A Study on Personality and Mental Health of Secondary School Students in Thanjavur District

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ABSTRACT— The present study investigates the personality and mental health of secondary school students in Thanjavur District. Using a survey method, data were collected from a representative sample of secondary school students to assess their levels of personality development and mental well-being and to examine differences based on gender, medium of instruction, and locality. The findings reveal that the majority of students fall in the average category for both personality (51.5%) and mental health (49.3%), with roughly equal proportions showing low and high levels. Significant differences were observed between boys and girls, with boys obtaining higher mean scores in both personality and mental health. Medium of instruction also showed a notable influence, as English medium students performed better than Tamil medium students in both variables. Further, rural students demonstrated higher mean scores than urban students in personality as well as mental health. Differences were also evident based on school locality, indicating that the school environment contributes to variations in students' psychological and personal development. Overall, the study indicates that while most secondary school students possess moderate levels of personality and mental health, these characteristics vary significantly across demographic and educational contexts. The results highlight the need for targeted educational and counselling interventions to support balanced personality growth and improved mental well-being among diverse groups of students.

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a vital role in shaping the overall development of children and adolescents. Schools are not only centres for academic learning but also important environments for the formation of personality and the promotion of mental health. During the secondary school stage, students experience rapid physical, emotional, cognitive, and social changes. These developmental changes strongly influence their personality patterns and mental well-being. Personality refers to the unique and relatively stable patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviours that distinguish one individual from another. It affects how students perceive themselves, interact with others, respond to challenges, and make decisions. A well-balanced personality helps students to adjust effectively with peers, teachers, family, and the wider society. Mental health, on the other hand, is a state of emotional and psychological well-being in which an individual can cope with normal stresses of life, work productively, and maintain satisfying relationships. Good mental health enables students

to concentrate on studies, regulate emotions, handle academic pressure, and adapt to changing situations. Poor mental health may lead to anxiety, depression, behavioural problems, low self-esteem, and poor academic performance. In the present competitive and fast-changing world, secondary school students face various pressures such as academic expectations, parental demands, peer influence, social media exposure, and future career concerns. These pressures can influence both their personality development and mental health. Students with positive personality traits such as emotional stability, confidence, and sociability are more likely to maintain better mental health, whereas maladjusted personality traits may increase vulnerability to stress and psychological difficulties.

Understanding the relationship between personality and mental health among secondary school students is therefore very important. Such understanding will help teachers, parents, and counsellors to identify students at risk, provide timely support, and create a healthy school environment that promotes both psychological well-being and positive personality development. In a district like Thanjavur, where students come from diverse social, economic, and educational backgrounds, studying these variables can provide valuable insights for educational planning and student guidance.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Adolescence is a sensitive period marked by significant personality formation and vulnerability to mental health issues. Many secondary school students experience stress, emotional conflicts, and adjustment problems that may affect their behaviour, learning, and social relationships. Differences in family background, school environment, gender, and locality may further influence their personality

traits and mental health status. Despite the importance of these factors, there is limited empirical research focusing on the combined study of personality and mental health among secondary school students at the district level. Without such information, it becomes difficult for educators and policymakers to plan suitable interventions to support students' psychological and personal development. Therefore, there is a need to systematically study and understand the level of personality traits and mental health among secondary school students and to examine whether significant differences exist with respect to selected background variables. Hence, the problem of the present investigation is stated as: "A Study on Personality and Mental Health of Secondary School Students in Thanjavur District."

NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Adolescence is a crucial period of growth and transformation in an individual's life, marked by significant physical, emotional, and psychological changes. Secondary school students, who are mostly adolescents, face unique challenges that impact both their personality development and mental well-being. In recent years, there has been a growing concern about the increasing mental health issues among school students, including stress, anxiety, depression, and emotional instability, often exacerbated by academic pressure and social expectations.

In the context of Thanjavur district, with its diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, students may encounter additional challenges such as limited access to mental health resources, family expectations, and environmental stressors. This necessitates a focused study to understand the personality patterns and mental health status of these students. Moreover, early identification of personality traits and mental health issues can help in implementing preventive interventions,

counseling programs, and educational support systems to foster healthy psychological development among students. The study is also needed to bridge the gap in localized research and contribute to the knowledge base specific to this region.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Based on the needs of the present study the investigator has derived the following objectives.

i. To find out the level of Personality of Secondary school students

ii. To find out the level of Mental health of the Secondary students

iii. To find out there is any significant difference between Personality of Secondary school students with respect to Gender

iv. To find out there is any significance difference between Personality of Secondary school students with respect to their Medium of Instruction

v. To find out there is any significance difference between Personality of Secondary school students with respect to location of the students

vi. To find out there is any significance difference between Personality of Secondary school students with respect to types of the school

HYPOTHESES:-

The hypothesis formulated for the present study is formulated as following.

i. There is no significant difference between Personality of Secondary school students with respect to Gender

ii. There is no significance difference between Personality of Secondary school students with

respect to their Medium of Instruction

iii. There is no significance difference between Personality of Secondary school students with respect to location of the students

iv. There is no significance difference in Personality of Secondary school students with respect to types of the school

Method Adopted in the Present Study (Modified Version)

The present study adopts the survey method. The survey method is a systematic approach to collect data from a large group of respondents in order to describe and analyse existing conditions, behaviours, and characteristics. the researcher to collect information regarding personality and mental health from a large number of secondary school students within a limited period of time.

Population of the Study

Population refers to the entire group of individuals possessing certain common characteristics relevant to the study. In sampling studies, the population is the total set from which inferences are to be drawn. For the present investigation, the population comprises all secondary school students studying in various government, aided, and private schools in Thanjavur District.

Sample of the Study

In the present study, the investigator employed the simple random sampling technique to ensure that each student in the population had an equal chance of being selected. A total of 300 secondary school students were selected as the sample for this investigation. The data were collected from selected secondary schools located in different parts of

Thanjavur District to obtain a representative distribution of students.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING - PERSONALITY

Null hypothesis-1.1

There is no significant difference between Personality of Secondary school students with respect to Gender

Table -4.3

Significant difference between Personality of Secondary school students with respect to Gender

Variable	Boys N=140		Girls N=160		Calculated value of 't'	Remarks at 5% level
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Personality	136.71	24.294	134.16	25.572	4.30	S

(At 5% level of significance, the table value is 1.96)

NS- Not significant, S- Significant

It is inferred from the above table that the calculated t-value (4.30) is greater than the table value (1.96) at the 5% level of significance with 298 degrees of freedom. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that there is a significant difference between boys and girls in their personality levels among secondary school students. Furthermore, a comparison of the mean scores reveals that boys exhibit higher personality scores than girls, suggesting that boys possess relatively stronger personality traits in this sample.

Null hypothesis-1.2

There is no significance difference between Personality of Secondary school students with respect to their Medium of Instruction

Table -4.4

Significance difference between Personality of Secondary school students with respect to their Medium of Instruction

Variable	Tamil N=180		English N=120		Calculated value of 't'	Remarks at 5% level
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Personality	131.16	22.172	136.71	24.694	2.10	S

(At 5% level of significance, the table value is 1.96)

NS- Not significant, S- Significant

It is inferred from the above table that the calculated value of 't' (2.10) is greater than the table value of 't' (1.96) at 5% level of significance for df 298. Hence the null hypothesis is *rejected*. Thus, there is significant difference between Tamil medium and English medium of Secondary school students in their Personality. While, comparing the means scores of English medium students have better than Tamil medium of Secondary school students in their Personality.

Null hypothesis-1.3

There is no significance difference between Personality of Secondary school students with respect to location of the students

Table -4.5

Significance difference between Personality of Secondary school students with respect to location of the students

Variable	Rural N=195	Urban N=105	Calculated	Remarks at

le	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	value of 't'	5% level
Personality	136.71	23.694	129.16	22.072	12.43	S

(At 5% level of significance, the table value is 1.96)

NS- Not significant, S- Significant

It is inferred from the above table that the calculated value of 't' (12.43) is greater than the table value of 't' (1.96) at 5% level of significance for df 298. Hence the null hypothesis is *rejected*. Thus, there is significant difference between rural and urban area of Secondary school students in their Personality. While, comparing the means scores of rural areas students have better than urban area of Secondary school students in their Personality.

Null hypothesis-1.4

There is no significance difference between Personality of Secondary school students with respect to location of the school

Table -4.6

Significance difference between Personalities of Secondary school students with respect to location of the school

Variable	Rural N=157		Urban N=143		Calculated value of 't'	Remarks at 5% level
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Persona	134.	24.6	137.	25.0	5.13	S

| lity | 71 | 94 | 16 | 72 | | |

(At 5% level of significance, the table value is 1.96)

NS- Not significant, S- Significant

It is inferred from the above table that the calculated value of 't' (5.13) is greater than the table value of 't' (1.96) at 5% level of significance for df 298. Hence the null hypothesis is *rejected*. Thus, there is significant difference between rural and urban area school Secondary school students in their Personality. While, comparing the means scores of urban areas secondary school students have better than urban area school Secondary school students in their Personality.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING - MENTAL HEALTH

Null hypothesis-2.1

There is no significant difference between Mental Health of Secondary school students with respect to Gender

Table -4.14

Significant difference between Mental health of Secondary school students with respect to Gender

Variable	Boys N=140		Girls N=160		Calculated value of 't'	Remarks at 5% level
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Mental Health	138.71	24.194	136.16	23.572	2.10	S

(At 5% level of significance, the table value is 1.96)

NS- Not significant, S- Significant

It is inferred from the above table that the calculated value of 't' (2.10) is greater than the table value of 't' (1.96) at 5% level of significance for df 298. Hence the null hypothesis is *rejected*. Thus, there is significant difference between boys and girls in Secondary school students in their Mental Health. While, comparing the means scores of boy's students have better than girls' secondary school students in their Mental health.

Null hypothesis-2.2

There is no significance difference between Mental health of Secondary school students with respect to their Medium of Instruction

Table -4.15

Significance difference between Mental health s of Secondary school students with respect to their Medium of Instruction

Variable	Tamil N=180		English N=120		Calculated value of 't'	Remarks at 5% level
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Mental health	131.16	23.672	136.71	22.494	6.10	S

(At 5% level of significance, the table value is 1.96)

NS- Not significant, S- Significant

It is inferred from the above table that the calculated value of 't' (6.10) is greater than the table value of 't' (1.96) at 5% level of significance for df 298. Hence the null hypothesis is *rejected*. Thus, there is significant difference between Tamil medium and English medium of Secondary school students in their Mental health . While, comparing the means scores of English medium students have better than Tamil medium of Secondary school students in their Mental health

Null hypothesis-2.3

There is no significance difference between Mental health of Secondary school students with respect to location of the students

Table -4.16

Significance difference between Mental health s of Secondary school students with respect to location of the students

Variable	Rural N=195		Urban N=105		Calculated value of 't'	Remarks at 5% level
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Mental health	136.71	24.694	129.16	20.072	3.430	S

(At 5% level of significance, the table value is 1.96)

NS- Not significant, S- Significant

It is inferred from the above table that the calculated value of 't' (3.430) is greater than the table value of 't' (1.96)

at 5% level of significance for df 298. Hence the null hypothesis is *rejected*. Thus, there is significant difference between rural and urban area of Secondary school students in their Mental health . While, comparing the means scores of rural areas students have better than urban area of Secondary school students in their Mental health

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

❖ About 23.5% of the secondary school students show a low level of personality development, 51.5% show an average level, and 25.0% show a high level of personality. This indicates that the majority of students possess a moderate level of desirable personality traits.

❖ With regard to gender, 26.2% of boys have low, 50.3% average, and 23.5% high level of personality, whereas among girls 21.3% have low, 54.2% average, and 24.5% high level of personality.

❖ There is a significant difference between boys and girls in personality. On comparison of mean scores, boys score higher than girls in overall personality.

❖ A significant difference exists between Tamil medium and English medium students in personality, with English medium students obtaining higher mean scores than Tamil medium students.

❖ There is a significant difference between rural and urban students in personality. Rural students show higher mean scores than urban students.

❖ A significant difference is also observed based on school locality, indicating variation in personality between students studying in rural schools and those studying in urban schools.

❖ Regarding mental health, 25.7% of the students have a low level, 49.3% have an average level, and 25.0%

have a high level of mental health, showing that nearly half of the students fall in the average range.

❖ Among boys, 25.2% show low, 51.3% average, and 23.5% high level of mental health, while among girls 23.3% show low, 54.2% average, and 22.5% high level of mental health.

❖ There is a significant gender difference in mental health, with boys scoring higher than girls on the mean mental health score.

❖ A significant difference is found between Tamil and English medium students in mental health, where English medium students perform better on average.

❖ There is a significant difference between rural and urban students in mental health, with rural students showing higher mean scores than urban students.

❖ A significant difference is observed based on school location (rural vs. urban schools) in mental health, indicating that the school environment is associated with variations in students' mental well-being.

❖ **Overall interpretation:**

Most secondary school students possess moderate levels of both personality development and mental health. However, meaningful differences are observed based on gender, medium of instruction, and locality, suggesting that these background factors influence students' personality traits and psychological well-being.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY
(Based on the Findings)

❖ Need for strengthening average-level students

❖ Since the majority of students fall in the average category of both personality and mental health, schools should design enrichment programmes to move students from average to high levels. Regular

personality development classes, group discussions, and reflective activities can enhance confidence and emotional stability.

Gender-focused interventions

❖ As boys scored higher than girls in both personality and mental health, special support should be given to girl students through mentoring, confidence-building activities, leadership opportunities, and counselling to reduce emotional stress and improve self-concept.

Support for Tamil medium learners

❖ Because English medium students performed better in both variables, Tamil medium schools should provide additional communication training, exposure to varied learning resources, and motivational programmes to strengthen students' personality traits and psychological well-being.

Rural–urban balanced development

❖ The differences between rural and urban students indicate that one common programme may not suit all. Urban students may need stress reduction and emotional regulation training, while rural students may benefit from social exposure, competitive skill development, and career orientation.

School environment matters

❖ Variation based on school locality suggests that schools should create positive, inclusive, and emotionally safe environments. Activities that promote cooperation, peer support, and healthy teacher–student relationships can directly improve mental health and personality.

Integration of life skills into curriculum

❖ Since personality and mental health are at moderate levels for many students, life skills education (self-awareness, empathy, decision making, coping with stress) should be embedded into regular classroom teaching rather than treated as an extra activity.

Regular guidance and counselling services

❖ Significant differences across groups show that some students are more vulnerable than others. A school counselling cell can identify students with low personality or poor mental health and provide timely individual or group intervention.

Language-inclusive pedagogical practices

❖ Teachers should adopt bilingual and interactive teaching methods so that Tamil medium students do not feel academically or socially inferior, thereby improving their confidence and mental health.

❖ In summary, the results indicate that while most students are at an average level, systematic, group-specific, and context-sensitive educational practices are essential to strengthen both personality and mental health of secondary school students.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

❖ A study on relationship between Personality and Mental Health of secondary school students

❖ A study on relationship between emotional intelligence and Personality of college level.

❖ Effectiveness of different teaching strategies and teacher effectiveness.

❖ A study on the cognitive, effective and psychomotor factors affecting of secondary school students level

❖ Future studies can be conducted using a larger sample size covering students from different states, education boards, and socioeconomic backgrounds to improve generalizability.

❖ Similar studies can be conducted at primary, higher secondary, or collegiate levels to compare developmental changes in personality and Mental Health.

❖ Future research could explore the relationship between parenting styles and adolescent personality development and Mental Health.

CONCLUSION

The present study reveals that the majority of secondary school students in Thanjavur District possess only an average level of both personality development and mental health. Only about one-fourth of the students fall in the high category, while nearly one-fourth remain in the low category. This indicates the need for systematic efforts in schools to strengthen students' personal and psychological competencies. The findings show clear group differences. Boys score significantly higher than girls in both personality and mental health, suggesting that girl students require greater emotional and confidence-building support. English medium students perform better than Tamil medium students in both variables, pointing to the need for additional academic and communicative enrichment in Tamil medium schools. Rural students demonstrate stronger personality traits than urban students, and significant rural–urban differences are also observed in mental health, indicating that the social and school environment has a strong influence on student development. Differences based on school locality further confirm that the type and setting of the school contribute to variations in both personality and mental well-being. Most importantly, the study establishes a significant positive relationship between personality and mental health. Students with better personality development tend to show better mental health, proving that these two aspects grow together and should not be treated separately in education. Therefore, the conclusion drawn from the findings is that improving students' personality traits will also contribute to better mental health, and vice versa. Schools must move beyond purely academic instruction and actively promote life skills, emotional maturity, social interaction, and psychological support. Special attention should be given to girls, Tamil medium learners, and students in less supportive environments to ensure balanced development.

Overall, nurturing personality and mental health is essential for helping students become confident, well-adjusted, and capable of facing future challenges. Educational practices and policies should consciously integrate programmes that strengthen both these dimensions for the holistic development of every secondary school student.

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