

Comparative Study of Mental Health Among Students Preparing for Competitive Exams

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This study was conducted to investigate the differences in mental health among students preparing for competitive exams. A total of 60 samples were taken for this study, including 30 boys and 30 girls preparing for competitive exams. These students were selected from the Lakshya Career Academy located in Bhavnagar. To collect data, the Mental Health Inventory developed by Dr. A.K. Srivastava and Dr. Jagdish (1982) was used. This original Hindi questionnaire was translated into Gujarati by BhavanabenThummar (2009). The collected data was used to measure the mental health of the subjects, and the t-test was used for statistical boys and girls preparing for competitive exams.

Keyword :-Mental health , Boys preparing for competitive exams, girls preparing for competitive exams

1.Introduction

In the modern era, education is no longer merely a means of acquiring knowledge; it has become an important medium for employment, social prestige, and economic security. In India, a large number of young people participate in competitive examinations such as UPSC, GPSC, SSC, banking, TET, police, teacher recruitment, and others. To achieve success in these examinations, students have to engage in continuous study for long periods, face intense competition, cope with time constraints, and deal with high expectations. As a result, the mental health of such students is deeply affected.

1.1 What is mental health?

Human life is not a bed of roses, but a crown filled with thorns. Ups and downs are an inevitable part of life. Along with happiness and joy, difficulties and sufferings also exist in human life. A person has many needs. If all these needs are satisfied, human life becomes much easier; however, obstacles and barriers frequently arise in the fulfillment of these needs. Due to the storms that come in life, a person is often unable to achieve their goals. Delays in meeting needs, failures, inadequacy, loss, illness, and various responsibilities cause a person to experience mental distress. Ambition is essential in every individual's life, and anxiety is natural. If a person is not concerned and does not strive to fulfill their aspirations, progress in life comes to a halt. On the other hand, if one does not feel concern about the outcome of any task beforehand, the desired success is not achieved, and caution and alertness are lacking. From this perspective, anxiety is a necessary part of life for the well-being of both the individual and society. Then why is anxiety considered a mental disorder? The question is natural. Therefore, it is necessary to clarify this.

1.2 Definition of mental health

“Mental health is a systematic and well-organized effort to prevent mental problems, resulting in the development of a healthy personality.” Coleman (1962) “Mental health is such an adjustment with the world and other individuals that enables a person to achieve maximum satisfaction.” Lehner and Kube (1984) “Mental health is the ability to understand one's emotions and willpower through self-introspection.” Bernhart (1989) “Mental health is the development of a particular type of behavior in individuals, both from personal and social perspectives, which possesses the highest capacity to prevent

any kind of mental illness.”Hadley (1998) “Mental health is an adjustment of the individual with the environment that results in maximum personal satisfaction.”Maslow (1960)

1.3 Review of Related Literature

According to an analytical study by Kamdar, B. J. (2016) on the mental health, frustration tolerance, and mental well-being of undergraduate and postgraduate students using Facebook and WhatsApp, the effect of the type of social media was not significant, nor was the effect of gender. No significant difference was found between the frustration. tolerance scores of students using social media for less than 2 hours versus more than 2 hours. However, the interaction effects between the type of social media and gender, type of social media and duration of use, and gender and duration of use were found to be significant. Additionally, the joint effect of all three type of social media, gender, and duration of use was also found to be significant in this study.

2. Research Methodology

(1)Objectives :

The present study was undertaken with the following objective:

To study the mental health of college students preparing for competitive exams.

(2) Hypothesis :

The following Null Hypothesis has been formulated for the investigation:

There will be no significant difference in the mental health of college students preparing for competitive exams.

(3)Variables :

(1) Independent Variables

Boys preparing for competitive exams and girls preparing for competitive exams

(2)Dependent Variable :-

Mental health scores obtained from students preparing for competitive exams.

(3)Controlled Variables :-

Only students from the Lakshya Career Academy,Bhavnagar; selection of only 60 students (30 boys and 30 girls).

(4)Sample :

In accordance with the current objective, a total sample of 60 was selected, including 30 boys and 30 girls preparing for competitive exams from the Lakshya Career Academy The selection was made using the Purposive Sampling method.

(5)Research Design :

Keeping the current objective in mind, 60 samples were selected for this research, consisting of 30 girls and 30 boys preparing for competitive exams The purposive sampling method was utilized for this selection.

(6)Tools :

The following tools were used to collect relevant information:

(a) Personal Information Schedule:

The main purpose of this schedule was to collect important information related to the study's variables, such as gender, age, and education level.

(b)Mental Health Inventory:

This inventory was used to measure mental health. It was developed by Dr. A.K. Srivastava and Dr. Jagdish (1982). The original Hindi inventory was translated into Gujarati and standardized by Bhavana Thummar (2000/2009).Structure: It includes a total of 56 questions covering six important areas of mental health.Response Scale: Four options are provided for each question:‘Always’, ‘Mostly’, ‘Sometimes’, and ‘Never’.

(c)Reliability:

The split-half reliability of the original inventory was $r=0.73$ (N=600). The Gujarati version by Bhavana Thummar showed a split-half reliability of $r=0.74$ (N=100).

(d)Validity:

The construct validity of the original inventory was $r=0.57$ (N=600). The Gujarati version showed a construct validity of $r=0.68$.

(7) Procedure

The Mental Health Inventory consists of six areas: (1) Positive self-evaluation, (2) Perception of

reality, (3) Integration of personality, (4) Mastery over the environment, (5) Autonomy, and (6) Group-oriented attitude. Respondents are asked to tick the appropriate option among four choices. Scoring: For positive questions, scores of 1, 2, 3, and 4 are given, while for negative questions, the scoring is 4, 3, 2, and 1. Range: The maximum possible score is 224 and the minimum is 56. Interpretation: A higher score indicates better mental health, while a lower score indicates poorer mental health.

(3) Result : -

t value of Mental Health of college students Preparing for Competitive Exams

NO	GROUP	N	M	SD	df	t	level of significant
1	Boys preparing for competitive exam	30	149.47	9.33	58	5.02	0.01 significant
2	girls preparing for competitive exam	30	160.97	8.39			

(4) Interpretation

From the t-table, it can be stated that between the two groups—boys and girls preparing for competitive examinations—the calculated value of t is **t5.02**. When the degree of freedom (df) is 58, the table value at the **0.05** level of significance is **2.00** and at the **0.01** level is **2.66**. Since the calculated value of t is less than the table value, the null hypothesis is accepted. This means that there is significant difference between the two groups.

This result indicates that there is a significant and meaningful gender-based difference in the level of mental health among students preparing for competitive examinations. In other words, the preparation process does not affect the mental health of boys and girls in the same way. There may be significant differences between the two groups in factors such as psychological pressure, anxiety, stress, or adaptability.

(5) Conclusion

In the study of mental health among boys and girls preparing for competitive examinations, the null hypothesis is rejected. The results indicate that there is a statistically significant and meaningful difference in the level of mental health between the two groups

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