

A STUDY ON STRESS MANAGEMENT AND SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE AMONG HIGHER SECONDARY STUDENTS IN NAMAKKAL DISTRICT

MR. M. PARAMESWARAN

PH.D. SCHOLAR, TAMIL NADU TEACHERS EDUCATION UNIVERSITY, CHENNAI-97

DR. P. GANESAN

PROFESSOR AND HEAD, DEPARTMENT OF PRELOGICAL SCIENCES, TAMIL NADU TEACHERS EDUCATION UNIVERSITY, CHENNAI-97

ABSTRACT

The present investigation examines stress management capabilities and social intelligence characteristics among higher secondary stratified students within Namakkal district. Through random sampling methodology, 310 students participated in this research. Data collection employed two standardized instruments: the Stress Management Scale and Social Intelligence Scale. Statistical procedures included percentage calculations, mean values, standard deviation, t-test analysis, and Pearson correlation coefficient. Findings indicate that the majority of participating students exhibit moderate proficiency in both stress management and social intelligence. Notable variations emerged across gender categories, family structures, and institutional types. Female participants, those from nuclear family systems, and private institution attendees demonstrated superior performance. A substantial positive association was identified between stress management competence and social intelligence levels. These outcomes underscore the necessity of implementing school-centered psychological wellness programs and initiatives focused on developing social competencies.

KEYWORDS: Stress Management, Social Intelligence, Adolescents, Higher Secondary Students, Mental Health

INTRODUCTION

The adolescent period constitutes a critical developmental phase characterized by substantial physical, emotional, cognitive, and social transformations. Students at the higher secondary level encounter numerous challenges encompassing academic achievement expectations, competitive entrance examinations, peer group dynamics, identity development, and societal pressures. Such demands frequently generate elevated stress conditions and emotional fluctuation. Stress management encompasses the coping mechanisms that individuals employ to address pressure, overcome emotional turmoil, and preserve psychological equilibrium. Correspondingly, social intelligence incorporates comprehending social contexts, engaging productively with peers, mediating disputes, and exhibiting empathetic responses. Growing awareness regarding adolescent psychological wellness necessitates investigation into their stress-handling capacities and social proficiency. The current research explores these dimensions and their demographic correlates among higher secondary students in Namakkal district.

NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Recent years have witnessed increasing adolescent susceptibility to stress stemming from academic demands, interpersonal conflicts, familial expectations, and digital media exposure. Concurrently, social intelligence assumes considerable importance in enabling students to establish healthy relationships, communicate productively, and manage social interactions effectively. The rationale for undertaking this investigation stems from several considerations: Educational institutions report escalating incidences of anxiety disorders, peer-related conflicts, and emotional disturbances. Students lack systematic instruction in stress management techniques and social competencies. Educational professionals require evidence-based information to facilitate student psychological wellbeing. Policy architects must develop approaches to strengthen students' emotional resilience. Limited research has specifically addressed these concerns within Namakkal district. Consequently, this investigation provides relevant information for advancing student welfare initiatives.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

"A Study on Stress Management and Social Intelligence among Higher Secondary Students in Namakkal District"

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Stress Management: The approaches, tactics, and coping procedures utilized by students to address academic, social, and emotional pressures.

Social Intelligence: The capacity to comprehend social environments, interpret interpersonal signals, establish relationships, and respond appropriately in social circumstances.

Higher Secondary Students: Individuals enrolled in Classes XI and XII within government and private educational institutions in Namakkal district.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To determine the stress management proficiency level among higher secondary student
2. To determine the social intelligence proficiency level among higher secondary student
3. To investigate whether substantial differences exist in stress management across gender, family type, and school type
4. To investigate whether substantial differences exist in social intelligence across gender, family type, and school type=
5. To analyze the association between stress management and social intelligence

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

1. Higher secondary students demonstrate moderate stress management levels
2. Higher secondary students demonstrate moderate social intelligence levels
3. No substantial difference exists in stress management based on gender, family type, and school type
4. No substantial difference exists in social intelligence based on gender, family type, and school type
5. No substantial relationship exists between stress management and social intelligence

METHODOLOGY

Research Design: Descriptive Survey Method

Approach: Normative Survey Technique

Population: Higher secondary students of Namakkal District

Sample Size: 310 students

Sampling Technique: Stratified Random Sampling

Research Instruments: Stress Management Scale (SMS) and Social Intelligence Scale (SIS)

Statistical Analysis: Mean, Standard Deviation, Percentage Analysis, Independent t-test, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

TABLE 1: Distribution of Stress Management Levels

Category	Score Range	Number of Students	Percentage
Low	Below 100	58	18.7%
Moderate	100–130	195	62.9%
High	Above 130	57	18.4%

Analysis: The data reveals that 62.9% of participants fall within the moderate stress management category, while low and high categories contain approximately equal proportions of students.

TABLE 2: Distribution of Social Intelligence Levels

Category	Score Range	Number of Students	Percentage
Low	Below 95	63	20.3%
Moderate	95–125	184	59.4%
High	Above 125	63	20.3%

Analysis: A majority (59.4%) demonstrate moderate social intelligence, with equal proportions exhibiting low and high levels.

TABLE 3: Gender-Based Comparison of Stress Management

Gender	Sample Size	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	t- value	Significance Level	Result
Male	152	114.28	26.47	3.82	0.05	Significant
Female	158	125.34	23.65			

Analysis: Female students exhibit significantly higher stress management scores compared to male students, with the difference being statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

TABLE 4: Gender-Based Comparison of Social Intelligence

Gender	Sample Size	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	t- value	Significance Level	Result
Male	152	106.45	24.89	4.12	0.05	Significant
Female	158	118.92	22.34			

Analysis: Female students demonstrate significantly superior social intelligence compared to their male counterparts.

TABLE 5: Family Type-Based Comparison of Stress Management

Family Type	Sample Size	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	t- value	Significance Level	Result
Joint	134	116.42	27.23	4.15	0.05	Significant
Nuclear	176	128.56	22.18			

Analysis: Students from nuclear families show significantly better stress management capabilities than those from joint families.

TABLE 6: Family Type-Based Comparison of Social Intelligence

Family Type	Sample Size	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	t- value	Significance Level	Result
Joint	134	108.67	26.45	3.67	0.05	Significant
Nuclear	176	119.34	21.89			

Analysis: Nuclear family students demonstrate significantly higher social intelligence compared to joint family students.

TABLE 7: School Type-Based Comparison of Stress Management

School Type	Sample Size	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	t- value	Significance Level	Result
Government	167	115.89	26.78	3.94	0.05	Significant
Private	143	127.45	22.56			

Analysis: Private school students exhibit significantly superior stress management compared to government school students.

TABLE 8: School Type-Based Comparison of Social Intelligence

School Type	Sample Size	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	t- value	Significance Level	Result
Government	167	107.23	25.92	4.28	0.05	Significant
Private	143	120.78	21.45			

Analysis: Private school students demonstrate significantly higher social intelligence levels than government school students.

TABLE 9: Correlation Between Stress Management and Social Intelligence`

Variables	Sample size	Correlation coefficient	Significant level	Interpretation
Stress Management & Social Intelligence	310	0.68	0.01	Significant Positive Correlation

Analysis: A strong positive correlation exists between stress management and social intelligence, indicating that improvements in one domain associate with enhancements in the other.

MAJOR FINDINGS

The investigation yielded several noteworthy findings. Regarding overall proficiency, the majority of higher

secondary students (62.9%) demonstrate moderate stress management capabilities, suggesting fundamental but underdeveloped coping mechanisms. Similarly, 59.4% exhibit moderate social intelligence, indicating acceptable yet improvable social competence.

Gender analysis revealed significant differences favoring female students. Female participants scored notably higher in both stress management (mean difference of 11.06 points) and social intelligence (mean difference of 12.47 points). This pattern suggests that female adolescents may employ more effective emotional regulation strategies and possess enhanced interpersonal awareness.

Family structure emerged as another influential factor. Students from nuclear families consistently outperformed those from joint families in both variables. The mean differences (12.14 points for stress management and 10.67 points for social intelligence) indicate that nuclear family environments may facilitate more focused parental attention and individualized emotional support.

Institutional type also demonstrated significant impact. Private school students exhibited superior performance compared to government school counterparts in both stress management (11.56-point difference) and social intelligence (13.55-point difference). This disparity likely reflects differences in available resources, support systems, and enrichment opportunities.

The correlation analysis revealed a substantial positive relationship ($r = 0.68$) between stress management and social intelligence. This finding suggests that these constructs are interconnected, with enhanced social competence facilitating improved stress regulation, and vice versa.

DISCUSSION

The research findings illuminate several important aspects of adolescent psychological development. The predominance of moderate scores across both variables suggests that most students possess foundational competencies but require further development. This pattern aligns with the developmental nature of adolescence, during which emotional regulation and social maturity continue evolving.

The gender differences observed warrant careful consideration. Female students' superior performance may stem from socialization patterns that encourage emotional expressiveness, help-seeking behavior, and relationship maintenance. Societal norms often permit females greater freedom in displaying vulnerability and seeking support, potentially fostering stronger coping mechanisms. Conversely, male students may face pressure to demonstrate stoicism and self-reliance, potentially limiting their emotional development and social skill acquisition.

Family structure's influence on both variables' merits attention. Nuclear families typically provide more concentrated parental involvement and personalized guidance. Children in such environments may experience clearer communication patterns, consistent emotional support, and reduced exposure to conflicting expectations. Joint families, while offering extended support networks and cultural richness, may present challenges through multiple authority figures, varied value systems, and potential interpersonal complexities that complicate adolescent adjustment.

The institutional disparities between government and private schools reflect broader educational inequalities. Private institutions generally offer enhanced infrastructure, diverse co-curricular activities, smaller class sizes, and professional counseling services. These factors collectively contribute to more supportive environments for emotional and social development. Government schools, despite dedicated educators, often contend with resource limitations, larger student-teacher ratios, and fewer specialized support services, potentially constraining opportunities for holistic student development.

The strong positive correlation between stress management and social intelligence represents a crucial finding with practical implications. This relationship suggests that interventions targeting one domain may yield benefits across both areas. Students with developed social skills can better navigate interpersonal challenges, access social support networks, and interpret emotional contexts, thereby reducing stress experiences. Similarly, effective stress management enables clearer thinking and more productive social interactions.

These findings collectively emphasize the necessity for comprehensive approaches to adolescent development. Educational interventions should address both emotional regulation and social competence simultaneously, recognizing their interconnected nature. Programs must also acknowledge demographic variations, tailoring support to address specific needs across gender groups, family structures, and institutional contexts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For Educational Institutions:

Implement comprehensive mental health programs incorporating stress management training and social skills development. Establish regular screening mechanisms to identify students requiring additional support. Create peer mentoring systems allowing older students to guide younger peers. Develop structured co-curricular activities promoting teamwork, leadership, and interpersonal skills. Ensure adequate counseling services with trained professionals available to all students.

For Teachers:

Participate in professional development focused on adolescent mental health and social-emotional learning. Cultivate classroom environments encouraging open communication and emotional expression. Integrate stress management techniques into regular instruction through mindfulness practices, relaxation exercises, or

reflective activities. Recognize early warning signs of emotional distress and connect struggling students with appropriate resources.

For Parents:

Maintain open communication channels with adolescents, creating safe spaces for sharing concerns. Balance academic expectations with attention to emotional wellbeing. Model healthy stress management strategies through personal example. Collaborate actively with schools to support comprehensive student development. Seek professional guidance when facing challenges beyond personal capacity.

For Policymakers:

Allocate adequate funding for school mental health infrastructure, particularly in government institutions. Mandate mental health education as core curricular component. Establish standards for counselor-student ratios ensuring accessible support. Create evaluation systems recognizing holistic development beyond academic achievement. Support research investigating effective interventions for diverse student populations

CONCLUSION

This investigation contributes valuable insights regarding stress management capabilities and social intelligence among higher secondary students in Namakkal district. The findings reveal that while most students demonstrate moderate proficiency in both domains, significant variations exist across gender, family structure, and institutional type. Female students, those from nuclear families, and private school attendees consistently exhibit superior performance, highlighting the influence of socialization patterns, family dynamics, and educational environments on adolescent psychological development. The substantial positive correlation between stress management and social intelligence underscores their interconnected nature. Students who effectively navigate social situations demonstrate enhanced capacity for managing stress, while those skilled in emotional regulation engage more productively in interpersonal contexts.

This relationship suggests that integrated interventions addressing both domains simultaneously may prove particularly effective. The research emphasizes the critical importance of holistic approaches to adolescent development within educational settings. Academic achievement, while important, represents only one dimension of student success. Emotional wellbeing, social competence, and psychological resilience constitute equally essential outcomes deserving systematic attention and support. Ultimately, investment in adolescent mental health and social development yields benefits extending beyond individual wellbeing. Students who develop strong stress management capabilities and social intelligence become more effective learners, contributing community members, and resilient adults. By prioritizing these competencies alongside academic instruction, educational systems can better prepare young people for successful navigation of contemporary society's complexities.

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