



## **Mental Health and Academic Achievement of Secondary school students: A study**

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### **Abstract**

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*Social health is getting attention recently because of its ill effects on overall community and issues related to sustainability. Social health includes a major area of concern i.e. mental health. A big challenge for mental health improvement is identifying indicators of positive mental health, as opposed to indicators of mental illness. School health is an important branch of community health that is an economical and powerful means of raising the health of the community.*

*This study focuses on studying the mental status of secondary school students with respect to its six dimensions- student's Positive self evaluation (PSE), - Perception of reality (PR), Integration of personality (IP), Autonomy (AUT), Group oriented attitudes (GOA), Environmental mastery (EM). The overall mental health is found to be poor. The relationship of mental health and academic achievement is also studied and is found to be positive.*

*This study thus attempted to find out the academic achievement as an indicator of mental health of the students. To improve the mental health the program can be developed which can take into account the academic achievement of the students.*

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**Key words:** *Mental Health, Academic Achievement, Secondary School Students*

## **Background of the study**

School health is an important branch of community health that is an economical and powerful means of raising the health of the community. It has developed from the narrowed concept of medical examination of school children, to the present day concept of comprehensive care of the health and well being of children throughout their school years.

Several behavioral and cognitive theories have emphasized the role of learning in the development of mental disorders. This internalized state may be a precursor of a depression in later years. Mental health can be socially constructed and socially defined; that is, different professions, communities, societies and cultures have very different ways of conceptualizing its nature and causes, determining what is mentally healthy, and deciding what interventions are appropriate.

Anxiety and depression can affect academic performance and academic achievement. However, school life may also have a beneficial effect for some students with pre-existing conditions. With widening participation in higher education, the results have important implications for educational and health policies.

It is possible to know something regarding to academic achievement; from the marks of students who have achieved in general examination may at the end of academic year or half of it. And find the correlation of mental health and academic achievement through statistical analysis. In this context the researchers focused on the mental health of Secondary School students and to determine is there any relationship between the two. This study thus conducted may prove helpful to understand the mental health status of the students at school level with respect to various dimensions included in mental health. This may lead to initiate the program aiming at improving the mental health of the students, to improve their academic performance and thus social well being.

## **Need and importance of the study**

Indian children are currently enrolled in schools and that school age group (4-16 yrs) makes up more than one of four of the total population of children in schools. The school

health program offers a great opportunity for improving the mental health of the population and to get satisfactory academic achievement.

All around the world many people suffering from mental diseases, therefore, if schools provide Health Education with special attention on mental health program, in the future people can get along well with new surrounding, therefore, mental diseases and mental disorders, will be decreased.

Mental health problems can affect school performance and academic achievement. When mental health problems are not recognized, students may be unable to reach their academic potential. School and the teachers are in a key position to provide interventions to address mental health and academic achievement to achieve their goals with respect to child education.

### **Conceptual foundations**

**Mental health** according to Wikipedia is either a level of cognitive or emotional well-being or an absence of a mental disorder. The World Health Organization defines mental health as "a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community". This definition of mental health highlights emotional well-being, the capacity to live a full and creative life, and the flexibility to deal with life's inevitable challenges. According to S K Srivastava (2005), a person is called mentally healthy when he understands himself and his own desires, his motivations, drives and wishes.

According to Julia Dilley (2009), the health and academic performance are discussed with the help of following points-

**Health and Education Are Linked:** For students in middle and high school, health risks and academic risks affect each other. Students who do poorly in school may have more health risks, which adversely affect their achievement and in turn contribute to health risks. Data from the

**Every Health Risk Can Affect Academic Success:** The more health risks students have, the less likely they will succeed in school or graduate on time. Each health risk that can be removed has the potential to positively influence academic behaviors. Improvement of even a single health factor may help improve academic achievement.

**Interventions Can Narrow Disparities:** Lack of equal chances for success—the result of poverty, discrimination, unequal access to services, and other factors—affects a person's health. These patterns of socioeconomic disparities are often the same for disparities in academic



achievement. It may be unrealistic to expect to close the achievement gap for disadvantaged youth without addressing wellness, readiness to learn, and the conditions affecting the health of the community.

### **Operational definitions**

1. *Mental health*: Following components of mental health are considered for the present piece of research:
  - Student's Positive self evaluation (PSE)
  - Perception of reality (PR)
  - Integration of personality (IP)
  - Autonomy (AUT)
  - Group oriented attitudes (GOA) and
  - Environmental mastery (EM)
2. *Academic achievement*: the scores obtained by the subject (sample) in the midterm (I and II) examinations are considered as academic achievement.
3. *Secondary school students*: For this study the male students of IX standard from one school in Pune city are considered as secondary school students

### **Objectives of the study**

1. To assess mental health of secondary schools students.
2. To determine the mental health of the secondary school students with respect different dimensions of mental health.
3. To determine relationship between mental health and academic achievement.

### **Assumptions**

The study is based on the following assumptions:

1. Students have their own mental health status.
2. The mental health of the students can be measured.
3. The result of examination shows the academic achievement.

### **Delimitations**

This piece of research is delimited to:

1. Only male secondary school students
2. Students studying in the IX standard in secondary school.
3. Sample considered is from one of the schools in Pune city.

## **Limitation**

The results of the study are based on the responses given by the subjects selected for the study.

## **Methodology**

### **Method of the research**

For this research co-relational method is used.

### **Population and Sampling**

*Population:* All the male students studying in IX standard in English medium schools of Pune city is the population for the present study. The sample comprises of 72 students.

### **Tools for the study**

Standard psychology test - Mental Health Inventory (MHI) is used.

### **Description of mental health measuring test:**

Mental Health Inventory (MHI), as developed by Dr Jagdish and Dr. A.K. Srivastava was used to measure mental health (positive) of normal individuals. This instrument includes 56 statements to consider 6 dimensions of positive mental health involve: positive self-evaluation, perception of reality, integration of personality, autonomy, group oriented attitude and environmental mastery. Basically the questionnaire was used to measure 6 different dimensions of the mental health such as:

- i. PSE-Positive self evaluation (10).
- ii. PR- Perception of reality (08).
- iii. IP- Integration of personality (12).
- iv. AUT- Autonomy (06)
- v. GOA- Group oriented attitudes (10).
- vi. EM- Environmental mastery (10).

The right figures shows the numbers of statements for each dimension regarding to that part and in total there were 56statements.

## **Statistical tools**

The following tools were used for the analysis of the data.

1. **Mean:** When we want to get average for different scores we use mean.
2. **Coefficient of Correlation:** To express the degree of relationship between mental health and academic achievement using Product moment correlation coefficient.

### **Procedure of the study**

After selection of the sample, to assess the Mental Health of the students the standardized test was administered on the respondents by the researchers. The marks obtained by the sample in I and II midterm tests were noted down. After data collection it was analyzed to come to the conclusion.

### **Analysis and interpretation**

**Table - 1**  
**Analysis of the respondents' scores**

S.N.	Mental Health Dimensions	Mean Score	S.D.
1	PSE	28	2.828
2	PR	21.16	1.908
3	IP	31.52	4.144
4	AUT	15.88	2.698
5	GOA	27.65	2.311
6	EM	26.69	3.092

**Table-2**  
**Mental Health status of the students**

S.N.	Dimension of MH	Max. expected score	Observed score	Status/level of MH
1	PSE	38.31 and above	28	Poor
2	PR	29.82 and above	21.16	Poor
3	IP	44.87 and above	31.52	Poor
4	AUT	22.34 and above	15.88	Average
5	GOA	38.50 and above	27.65	Poor
6	EM	36.26 and above	26.69	Average

### **Observation and Interpretation**

- From table 1 and 2, it is observed that, Total mean of the MHI of respondents is 150.8. Thus, we draw a conclusion that MH of respondents is poor (157.01 to below 176.45).
- As observed data regarding to academic achievement and mental health; the correlation coefficient between in these two variables in is 0.0234 and this figure shows that correlation coefficient is positive.

## **Conclusion**

Health is a major issue in today's world full of challenges. Health indicators are used to both to define a public health problem and to indicate changes in health over time. A big challenge for mental health improvement is identifying indicators of positive mental health, as opposed to indicators of mental illness in order to develop a sound program. At school level this paper attempted to know the mental health status of the Secondary school students, also a positive relationship is found between mental health status and academic achievement. Thus student's academic achievement can serve as an indicator of mental health. The sound program can be developed to improve academic achievement through mental health of students and vice versa.

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