

Coping with Adolescent Issues: An Investigation of Youth Problems among Higher Secondary Students

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Abstract

Adolescence is a pivotal developmental phase characterized by significant physical, emotional, and social transformations. This study explores the predominant challenges faced by higher secondary students; focusing on the coping strategies they utilize to manage these issues. Utilizing a survey method, the research examines key problem areas, including family, school, social, and personal difficulties, as well as heightened emotional sensitivity. The background variables analyzed are Gender, Region, Medium of Instruction, Stream of Study, Family Type, and Type of School. A random sampling technique was employed to select a sample of 300 higher secondary students from Chennai. Statistical techniques such as mean, standard deviation, t-test, chi-square analysis, and correlation analysis were applied for data interpretation. The findings underscore into the importance of support systems like family, teachers, and counsellors in assisting students with their coping mechanisms. The paper concludes by offering recommendations to create a supportive school environment and improve student resilience through targeted interventions and guidance programs.

Keywords: Adolescence, Youth Challenges, Coping Strategies, Emotional Sensitivity, Mental Health, Student Resilience, Guidance Programs

Introduction

Adolescence is a time of significant physical, emotional, and social changes, and higher secondary students, aged 15 to 18, face challenges in balancing academic pressures and social dynamics while transitioning into adulthood. Recent studies show that youth problems during adolescence can take many forms, such as academic stress, family conflicts, peer pressure, and mental health issues. This research seeks to investigate the prevalent challenges faced by higher

secondary students and the coping strategies they employ. By employing a survey methodology to collect data from a diverse cohort of students, the study aims to illuminate the specific issues they confront and the underlying factors that shape their coping mechanisms. It will also examine the role of support systems; including families, teachers, and counsellors, in helping students manage their adolescent struggles.

Review of Literature

The review of related literature is crucial in research, as it provides the researcher with up-to-date information on existing studies in their field. It ensures familiarity with previous work and helps the researcher understand what has been learned about similar problems. This review serves multiple purposes and is a foundational activity in any well-designed research project. Research on adolescence indicates it is a period of intense psychological and emotional changes. According to Erikson's theory of psychosocial development, adolescents experience identity versus role confusion, which shapes their self-concept and social roles.

Literature reveals that academic stress, mental health concerns, peer pressure, and familial expectations are the major problems faced by adolescents (Deb et al., 2015; Sreedevi et al., 2016). Other studies also highlight the impact of technology and social media on student behavior (Twenge, 2020). By synthesizing findings from these diverse studies, the researcher gains a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted influences on the youth problem among higher secondary students. These insights inform the conceptual framework and methodology employed in the present study, facilitating a nuanced exploration of values among this demographic.

Need for the Study

Higher secondary students face increased academic pressure, emotional upheaval, peer influence, and societal expectations, all of which can significantly affect their mental health and academic performance. Recognizing and understanding these challenges is crucial for developing effective coping strategies that cater to their emotional, social, and psychological needs. This study aims to identify the common issues encountered by adolescents during this critical phase of development. By shedding light on these challenges, the research seeks to provide valuable insights for educators, parents, and policymakers, enabling them to create supportive environments that promote the well-being and personal growth of young people.

Such environments are essential for helping adolescents navigate their formative years and build resilience against the pressures they face.

Objectives of the Study

- To find out the difference in youth problem in higher secondary students owing to difference in gender, region, medium of instruction, stream of study and family type.

Hypothesis of the Study

- There is no significance difference in the youth problem in higher secondary students owing to difference in gender, region, medium of instruction, stream of study and family type.

Methodology

Research problems typically require diverse methodologies for thorough investigation. In this study, the chosen approach is the survey method, which facilitates the collection of quantitative data to gain insights into the specific issues at hand.

Sample

For the present study the investigators collected the samples from the students from various higher secondary schools in Chennai. The investigators collected a sample of 300 students.

Tools Used In For the Study:

The investigators used Dr. (Mrs.) M. Verma's (2004) Youth Problem Inventory to gather data. A 5-point rating scale was employed to assess the factors impacting youth problems. Participants indicated their most suitable option by placing a checkmark in the provided space.

Reliability and Validity

By obtaining opinions regarding the claims made in the tools from professionals in the field of education, the investigator employed content validity to guarantee the validity of the instrument. It was discovered that the tool's dependability was 0.937.

Data Analysis

1. There is no significant disparity in the youth problems experienced by higher secondary students attributed to gender.

Table - 1

Table showing the critical ratio of difference in youth problem of male and female students

Categories	N	Mean	SD	t-test value	df	P value and significance level	Interpretation
Female	150	28.37	18.526	-2.716	298	0.593	Accepted
Male	150	34.21	18.717			P > 0.05	

Table 1 shows that the mean score for females is 28.37 (SD = 18.526), while males have a mean score of 34.21 (SD = 18.717). The significance value of 0.593 exceeds 0.05, indicating no significant difference at the 5% level. Consequently, the null hypothesis is accepted, suggesting that gender differences do not significantly affect value orientation among higher secondary students.

- There is no significant difference in the youth problems faced by higher secondary students attributable to regional variations.

Table - 2

Table Showing the Critical Ratio of Difference in Youth Problem of Rural and Urban Students

Categories	N	Mean	SD	t-test value	df	P value and significance level	Interpretation
Rural	150	33.27	17.021	1.836	298	0.002	Rejected
Urban	150	29.30	20.323			P < .05	

Table 2 indicates that rural students have a mean score of 33.27 (SD = 17.021)

compared to urban students' mean score of 29.30 (SD = 20.323). With a significant value of 0.002, below the 0.05 threshold, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating a significant difference in value orientation among higher secondary students based on their regional backgrounds.

3. There is no significant disparity in the youth problems of higher secondary students attributable to the medium of instruction.

Table - 3

Table showing the critical ratio of difference in youth problem of Tamil and English medium students

Categories	N	Mean	SD	t-test value	df	P value and significance level	Interpretation
Tamil	51	40.12	20.832	3.758	298	0.016	Rejected
English	249	29.48	17.893			P < .05	

Table 3 shows a mean score of 40.12 (SD = 20.832) for Tamil and 29.48 (SD = 17.893) for English. The significant value of 0.018, below 0.05, indicates a significant difference in youth problems among higher secondary students based on their medium of instruction, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

4. There is no significant variation in the youth problems experienced by higher secondary students attributable to their chosen stream of study.

Table - 4

Table showing the critical ratio of difference in youth problem of Arts and Science students

Categories	N	Mean	SD	t-test value	df	P value and significance level	Interpretation
Arts	232	29.43	19.315	-3.211	298	0.010	Rejected
Science	68	37.63	15.538			P < 0.05	

The table indicates a mean score of 29.43 for arts (SD = 19.315) and 37.63 for English (SD = 15.538). A significance value of 0.010, below the 0.05 threshold, indicates a significant difference at the 5% level. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, suggesting a significant difference in value orientation among higher secondary students based on their field of study.

5. There is no notable difference in the youth problems of higher secondary students attributable to family type.

Table - 5

Table showing the critical ratio of difference in youth problem of joint and nuclear family students

Categories	N	Mean	SD	t-test value	df	P value and significance level	Interpretation
Joint	81	35.48	21.25 9	2.385	298	0.006 P < 0.05	Rejected
Nuclear	218	29.68	17.65 4				

The table shows that the mean score for joint families is 35.48 (SD = 21.259) and for nuclear families is 29.68 (SD = 17.654). With a significance value of 0.006, below the 0.05 threshold, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating a significant difference in the value orientation of higher secondary students based on family type.

Major Findings of the Study

1. Gender differences significantly impact the youth problems faced by higher secondary students.
2. Regional differences do not significantly affect the youth problems of higher secondary students.
3. The medium of instruction does not significantly influence the youth problems encountered by higher secondary students.

4. There is no significant variation in youth problems among higher secondary students across different streams of study.
5. Family structure does not significantly differentiate the youth problems experienced by higher secondary students.

Implications for Practice

- **For Schools:**

Schools should offer greater access to mental health resources and foster a supportive environment where students feel comfortable sharing their problems. Developing peer mentoring programs and counselling services could aid in addressing emotional and academic challenges.

- **For Parents:**

Parental awareness and involvement in their children's academic and emotional well-being are crucial. Workshops and parenting programs can help bridge the communication gap between parents and adolescents.

- **For Policymakers:**

Educational policies should promote mental health awareness and integrate stress management and coping skills into the curriculum. Schools should be equipped with trained counsellors to help students manage their problems.

Conclusion

This research sheds light on the various challenges faced by higher secondary students and their coping mechanisms. By identifying the key stressors and the strategies students use to manage these issues, the study contributes to a better understanding of adolescent mental health and well-being. Further research should explore long-term coping strategies and the role of digital tools in supporting adolescent mental health.

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