

MENTAL HEALTH IN RELATION TO ADJUSTMENT AND SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT OF WARDS OF DEFENCE PERSONNEL

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Abstract

It is known fact that the mental health plays a very important role in human life. The defence personnel need to perceive their health in all aspects of health i.e. physical, mental and social well-being which further determines success and the future well-being, life satisfaction and excellence in work. During 2010, the Indian Armed Forces had a reported strength of 1.4 million active personnel and 2.1 million reserve personnel. In addition, there were approximately 1.3 million paramilitary personnel, making it one of the world's largest military forces. Current statistics of Army alone shows 2/3rd of defence personnel are married and have children. The lives of families of defence personnel are unique in their own ways. The nature of demands made by defence services may increase the stress level, adjustment of both the parents and children, directly or indirectly influence their relationship with the children. Thus the curiosity of the investigator arouses to know the mental health, adjustment and school environment of wards of defence personnel. So the objectives were to find out relationship between mental health and adjustment; mental health and school environment. The result indicated that there is positive and significant relationship between mental health and adjustment, but there is no correlation between mental health and school environment.

Keywords: Mental Health, Adjustment, School Environment, Relationship.

INTRODUCTION

One's body and mind function harmoniously; it is said that sound body presupposes a sound mind and a sound mind exists in a sound body in so much so that any understanding of personality requires proper analysis of body and mind. Mental health includes all aspects of human personality. The main aspect of personality is adjustment.

Sound mental health is an essential requirement for the harmonious personality. It plays an important role in the child growth and development. It must be taken care at school and at home with sincerity. Mental health of an individual is required for becoming a civilized and efficient member of the society.

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Mental Health refers to a broad array of activities directly or indirectly related to the mental well-being component included in the WHO's definition of health: "A state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease". It is related to the promotion of well-being, the prevention of mental disorders, and the treatment and rehabilitation of people affected by mental disorders.

Good mental health thus becomes imperative for one to attain and enjoy total health. Sound mental health will ensure germination of healthy ideas and action which guide personal and social functioning as well as adjustment.

ADJUSTMENT

The process of adjustment starts right from the birth and continues till death. We face the problem of adjustment at home, school, college and workplace. In adjustment, the two crucial factors are the individual and the environment. In the study of the individual, the considerations are the heredity and biological factors, the psychological factors, and the quality of socialization given to him or her Whereas environment factors includes all the social factors.

Adjustment deals with the way an individual adapts to his environment and demands of life. This includes how he interacts with others and how he gets on with his responsibilities and inner feelings. Psychologically, adjustment helps the organism to cope with the demands and pressures of the outside world as well as the needs, desires and conflicts experienced within.

Encyclopaedia Britannica (2015), adjustment is the behavioural process by which a person and other living beings maintain equilibrium between their needs and the obstacles from their environments. A series of adjustment begins when a need is felt and ends when it is satisfied.

Shukla (2019) studied mental health of residential and non-residential school students. A comparative study was conducted to know mental health of residential and non-residential school students. The design selected for this study is comparative research design which is descriptive in nature. To carry out the present study the population comprises of students of VIII Class belonging to Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya and Government secondary schools located in Faridabad district of Haryana. The sample size of the study consists of 60 residential school students and 60 non-residential school students from selected secondary schools. Researcher employed random sampling technique to select sample units of the study.

The findings of the study showed that there exists a significant difference between residential school students and non-residential school students with respect to the mean scores of their mental health. The mental health of the non-residential school students was found to be better than the mental health of the residential school students.

Ahir (2018) studied the social and emotional adjustment, emotional intelligence and psychological wellbeing of the persons having siblings and the persons don't having siblings. Total 600 persons were taken as a sample. Out of them total 400 person were taken with random method, out of 400 samples, 200 persons having siblings, 200 person's don't having sibling. Out of 200 persons having sibling, 100 male and female were having siblings and 100 male and female don't having siblings. Now out of 100 male and female 50 male and female will be selected who have lived in urban area, 50 male and female were selected who have lived in rural area. To measure social and emotional adjustment Bell Adjustment Inventory was used. For measuring emotional intelligence, Dr S.K.Mangal and Subhra Mangal's Emotional Intelligence Scale was used. For measure psychological well-being Sudha Bhogle's Psychological Well-being was used. For data analysis ANOVA (f-test) and Karl Pearson correlation method was used. There was positive correlation between social adjustment and emotional adjustment, emotional intelligence and psychological wellbeing of the persons having siblings and the persons don't having siblings.

SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

The school is the most important experience in the process of child development next to home. When the child enters the school area, she/he is presented with new opportunities in terms of socialization and cognitive development. These opportunities are provided in different measures in school and may have a direct impact on cognitive and affective development of students.

The school substitutes home situations and often meets emotional needs that are neglected in the home. The school should provide experiences to develop the total individual through self-realization, human relationships, stimulate learning and develop good behavioural patterns. The experiences at school and school curriculum contribute to the child's feeling of personal worth, social competence in winning acceptance from associates, physical satisfaction necessary to the well-being of the individual, freedom to play and to accomplish tasks and to develop interests and activities providing social values. If children have favourable attitude towards school related aspects like teachers, classmates, curriculum, methods of teaching,

facilities available in the classroom and school as a whole; they are expected to be motivated better than those who have unfavourable attitude towards the school.

Students who experience their school as a caring community become more motivated, ambitious and engage in their learning. In particular, students' active connection with teachers and their perceptions that teachers care about them are what stimulate their effort and engagement.

According to Zais (2011), school environment means the extent to which school settings promote student safety and student health, which may include topics such as the physical plant, the academic environment, available physical and mental health supports and services, and the fairness and adequacy of disciplinary procedures, as supported by relevant research and an assessment of validity.

School is a special environment where certain qualities of life and certain type of activities and occupations are provided with the objective of securing a child's development along desirable lines.

Oberle (2018) studied positive mental health and supportive school environments. A population-level longitudinal study of dispositional optimism and school relationships in early adolescence was conducted. The present study examined the degree to which early adolescents' relationship experiences in school (i.e., peer group belonging, peer victimization, and supportive relationships with adults)—at the individual level and at the school-level—were associated with their dispositional optimism, concurrently and over time. Self-report data from over 4000 4th and 7th graders were obtained via a population-level measure designed to assess students' supportive relationships, well-being, and resilience (i.e., the Middle Years Development Instrument). An indicator for family income (SES) was obtained through tax filer information. The findings suggest that positive relationship experiences in school are key contributors to positive mental health, over and above the absence of negative relationship experiences (i.e., victimization). These findings also suggest that being embedded in a school with a positive social relational climate contributes to students' current and future positive mental health, over and above individual relationships with peers and adults.

De Pedro (2018) Studied on School Climate, Deployment, and Mental Health among Students in Military-Connected Schools. Research has found that when compared with civilian students, military-connected students in the United States have more negative mental health outcomes, stemming from the stress of military life events (i.e., deployment). This

study draws from a large sample of military and non-military secondary adolescents in military-connected schools (N = 14,943) and examines associations between school climate, military connection, deployment, and mental health. Findings show that multiple components of school climate are associated with a lower likelihood of depressive symptoms and suicidal ideation and increased likelihood of well-being among students in military-connected schools, after controlling for student demographics, military connection, and deployments.

Thus it can be said that the school environment has broad influence on students' learning and growth, including a significant aspect of their social, emotional and ethical development. When students find their school environment supportive and caring, they are less likely to become involved in substance abuse, violence and other problem behaviour.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Wards in defence families on an average move six to nine times before they graduate high school. That means navigating new schools, finding new friends, and catching up in classes over and over again. 1.1 million School age children have parents on active duty. On some bases, the Department of Defence runs its own schools for military children, but also some of military wards go to public schools.

While there are many positive elements of growing up in a military family, being a military ward means always having to adjust and adapt to an array of changes. In this study the researcher will study the challenges that military wards face, some common difficulties they experience as a reaction to those challenges and to help children to overcome them.

Schools teach content at different paces and with different teaching styles. Schools have the expectations from the child that he/she should have the knowledge of content at the time of entering in the school. A child may enter a classroom where they are expected to have knowledge of content they haven't been taught yet. This is especially challenging for children who learn differently or have special needs. Frequent school changes do not give a teacher time to understand how a child learns best. This can lead to difficulties in the adjustment with school environment. This may affect the health especially mental health of students.

Frequent moves can also make it difficult to build and maintain friendships and social groups. Always having to "put oneself out there" and get to know new people is tiring, especially if one knows another move will be on the horizon which means starting over again. This can leave defence children feeling lonely or difficulties in social adjustment.

These issues aroused the curiosity of the investigator to know the mental health, adjustment and school environment of wards of defence personnel. So the topic has been taken to find out whether there is any relationship between mental health and adjustment; mental health and school environment.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the relationship between mental health and adjustment of wards of defence personnel.
- To study the relationship between mental health and school environment of wards of defence personnel.

HYPOTHESES

- There is no significant correlation between mental health and adjustment of wards of defence personnel.
- There is no significant correlation between mental health and school environment of wards of defence personnel.

DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The study is delimited to 100 wards of IX class whose parents who are serving in defence.
- The study is conducted on students studying in schools in defence establishment in Chandigarh.
- The study was limited to three variables i.e. Mental Health, Adjustment and School Environment.

SAMPLE

Sample is a miniature picture of the entire group of aggregates from which it has been taken. In the present study, the sample of 100 students of IX grade was chosen through random sampling technique from schools of Central government in defence establishment. It included Kendriya Vidyalaya 3 BRD, Kendriya Vidyalaya, Sector 31 and Air Force School Sector 31, Chandigarh. The whole sample was given the three tools one after the other to be filled in.

TOOLS USED

For the present study following standardized tools were used:

- Mental health battery by Singh and Sengupta (2012)
- Adjustment Inventory for school students by Sinha and Singh (2010)
- School environment inventory developed by Mishra (2013)

METHOD AND PROCEDURE

For collecting the data, investigator requested the Principals of Kendriya Vidyalayas and Air Force School for the permission to collect data. The investigator asked the students of class IX whose parents are serving in Defence Services to assemble in a separate class. The investigator read the instructions to the students as given in the manual of the inventories. The investigator made it clear to the students that their answers were strictly for the purpose of research work and they were assured about the confidential nature of their responses. The students were first given Mental Health Battery followed by Adjustment Inventory for School Students and then School Environment Inventory. Finally, the response sheets were collected and analysed.

SCORING

For scoring of the responses of Mental Health Battery, the answers of the items which tally with the answers given in the scoring key were given a score of 1 and those which didn't tally were given 0. For the total score, we summed all the responses. For scoring of the responses of Adjustment Inventory for School Students, answers indicative of adjustment were given 0, otherwise a score of 1 was given. The total score of all the responses was summed. For scoring of School Environment Inventory, each item of the inventory five alternatives were given, a scores of 4 for 'Always', 3 for 'Often', 2 for 'Sometimes', 1 for 'Rarely' and 0 for 'Never'. The responses were summed for the total score.

INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

To test the hypotheses-1 and 2 Pearson's Correlation Coefficient was computed and entered in the tables 1 and 2.

Hypothesis-1

There is no significant correlation of mental health and adjustment of school going wards of defence personnel.

Table 1: Table Showing Coefficient of Correlation of Mental Health and Adjustment of School Going Wards of Defence Personnel

| Variables | N | Mean | Median | S.D. | R | Level of Significance |
|-------------------|-----|-------|--------|------|--------|---------------------------|
| Mental health | 100 | 80.42 | 81 | 7.75 | 0.4243 | Significant at 0.01 level |
| School Adjustment | 100 | 30.54 | 30 | 7.41 | | |

Interpretation

Table 1 shows that the inter-correlation among the variables of Mental Health and Adjustment of the total sample was significant at either 0.01 and 0.05 levels of significance. The value is 0.4243 more than the table value of 0.20 at 0.05 level and 0.267 at 0.01 level. It implies that Mental Health had significant relationship with Adjustment of school going wards of defence personal. Hence the first hypothesis there is no significant correlation of Mental Health and Adjustment of school going wards of defence personnel is rejected and the data did support our hypothesis. This means that mental health of school going wards of defence personal is affected by the adjustment.

The result is supported by the studies Shokeen (2017) and Murugan (2017) whose results are also showing positive and significant relationship between mental health and adjustment.

Hypothesis-2

There is no significant correlation of mental health and school environment of school going wards of defence personnel.

Table 2: Table Showing Coefficient of Correlation of Mental Health and School Environment of School Going Wards of Defence Personnel

| Variables | N | Mean | Median | S.D. | R | Level of Significance |
|--------------------|-----|-------|--------|-------|---------|-------------------------------|
| Mental health | 100 | 80.42 | 81 | 7.75 | -0.0456 | Not significant at 0.01 level |
| School Environment | 100 | 186.3 | 188 | 24.48 | | |

Interpretation

Table 2 shows that the inter-correlation among the variables of Mental Health and School Environment of the total sample was not significant at either 0.01 and 0.05 levels of significance. The value -0.0456 is lower than the table value of 0.20 at 0.05 level and 0.267 at 0.01 level. It implies that mental health had no significant relationship with School Environment of school going wards of defence personal. Hence the first hypothesis there is no significant correlation of Mental Health and School Environment of school going wards of defence personnel is accepted and the data did support our hypothesis. This means that Mental Health of school going wards of defence personal is not affected by the School Environment.

The result is supported by the study Dang and Kaur (2010) whose results are showing that there is no correlation between mental health and school environment.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The following are the educational implications of the study:

- The study is helpful for parents, teachers and community members to understand the mental health of wards of serving defence personnel in relation to school adjustment. Sound mental health leads to better adjustment.
- Future educational research can focus on ways schools of education and universities educate teachers, principals, and pupil personnel on how to respond to the mental health and adjustment of wards of defence personnel.

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