts, Science, Social Studies, and the Fine Arts, as well as to involve parents and community change agents in future interventions.

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## **DEVELOPMENT OF A LIFE SKILLS TRAINING PROGRAM FOR POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH THROUGH THE PERSON CENTERED APPROACH**

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### **Abstract**

*Promotion of positive mental health is widely being recognized as a key resource for the population well-being and the social and economic prosperity of society. Life Skills are the crucial for individuals to make proactive choices leading to positive mental health. A Life skills Training program titled the Skills For Life Program was developed to empower prospective teachers with Life Skills essential for a fulfilling professional and personal life leading to positive mental health. The duration of the program was 40 hours, which includes 30 hours of face to face interactive sessions and 10 hours of assignments. The target group was pre-service teachers from B.Ed colleges affiliated to the University of Mumbai. Total sample size is 123 male as well as female prospective teachers. Participative techniques with a focus on reflection, individual goal setting and self assessment are planned. Experiential learning will involve role plays, analysis of films and video clips and creative group exercises. Practicing the Life skills and ongoing facilitator support to practice the same is the highlight of the program. This paper discusses development of a life skills program for positive mental health based on the Person Centered approach advocated by Carl Rogers. The paper briefly outlines the basic concepts and the goals of the Person Centered approach and explains the development of the Life skills Training program for positive mental health based on the principles of Person Centered Approach.*

**Key words:** *Life skills Training, Person Centered approach, Positive Mental Health.*



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### **Introduction:**

There is growing recognition that mental health is an integral part of general health and well-being. WHO asserts that 'there is no health without mental health'? Positive mental health focuses on the promotion of mental health as opposed to dealing with mental illness. Positive mental health is recognized as a key resource for population well-being and the social and economic prosperity of society (Barry, 2009). Life skills are abilities which empower the



individual to make proactive choices for individual well-being and also to ensure meaningful contribution to the society. Research findings suggest a strong link between life skills and positive mental health.

This paper discusses the use of the Person Centered Approach for development of a life skills training program for positive mental health. The program was implemented for prospective secondary school teachers.

### **Concept of Life Skills:**

A skill is a learned ability to do something well. Life Skills are skills that enable individuals to live a fruitful life. Life Skills are subject to interpretation and there is no single definition of life skills. UNICEF defines Life Skills as “A behavior change or behavior development approach designed to address a balance of three areas, knowledge, attitude and behavior.” The International Bureau of Education (2000) defines Life Skills as “personal management and social skills that are necessary for adequate functioning on an independent basis.” World Health Organization (WHO) defines Life Skills as, “The abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life.” According to WHO (1999) life skills consist of personal, interpersonal, cognitive and physical skills that enable people to control and direct their lives and to develop the capacity to live with and produce change in their environment.

Life skills involve the processes of thinking, feeling and acting that develop an attitude favoring positive change, knowledge revealing how to change and skills in realizing the desired change. (Tung, 2002)

The Skills for Life program is a comprehensive program conceived with the objective of training prospective teachers in the areas of selected life skills, to enhance personal as well as professional competence.

The Life Skills are based on targeted Life Skills areas according to World Health Organization (1997). The focus of the program is the Coping and Self Management Skills cluster, which will include the following three sub skills viz. Skills for increasing internal locus of control, Skills for managing feelings and Skills for managing stress.

The duration of the program is 40 hours, which includes 30 hours of face to face interactive sessions and 10 hours of assignments. The target group is pre-service teachers from B.Ed colleges affiliated to the University of Mumbai. Total sample size is 123 prospective teachers.

Participative techniques with a focus on reflection, individual goal setting and self assessment are planned. Experiential learning will involve role plays, analysis of films and video clips

and creative group exercises. Practicing the Life skills and ongoing facilitator support to practice the same is the highlight of the program.

It is expected that effective acquisition of life skills can influence the way one feels about oneself and others and can enhance one's productivity, efficacy, self-esteem and self-confidence. They also provide tools and techniques to improve interpersonal relations. Hence as an outcome of the program, the prospective teachers are expected to feel empowered with the skills of self management, which may lead to enhanced effectiveness in their career as well as fulfillment in their personal lives.

The program is based on humanistic principles, and more specifically, the Person Centered Approach has been kept in mind while designing the program.

**PERSON CENTERED APPROACH (CARL ROGERS, 1959):**

The humanistic model, while acknowledging that people are influenced by their childhood and also by their current learning experiences, posits that they can play a part in fashioning their own lives to the extent that they are psychologically well. Carl Rogers is the founder of client centered therapy, based on the humanistic paradigm, also called the Person Centered approach.

**Rationale for using Person Centered approach:**

The Person Centered Approach was used with the aim to train the participants in life skills for positive mental health. Positive mental health aims at optimal functioning of the individual. The Person Centered Approach is based on the premise of facilitating the individual to actualize his/her potential. The objectives of the Skills for Life program are facilitating the participants to analyse their own areas of skill deficits, and empowering them with strategies to overcome these in an atmosphere that ensures sustainable change. Secondly, through modeling, it was expected that the participants will learn the facilitation skills needed to guide learning in a learner centered environment. Thus, use of the Person Centered Approach was to empower the learners with the skills to realize their potential, leading to their well-being.

The learners in the Skills for Life program are adults ranging from ages 22 years to 45 years. Hence a training program for a sustainable change in these learners needs to be based on principles of Adult Learning. Speck (1996) notes that the following important points of adult learning theory should be considered when professional development activities are designed for educators:

- Adults will commit to learning when the goals and objectives are considered realistic and important to them.

- Adults want to be the origin of their own learning and will resist learning activities they believe are an attack on their competence. Thus, professional development needs to give participants some control over the what, who, how, why, when, and where of their learning in a democratic learning environment.

Thus, a life skills training program developed keeping in mind the essential elements of the process that facilitates a personality change in individuals towards their self actualization, would help in starting a process of sustainable change in adults, as well as providing them with a model of behaviors that they could use in order to facilitate these changes in their students. According to the Person Centered Approach, Rogers sees individuals as capable of self direction. Self actualization and the provision of choice for the individual are the corner stone's of the Person Centered approach. Hence the Person Centered Approach was the chosen approach for the design of the Skills for Life Program.

### **BASIC CONCEPTS:**

**1. Perceptual/Subjective frame of reference:** Rogers(1980) stresses that the only reality a person can possibly know is the world which that individual perceives and experiences at this moment. In the person centered approach the focus is on the subjective view of the person, the perceptions of the participants are viewed through their version of reality.

**Implications for program development:** During the development of the program keeping in mind the subjective nature of reality for each participant of the program, conscious effort was made to avoid a prescriptive manner of presentation. An activity was designed at the beginning of each module which engaged the participants in exploring their own individual conceptions of the world, with reference to the construct under consideration. E. g. In the module on coping with emotions, incomplete statements were given and the participants were asked to complete these to explore their own triggers, strategies for coping as well as areas of deficits. Experiential activities were designed to help the participants present their perceptions of the world in form of role plays. Post activity discussions encouraged clarifications, and were designed to provide the participants a range of options for developing their skills, while leaving the choice of the options to the participants themselves.

The participants were encouraged to try out the strategies, and maintain a reflective narrative of their experiences. These narratives were shared in the next sessions and doubts were addressed. Thus the focus was on exploration of the subjective realities of the participants and helping them develop strategies to enhance life skills according to their own aspirations and individual requirements.

**1. Actualizing tendency:** The actualizing tendency is the single basic motivation drive. It is an active process of representing the inherent tendency of the organism to develop its capacities in the direction of maintaining, enhancing and reproducing itself. It is viewed as basically positive and assumes that man has the capacity to guide, regulate and control himself provided certain definable conditions exist. The cornerstone of Person Centered approach is that people move towards self regulation and their own enhancement and away from external forces.

The Person Centered Approach proposes that all psychological difficulties are caused by blockages to this actualizing tendency and the task of counseling is to release further this fundamentally good motivating drive.

According to Rogers, individuals appear to have two motivational systems, their organismic actualizing tendency and their conditions of worth.

The development of self concept is essentially the expression of these two valuing processes.

**Organismic Valuing Process:** The concept of an organismic valuing process is central to the idea of a true or real self. This relates to the continuous weighing of experience and placing values on that experience in term of its ability to satisfy actualizing tendency. E.g. The infant prefers experiences such as security which enhance his organism and rejects pain which does not.

**Conditions of worth:** Positive regard is the perception of experiencing oneself as making a positive difference in the experiential field of another. A need for positive regard for others is a learned need developed in early infancy. Many times, the person's experiencing of behavior will coincide with positive regard from others, thus meeting own need for positive regard. E.g. Altruistic behavior satisfies the person himself and also gains positive regard from others.

However, there may be occasions when the person may feel that his experiencing may conflict with his need for positive regard from significant others. E.g. At times a need to prioritize personal life may get the person organismic valuing, but may not get the person positive regard from colleagues at work. In such a case, instead of an accurate symbolization of the experience as "I find this satisfying but my colleagues perceive it as unsatisfying, there may be distorted symbolization as " I find this behavior unsatisfying" leading to stress related to maintaining a healthy work life balance. Such values which are based on others' evaluations rather than on the individual's own organismic valuation process are called conditions of worth. These conditions of worth lead to the individual developing a second valuing process. This second valuing process is based on the internalization or introjections

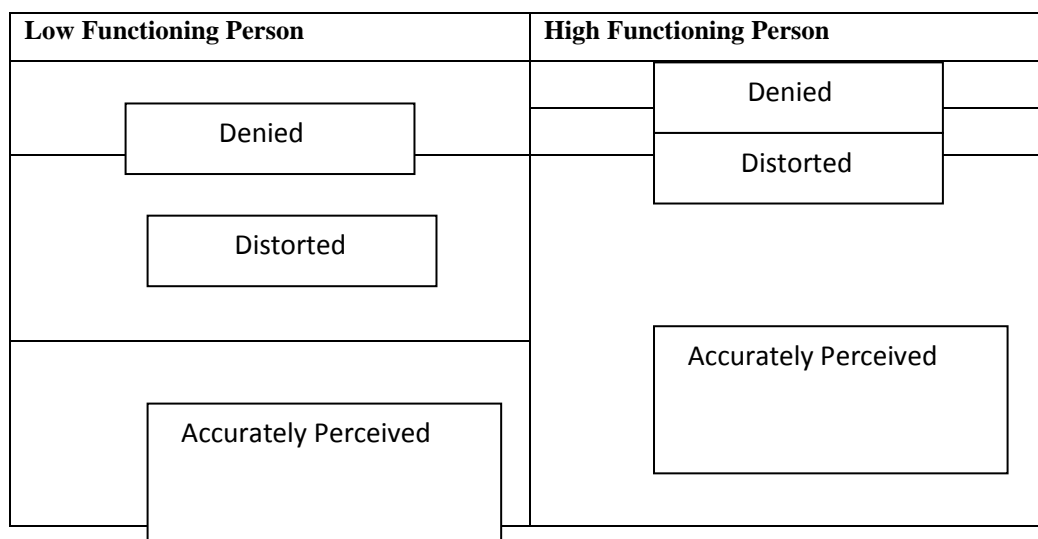
of others evaluations, which does not truly represent the actualizing tendency of the individual and serves to impede it. The individual has a false awareness in regard to this second valuing process since he feels that decisions based on it are in fact based on his organismic valuing process. Thus experiences may be sought to meet false rather than real needs leading to dissatisfaction.

Individuals differ in the degree to which they internalize conditions of worth, depending on the emotional quality of their environment and their own need for positive regard. Some examples of debilitating conditions of worth are beliefs like, “Achievement/success is very important, I am less of a person if I am not successful/I do not achieve.”

Rogers believes that it is common for most individuals to have their values largely introjected, held as fixed concepts and rarely examined or tested. Thus not only are they estranged from their experiencing but their level of self regard is lowered and they are unable to prize themselves fully. Further by internalizing conditions of worth, they have internalized the process by which they come to be the agents of lowering their own level of self regard.

Thus, conditions of worth play a major role in the processing of experience into perceptions.

Fig. 1.1 represents the processing of experience by a low functioning and high functioning person. The low functioning person is out of touch with his own valuing process for large areas of his experiencing. In these areas, his self concept is based on conditions of worth which deny much of his experiencing. On the other hand, the high functioning person has fewer conditions of worth and thus is able to perceive most of his experiences accurately.



**Fig 1.1 Diagrammatic representation of processing of experience by a low functioning and high functioning person. Source: The Theory and Practice of Counseling Psychology, Jones, R N.**

### **Implications for program development**

A conscious effort was made to design activities which in the first stage helped to create an awareness of conditions of worth. They were then asked to reflect on aspects that created a feeling of discomfort within them. These were clarified through discussion in small groups, where the other participants gave feedback to encourage realistic perceptions of self.

After the stage of awareness was established, participants were encouraged to think rationally about conditions of worth that they have for themselves, to analyze if these conditions empower them or create conflict. Strategies to reflect on conditions of worth and to replace these with more empowering alternatives leading to the accurate perceptions of reality were then discussed. Reflective narratives by the participants about the process were discussed, and in case the participants sought clarifications, these clarifications were given by the researcher. The whole process was carried out keeping in mind the three essential qualities of facilitator for adopting the Person centered approach given by Carl Rogers, namely Unconditional Positive Regard, Empathetic Understanding and Genuineness.

### **2. Goals of the program according to the Person Centered Approach**

Person Centered Approach advocates that the goal of an intervention is a fully functioning person. Carl Rogers has elucidated the qualities of a fully functioning person. These qualities were kept in mind as goals to be achieved by the participants through the intervention.

#### **a. Realistic Perception**

A self concept which allows all the significant sensory and visceral experiences to be perceived is the basis for effective functioning. Realistic perception ensures that people operate from choice rather than necessity. Thus realistic perception enables people to engage in the existential process of living where they are alive, able to handle change, and alert to the range of their choices for creating their lives.

### **Implications for the program**

Activities to increase self awareness, as well as seeking feedback from others were incorporated to encourage realistic perception. E.g. the participants completed the Johari Window exercise and outlined their goals for more effective conceptions of self.

The entire program encouraged ongoing self reflection, coupled with discussion and clarifications with external constructive feedback so as to help the participants become aware of their own perceptions and to enable them to perceive all that they experience, lessening deletion or distortion.

### **b. Personal Responsibility**

This refers to people's taking responsibility for their self actualizing and not just feeling responsible to others. This covers Roger's ideas of individual trust in their organismic valuing process, trust of authority within, acceptance of responsibility of their own behavior and acceptance of responsibility of being different from others. Personally responsible people, within the existential parameters of death and destiny are able to take control of their lives.

#### **Implications for program development**

The program started with the participants outlining the areas of their life where they wanted to make change, thus underlining personal responsibility for change. In activities to develop skills like Goal Setting awareness of personal responsibility with an existential framework was stressed, with emphasis on setting goals to fulfill personal needs, outlining a program of action to achieve the goals, and most important, tracking changes to see check progress as well as to conduct ecological checks. Openness and the flexibility to change if required were also stressed. A session was conducted on proactive behavior and the participants formulated their own strategies for incorporating proactive behaviors.

### **c. Self Regard**

People with high degree of unconditional self regard prize themselves though they may not prize all their behaviors and attributes. A positive self regard is based on a person's own organismic valuing process, rather than evaluations made by others. Hence the degree of self regard depends on the conditions of worth internalized by an individual.

#### **Implications for program development**

Since positive self regard depends on the conditions of worth, self exploratory exercises were included in the program to create awareness of one's own conditions of worth. Once this awareness was created, the participants were urged to reflect on the conditions of worth that impede positive self regard, and strategies to overcome these were suggested. An important aspect of the program was a creation of awareness that a person and his/her behavior are two distinct parameters. Hence it was stressed that one may not like one's own behavior in a particular situation, but that does not reflect /decrease the self worth of the total person. Another measure to increase the positive self regard of the participants is the adoption of a completely non-judgmental attitude by the facilitator. The facilitator herself exhibited unconditional positive regard for the participants, thus serving as a model to the participants as well as helping them to open up and become aware of their own conditions of worth and examine these.



**d. Capacity for good personal relations**

This incorporates notions of accepting others as unique individuals, prizing others, relating openly and freely to them on the basis of immediate experiencing and having the capacity when appropriate to communicate rich self awareness. These relations are characterized by mutual concern for both persons self actualizing. They are also characterized by good listening, authenticity, genuineness as well as empathy.

**Implications for program development:**

Along with exercises aimed at increasing positive self regard and self awareness mentioned above, the program involved exercises where the participants worked in groups to share and reflect. At the beginning of the program, one session was conducted to facilitate good listening skills and empathy in the participants. These were repeatedly stressed throughout the program to ensure that participants also develop the skills for good interpersonal relations.

**e. Ethical living**

At the core of the Person Centered Approach is the belief that the person is a trustworthy organism. It believes that people seek others self actualizing along with their own, and are careful not to infringe on the rights of others while pursuing their own ends. They also are able to distinguish between good and evil, means and ends.

**Implications for program development**

The entire program was designed with the belief that people are trustworthy and they would like to self actualize at the same time help others to do so. This was reflected in the various group activities organized which required the participants to give honest constructive feedback to each other in an atmosphere of empathy, genuineness and unconditional positive regard. Confidentiality was also stressed and the participants entered into a confidentiality contract with the group.

**f. Rationality**

When people are in touch with their actualizing tendency, there is less deletion and distortion and their perceptions tend to be rational.

**Implications for program development**

Rationality was stressed in all the activities of the program, the participants were encouraged to question beliefs and ensure that they stem from a rational background. In the sharing sessions the facilitator adopted a rational mode and modeled as well as encouraged the same of the participants.

## **Conclusion**

In the development of the Skills for Life program for prospective teachers for positive mental health, the Person Centered Approach focuses on the person as the central theme of the intervention. Hence, the Skills for Life Program has been designed keeping in mind respect for individuality, rests on the assumption that every individual has the capacity to self actualise and aims at development of participants to become fully functioning individuals. It is expected that after having undergone this program, not only will prospective teachers feel empowered to work towards actualizing their own potential, but will also carry on similar strategies as role models for their future students in schools.

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