
A Comparative Study on Environmental Awareness and Mental Health of Higher Secondary Students of Kuzhithurai Educational District

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The present study aims to compare the Mental Health and Environmental Awareness of higher secondary students of Kuzhithurai Educational District. A sample of 250 students was drawn adopting simple random sampling technique from Government, Aided and Unaided higher secondary schools of Kuzhithurai Educational district of Kanyakumari district of Tamil Nadu. Descriptive survey method was employed to collect the data. The 't'- test and F – test and percentage were used for finding the significance of means and significance of relationship between dependent and independent variables. The study revealed that there were no significance differences in mental health of rural and urban students. The study also explored that there was a positive relationship between mental health and Environmental Awareness.

Keywords: Mental Health, Environmental, Rural and Urban Students.

Introduction

Mental health is a pretty broad term. Some use it as a simple synonym to describe our brain's health. Mental health describes our social, emotional, "good" mental health, therefore, has found a balance in his or her social and psychological states, all wrapped up into one. Someone who experiences emotional and psychological areas of life. Generally, a person with balance is satisfied and happy with how these areas are performing in their lives, even if it appears to someone else, they are not in balance. Bhatia (1982) considers mental health as the ability to balance feelings, desires, ambitions and ideals in one's daily living. It means the ability to face and accept the realities of life.

One should remember that this earth has everything to satisfy the needs of animals and human beings but not greed of the living beings. Today's environmental awareness is such in which the harmony and balance between the organism and environment is totally disturbed. Deforestation, pollution, construction of building and use of dynamite to make roads and tunnels disturbed the ecological in balance everywhere which has led to a great disaster.

It can be saved when awareness is brought in school campus as well as in our children and students. Teachers can only motivate and educate. Meinhold and Malkus (2005) emphasized the importance of environmental awareness to individuals about ecology and ecological balance and to combine the knowledge with values leading to action. The main objective of this study was to compare the environmental awareness and mental health with regards to gender and locality.

Need and Significance

Over recent decades, global problems relating to degradation of natural resources and pollution have increased dramatically. Natural resources are depleted by excessive use. Fresh water scarcity on a global scale, deforestation, degradation of river areas, soil depletion and loss of biodiversity are some of the problems that have become a major concern. Air and water pollution have reached such levels that have already resulted in serious health problems, as well as negative impact on the environment.

Awareness is essential to solve these problems. So without environmental awareness, our higher secondary school students will not be able to motivate our future generation to take environment related problems as challenge.

Mental health is the measure of a person's ability to shape his environment to adjust to life as he has to face it, and to do so with a reasonable and happiness. The aim of mental health is to prepare the individual to be happy, productive and useful to his fellow human being by contributing to a changing and challenging society. Mental health which today is recognized as an important aspect of one's total health status. It is a basic factor that contributes to the maintenance of physical health as well as social effectiveness. Modern age is the age of competition which results in tension and mental illness. So mental health is of particular importance in learning and increase scientific knowledge.

Objectives of the Study

- To find out the significant difference if any, in the environmental awareness of the higher secondary students with respect to their gender.
- To find out the significant difference if any, in the environmental awareness of the higher secondary students with respect to their age
- To find out the significant difference if any, in the mental health of the higher secondary students with respect to their gender
- To find out the significant difference if any, in the mental health of the higher secondary students with respect to their age.
- To compare the environmental awareness and mental health of the higher secondary students.

Hypotheses of the Study

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between Higher Secondary school students on environmental awareness with regard to gender

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between Higher Secondary school students on environmental awareness with regard to age

H₀₃: There is no significant difference between Higher Secondary school students on mental health with regard to gender

H₀₄: There is no significant difference between Higher Secondary school students on mental health with regard to age.

Method Used for The Present Study

The investigator has used survey method to study the relationship between the environmental awareness and mental health of higher secondary school students of Kuzhithurai Educational District.

Population & Sample

Population for the present study comprises of higher secondary school students from various schools in Kuzhithurai Educational District. The sample of the present study consists of 250 higher secondary school students from ten higher secondary schools.

Description of the Tool & Data Collection

A personal data sheet has been used to collect data of background variables. Environmental Awareness questionnaire consists of 38 statements and Mental Health Inventory consists of 55 statements with five-point scale namely Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. For the purpose of collecting data, the investigator has selected 10 higher secondary schools in Kuzhithurai Educational District.

Analysis of Data

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between Higher Secondary school students on environmental awareness with regard to gender.

Table – 1

Significance difference between higher secondary school students in their environmental awareness with regard to Gender

Environmental Awareness						
Male		Female		t-Value	P - Value	Remarks (5% level)
Mean	S. D	Mean	S. D			
112.286	18.707	107.159	20.466	2.026	0.044	S

S – Significant

From the table - 2 it is clear that the P – value is less than 0.05 at 5% level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis is not accepted. It shows that there is significant difference between higher secondary school students in their environmental awareness with regard to gender.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between Higher Secondary school students on environmental awareness with regard to age.

Table – 2

Significance difference between higher secondary school students in their environmental awareness with regard to age

Environmental Awareness						
Age 16		Age 17		t-Value	P - Value	Remarks (5% level)
Mean	S. D	Mean	S. D			
109.145	20.165	109.980	18.823	- 0.265	0.791	N S

S – Not Significant

From the table - 3 it is clear that the P – value is greater than 0.05 at 5% level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted. It shows that there is no significant difference between higher secondary school students in their environmental awareness with regard to age.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference between Higher Secondary school students on mental health with regard to gender.

Table - 3
Significance difference between higher secondary school students in the mental health with regard to gender

Mental Health						
Male		Female		t-Value	P - Value	Remarks (5% level)
Mean	S. D	Mean	S. D			
143.448	23.850	144.200	27.402	-2.226	0.821	N S

N S – Not Significant

From the table - 4 it is clear that the P – value is greater than 0.05 at 5% level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted. It shows that there is no significant difference between higher secondary school students in their mental health with regard to gender.

H₀₄: There is no significant difference between Higher Secondary school students on mental health with regard to age.

Table - 5
Significance difference between higher secondary school students in the mental health with regard to age

Mental Health						
Age 16		Age 17		t-Value	P - Value	Remarks (5% level)
Mean	S. D	Mean	S. D			
141.860	24.891	151.980	28.545	-2.495	0.013	S

S – Significant

From the table - 5 it is clear that the P – value is less than 0.05 at 5% level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis is not accepted. It shows that there is significant difference between higher secondary school students in their mental health with regard to age.

Finding

- There is significant difference between the Higher Secondary School Students in their Environmental Awareness based on gender.
- There is no significant difference between the Higher Secondary School Students in their Environmental Awareness based on age.
- There is no significant difference between the Higher Secondary School Students in their mental health based on gender.
- There is significant difference between the Higher Secondary School Students in their mental health based on age.

Interpretation of the Study

On comparing the level of environmental awareness of higher secondary school students based on gender, it is found that there is average level of environmental awareness. There is significant difference between the higher secondary school students in their environmental awareness based on their gender.

On comparing the level of environmental awareness of higher secondary school students based on age, it is found that there is average level of environmental awareness. There is no significant difference between the higher secondary school students in their environmental awareness based on their age.

On comparing the level of mental health of higher secondary school students based on gender, it is found that there is average level of mental health. There is no significant difference between the higher secondary school students in their mental health based on their gender.

On comparing the level of mental health of higher secondary school students based on age, it is found that there is average level of mental health. There is significant difference between the higher secondary school students in their mental health based on their age.

Comparison of Environmental Awareness and Mental Health

Female higher secondary school students have more environmental awareness and good mental health than male higher secondary school students.

Sixteen years old higher secondary school students have better environmental awareness and mental health than seventeen years old higher secondary school students.

Educational Implication

From the analysis of the present study the investigator wishes to recommend the following.

- To enhance the chances of creating more awareness about the environment, the education process has to play more a practical role.
- The subject of environmental education should be included as compulsory subject in curriculum.
- Special emphasis should be given on students at lower school level because they are tomorrow's citizens and educating them means educating a generation.

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- Making simple exercises such as walking and jogging in outside of home is a great boost to your mental health, going for a walk or run outside has even more vital health benefits.
 - Students should get balanced diet which includes vitamin B12 which keep them from getting depression, anxiety, paranoia and more harmful problems. This vitamin can be get from eating foods such as eggs, poultry and dairy products like milk.
 - Students should write simple goals in a book let and try to achieve it.

Conclusion

The investigator found that, rural and urban higher secondary school students have average level of environmental awareness and mental health. There was significant difference between rural and urban higher secondary school students in environmental awareness and mental health. Higher secondary school students arriving from rural area have more awareness on their environment and mental health than those higher secondary school students arriving from urban area.

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