

## A Study of Various Mental Health Factors among Boys and Girls Junior College Students

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### ABSTRACT

The study aims to examine the various mental health factors, including Emotional Stability (ES), Overall Adjustment (OA), Autonomy (AY), Security-Insecurity (SI), Self-Concept (SC), and Intelligence, among junior college students. A sample of 100 students (50 male and 50 female), aged between 18 to 20 years, from Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar in Maharashtra, was selected using purposive sampling. The research employed the Mental Health Inventory (MHI) developed by Dr. Jagdish and Dr. A. K. Srivastav (1983) to assess mental health factors. The data were analyzed using the t-test to identify any significant differences between male and female students. The findings revealed that males scored significantly higher than females across most mental health dimensions, including emotional stability, overall adjustment, autonomy, self-concept, and intelligence. However, females exhibited higher levels of insecurity compared to males. These results suggest that male students in this sample tend to have better mental health in comparison to their female counterparts. The study highlights the importance of addressing gender differences in mental health and suggests that future research may further explore the underlying factors contributing to these disparities.

**Keywords:** *Mental health, emotional stability, self-concept, autonomy, gender differences, junior college students*

Mental health is critical to overall well-being, affecting students' academic performance, social relationships, and personal development. For junior college students, who are often at a crossroads between adolescence and early adulthood, mental health issues can have profound implications for their future. During this phase, students face multiple stressors related to their academics, social lives, and the increasing expectations from family and society. These pressures can be particularly challenging as students navigate complex developmental changes and explore their identities. Among the various groups in educational settings, junior college students stand out as a cohort that requires focused attention due to their vulnerability to mental health issues. This study explores the various mental health factors affecting boys and girls in junior colleges, examining the differences and similarities between the two genders in terms of their mental health experiences.

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Received: May 28, 2024; Revision Received: June 20, 2024; Accepted: June 30, 2024

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The transition from high school to junior college is a period of significant transformation. Students face the challenge of adjusting to more demanding academic expectations and grapple with changes in their social environments. In particular, the shift from a familiar high school setting to a larger, often more competitive, and diverse junior college environment can exacerbate feelings of anxiety, stress, and self-doubt. In addition, the onset of emerging adulthood is marked by various emotional and psychological changes, which, if left unaddressed, can manifest as mental health issues. These challenges are often compounded by issues such as family dynamics, peer pressure, and the increasing pressure to excel academically and socially. As a result, junior college students, both boys and girls, are at an elevated risk of experiencing mental health difficulties, including depression, anxiety, stress, and even suicidal ideation.

### ***The Importance of Mental Health Among Junior College Students***

Mental health is often overlooked or misunderstood in academic environments, particularly when students are seen as "young adults" who are expected to be resilient and independent. However, studies have shown that mental health problems during adolescence and young adulthood can have long-lasting effects on one's personal and academic life. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), mental health issues during this period can contribute to poor academic performance, increased dropout rates, substance abuse, and a range of other detrimental outcomes. For junior college students, mental health concerns can also affect their ability to engage in extracurricular activities, form meaningful social connections, and develop essential life skills. These issues not only impact students individually but can also have broader societal consequences, as students with unaddressed mental health needs may struggle to reach their full potential, leading to long-term social and economic consequences.

Additionally, the stigma surrounding mental health often discourages students from seeking help or discussing their emotional struggles. Many students, especially in conservative or competitive educational environments, may perceive mental health issues as a sign of weakness or failure. This stigma is compounded by a lack of awareness and understanding about mental health, both among students and educational staff. As a result, many students continue to suffer in silence, their mental health deteriorating without the necessary intervention or support. Therefore, it is crucial to understand the various mental health factors affecting boys and girls in junior college settings, so that appropriate measures can be taken to promote mental well-being and provide timely support.

### ***The Gender Dimension in Mental Health***

Mental health concerns are not experienced in the same way by all individuals; gender plays a significant role in shaping how students perceive and respond to mental health challenges. While both boys and girls in junior colleges are susceptible to mental health issues, there are notable gender differences in the types and severity of these challenges. Historically, research has shown that boys and girls exhibit different patterns of emotional and psychological distress, which can be attributed to various factors such as socialization, biological differences, and societal expectations.

For example, girls are often more likely to experience internalizing disorders, such as anxiety and depression, which can manifest as withdrawal, sadness, or excessive worry. This is partly due to the societal expectations placed on girls to conform to certain standards of behavior, appearance, and social relationships. Furthermore, girls tend to be more emotionally expressive than boys, which may make it easier for them to acknowledge and

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articulate their mental health struggles. On the other hand, boys are often more likely to exhibit externalizing behaviors, such as aggression, anger, or substance abuse, as a way of coping with emotional distress. Boys are also less likely to seek help for mental health issues, possibly due to societal norms that discourage emotional vulnerability in males.

Understanding these gender-specific patterns is crucial for developing effective mental health interventions and support systems for junior college students. While both boys and girls may face overlapping challenges, their responses to these challenges can differ significantly. Therefore, it is important to examine how mental health issues manifest differently in boys and girls, taking into account the social, cultural, and psychological factors that contribute to these differences.

Gupta, H., & Sharma, R. (2020) *Mental health issues among adolescents and young adults: A review of challenges and interventions*. This review examines the mental health challenges faced by adolescents and young adults, particularly during the transition to junior college. The study identifies key stressors including academic pressures, social expectations, and family dynamics, which contribute to increased mental health concerns among students. Gender differences in mental health outcomes are highlighted, with girls more likely to experience internalizing disorders such as anxiety and depression, while boys tend to exhibit externalizing behaviors like aggression. The review emphasizes the need for targeted interventions that address both gender-specific experiences and general stressors in educational settings. Additionally, the paper suggests practical strategies for mental health support systems, including counseling services and awareness programs aimed at reducing stigma.

Chandra, A., & Saini, N. (2019) *Gender differences in mental health outcomes among school and college students: A review of recent trends*. This article provides a comprehensive review of recent studies on gender differences in mental health outcomes among school and junior college students. The paper outlines how male and female students experience and cope with academic and social stressors in distinct ways. Girls are more likely to report higher levels of anxiety and depression, whereas boys often exhibit behavioral problems, such as aggression and substance use. The review highlights the influence of societal expectations on gendered coping mechanisms and mental health trajectories. The authors argue for gender-sensitive mental health interventions in educational institutions that cater to the unique psychological needs of both boys and girls, ensuring equitable access to support services.

Bhardwaj, M., & Singh, N. (2022) *Gendered experiences of mental health among Indian college students: A comprehensive review*. This comprehensive review investigates the gendered experiences of mental health among Indian college students, with a particular focus on junior college students. The study highlights the varying factors influencing mental health, including academic pressures, peer relationships, and family expectations. Gender-specific challenges are discussed, with female students more frequently experiencing anxiety and depression, while male students tend to manifest externalized behaviors, such as aggression and substance abuse. The review underscores the role of societal expectations and gender norms in shaping students' mental health experiences. The authors recommend that college mental health programs incorporate gender-sensitive approaches and provide tailored support to address the unique mental health needs of male and female students.

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### **Objectives:**

To investigate the various factors of mental health (Emotional Stability (ES), Over-all Adjustment (OA), Autonomy (AY), Security-Insecurity (SI), Self-Concept (SC), and Intelligence) among Junior college students.

### **Hypotheses:**

There will be no significant difference in various factors of Mental Health (Emotional Stability (ES), Over-all Adjustment (OA), Autonomy (AY), Security-Insecurity (SI), Self-Concept (SC), and Intelligence) between Junior college students.

### **Sample:**

For the present study, the researcher selected a total of 100 junior college students from Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar in Maharashtra. The sample consisted of 50 male students and 50 female students, all within the age range of 18 to 20 years ( $M = 19.53$ ,  $SD = 3.19$ ). A non-probability purposive sampling method was employed to select the participants for this research.

### **Research Tools**

**Mental Health Inventory (MHI):** Mental health inventory constructed by Dr. Jagdish and Dr. A K Srivastav (1983). 56 items are in the questionnaire and each of the item has four responses – 1. Almost always true, 2. Sometime true, 3. Rarely true and 4. Almost never true. The reliability of the inventory is determined by split-half method using odd-even procedure. Overall mental health reliability coefficients is .73 and Construct validity of the inventory is determined by finding coefficient of correlation between scores on mental health inventory and general health questionnaire (Gold beig, 1978) it is found to be .54.

### **Variable**

**Independent variable-**  
**Gender**

a) Male                      b) Female

### **Dependent Variable**

#### **Mental Health**

- i) Emotional Stability (ES)
- ii) Over-all Adjustment (OA)
- iii) Autonomy (AY)
- iv) Security-Insecurity (SI)
- v) Self-Concept (SC)
- vi) Intelligence (G)

### **Statistical Analysis**

't' test was used for the present study.

**STATISTICAL INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSIONS**

*Table No. 01*

Mean, S.D, ‘t’ value among male and female Junior college students on dimension Mental Health

MH Factors	Gender		Female		df	t value
	Male	SD	Mean	SD		
<b>Emotional Stability</b>	11.45	3.25	8.09	3.78	118	5.22**
<b>Over-all Adjustment</b>	34.25	4.58	27.46	4.19	118	8.47**
<b>Autonomy</b>	12.08	3.29	7.09	2.97	118	8.72**
<b>Security-Insecurity</b>	8.09	3.04	12.74	4.12	118	7.03**
<b>Self-Concept</b>	11.87	3.74	8.07	3.90	118	5.44**
<b>Intelligence</b>	23.69	3.55	20.37	4.10	118	4.74**
<b>Mental Health</b>	101.43	21.45	83.82	23.06	118	4.33**

*Significant at 0.01\*\* = 2.62, 0.05\* = 1.98*

The table provides data on six mental health factors—Emotional Stability, Overall Adjustment, Autonomy, Security-Insecurity, Self-Concept, and Intelligence—as well as overall mental health scores for males and females. The results include mean scores, standard deviations, and t-values, which indicate the statistical significance of the differences between the two groups. Higher t-values represent more statistically significant differences.

The data reveals that males scored significantly higher than females in emotional stability, with males having a mean score of 11.45 compared to females' 8.09. This difference is statistically significant, suggesting that males tend to exhibit higher levels of emotional stability than females in this sample.

In terms of overall adjustment, males again outperformed females, with a mean score of 34.25 compared to 27.46 for females. The difference is noteworthy and indicates that, in this sample, males tend to have better overall adjustment abilities.

Males scored significantly higher on autonomy, with a mean score of 12.08, whereas females scored 7.09. This suggests that males generally demonstrate greater independence and self-sufficiency than females in this study.

The results on the factor of security-insecurity were reversed, with males scoring lower (8.09) compared to females (12.74). This indicates that males in the sample may experience lower levels of insecurity or a higher sense of security than females.

Regarding self-concept, males scored significantly higher (11.87) than females (8.07). This shows that males tend to have a more positive or confident view of themselves than females in this study.

Males also had higher mean intelligence scores, with a score of 23.69 compared to females' 20.37. The difference between the two groups is statistically significant, suggesting that, in this context, males are perceived to have higher intelligence scores than females.

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Lastly, the overall mental health scores show that males scored significantly higher (101.43) than females (83.82). This pattern is consistent across the various mental health factors, indicating that males tend to have better mental health overall than females within this sample.

In conclusion, the findings highlight that males tend to perform better across most mental health dimensions, including emotional stability, overall adjustment, autonomy, self-concept, and intelligence, while showing lower levels of insecurity. However, it is essential to note that these results are specific to this sample and may not be universally applicable.

### CONCLUSION

Males generally have higher scores than females across most mental health factors, including emotional stability, overall adjustment, autonomy, self-concept, and intelligence.

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### Acknowledgment

The author appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

### Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

**How to cite this article:** Kale, K.S. (2024). A Study of Various Mental Health Factors among Boys and Girls Junior College Students. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 12(2), 4916-4921. DIP:18.01.441.20241202, DOI:10.25215/1202.441