

## A Study of Academic Achievement, Mental Health and Adjustment Problem of Secondary School Students

Arvind Kumar<sup>1\*</sup>, Dr. Anand Kumar<sup>2</sup>

### ABSTRACT

In today's society, academic success is often seen as one of the main ways to measure a person's overall potential and abilities. Because of this, academic achievement holds a very important place not only in the field of education but also in the entire learning process. A student's good mental health and proper adjustment with their surroundings play a crucial role in helping them perform better in their studies. When a student is mentally healthy, they have a clear understanding of their physical and emotional well-being as well as their personal strengths and limitations. Such students actively take part in school programs and activities with enthusiasm. They are able to adjust well according to their needs and abilities, which helps them achieve better academic results. Keeping all this in mind, the researcher in the present study has focused on examining the academic performance, mental health, and adjustment-related challenges faced by secondary school students.

**Keywords:** *Academic Achievement, Mental Health, Adjustment Problem*

Education acts as a mirror of society. It is both the seed from which development originates and the flower that blossoms as a result of progress. It helps individuals transition from ignorance to awareness and uplifts communities from backwardness to advancement. Education plays a critical role in moving a nation from underdevelopment to a path of rapid social and economic growth. As acknowledged long ago in a UNESCO conference, illiteracy is a significant barrier to progress. Without proper education, the implementation of any national development plan remains incomplete. Therefore, the expansion of literacy is essential for achieving social and economic advancement.

Education shapes a person's character and influences every stage of life from early childhood to old age. Its core purpose is to prepare individuals to handle life's challenges effectively and meaningfully. In today's world, marked by intense competition and rapid scientific and technological progress, the goals of education must also evolve. It should empower students not only with knowledge but also with skills such as problem-solving, emotional intelligence, and social awareness. In this fast-paced era, society expects learners to be more conscious, emotionally resilient, and intellectually capable. Education should guide individuals in adjusting to both their internal emotions and the external environment.

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, Department of Psychology, Magadh University, Bodh Gaya, Bihar, India

<sup>2</sup>Supervisor, Gaya college Gaya, Department of Psychology, Magadh University, Bodh Gaya, Bihar, India

\*Corresponding Author

Received: June 14, 2025; Revision Received: July 04, 2025; Accepted: July 07, 2025

## **A Study of Academic Achievement, Mental Health and Adjustment Problem of Secondary School Students**

As human beings, we strive to meet not only our physical needs like food and safety but also our emotional needs, such as acceptance and emotional security. In doing so, we continually engage with our surroundings either by adapting to them or by modifying them to meet our needs.

This interaction and adjustment between an individual and their environment are essential for maintaining harmony. When this balance is lacking, issues like stress, anxiety, and underperformance in academics and life can arise. Many students, despite possessing adequate intelligence, fail to perform well due to emotional or psychological difficulties. In such cases, personality traits and emotional stability greatly influence their adjustment and academic success. With increasing competition, performance has become a central focus for all. Parents often expect their children to excel and reach the highest levels of achievement. This constant pressure not only affects students but also places a heavy burden on teachers and the entire educational system. Although schools aim to foster holistic development, a large portion of their energy is still directed toward academic performance.

As a result, educational researchers are keen to explore the factors that enhance academic achievement. Questions such as What factors contribute most to student performance? To what extent do variables like emotional adjustment, family background, intelligence, and socio-economic status affect academic success?— have become central to their investigations. Among all levels of education, secondary education holds particular significance. Targeting students between the ages of 15 to 18, it serves as the foundation upon which future educational and career decisions are built. It nurtures critical thinking, comprehension skills, and the ability to process complex information. Decisions made during this period often influence one's future professional and social standing. Without a robust secondary education system, quality higher education cannot be achieved.

In today's world, academic achievement is of immense importance. It not only reflects the individual learning outcomes of students but also serves as an indicator of the overall effectiveness of the educational system. High academic performance is viewed as a marker of success, and both educators and policymakers continuously strive to enhance it. A student's academic outcomes are shaped by a variety of factors including intelligence, attitude toward learning, study habits, personality characteristics, and home environment. A learner who possesses a positive self-image and a belief in their ability to succeed is more likely to set high goals and achieve academic excellence.

### ***Academic Achievement:***

In today's society, academic achievement is seen as a major factor in understanding a person's overall ability and potential. It plays a very important role not only in the education system but also in the entire process of learning. According to Crow and Crow (1969), academic achievement refers to how well a student is learning in a particular subject. In simple terms, it shows how much knowledge and skills a student has gained, usually measured through test scores and classroom performance.

As the demand for better school performance grows, many laws and policies have been introduced at the national, state, and district levels. These aim to improve student outcomes and reduce practices like "social promotion" where students are moved to the next grade without meeting the required academic standards. To address this, some schools have started holding students back a year, hoping it will give them more time to learn and grow.

## **A Study of Academic Achievement, Mental Health and Adjustment Problem of Secondary School Students**

However, research has shown that repeating a grade does not always help students. In fact, it can often lead to more problems, including low confidence and lack of motivation. Experts, like those from the National Association for School Psychologists, warn that we must consider a child's mental health, behavior, and academic needs before deciding on such actions.

Academic achievement is closely connected to how students grow and learn in school. As Pandey (2008) explains, it refers to how students perform in their school subjects. It also reflects their position in the class and gives them the chance to explore their abilities, improve their performance, and get ready for future educational goals (Kamble, Shubhangi, 2009). In short, academic achievement is more than just marks it is about overall learning, development, and preparing students to face challenges in life with confidence.

### ***Mental Health:***

Mental health is an essential part of overall well-being and plays a significant role in how individuals think, feel, and act in their daily lives. It affects one's ability to handle stress, maintain relationships, make decisions, and enjoy life. Good mental health enables a person to realize their full potential, cope with life's challenges, and contribute positively to society. In recent times, there has been growing awareness of the importance of mental well-being, yet many individuals continue to suffer silently due to stigma, lack of support, or awareness. This paper explores the concept of mental health, its importance, the factors that influence it, and the need for early intervention and support. Promoting mental health involves encouraging emotional resilience, reducing stress, building positive relationships, and ensuring access to appropriate care. A healthy mind is not just the absence of mental illness but a state of positive emotional and psychological functioning.

Taking care of the mind is as important as taking care of the body." Mental and emotional well-being is a key part of overall health, helping individuals handle life's challenges successfully. A person with good mental health has the emotional strength and inner stability to enjoy life and face pain, loss, and disappointments with resilience (V. Srividhya, 2007). A mentally healthy person has a strong sense of purpose and is not easily shaken by everyday stress. Mental health is a holistic concept that covers personality traits, behaviors, and values. It reflects how a person views themselves and others, and how they respond to the world. Such individuals often show emotional balance, confidence, self-respect, and clarity in their thoughts.

### ***Adjustment:***

Adjustment means how a person manages to live peacefully with their surroundings both physical and social. The idea was first introduced by Charles Darwin as a way of adapting to survive in the environment. Humans constantly adjust to changes at home, school, workplace, and in relationships. It involves changing one's behavior to meet personal needs while also matching the expectations of society.

Experts describe adjustment as a process where individuals balance their internal desires with the demands of the world around them. It is not a one-time event, but a continuous journey throughout life. A well-adjusted person is one who can meet life's challenges while maintaining healthy relationships and emotional stability. According to psychologists like Carter V. Good and Shaffer, adjustment is about adapting to environmental changes while

## **A Study of Academic Achievement, Mental Health and Adjustment Problem of Secondary School Students**

satisfying one's own needs. It is a sign of maturity and emotional strength, and it helps build a positive relationship between the individual and society

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

1. Reddy and Ramana (1974) conducted a study on the academic adjustment and scholastic achievement of secondary school students. They found that students who were better adjusted academically also performed better in their studies. Mental ability and academic performance showed only a moderate connection, while a student's place of residence (urban, semi-urban, or rural) had no impact on academic performance or adjustment. Positive attitudes towards self-learning, parents, teachers, and peers were closely linked with better academic adjustment, but factors like socio-economic status, family size, or life goals had no significant effect on academic performance.
2. Ushasri (1978) carried out a comparative study on socially disadvantaged (Harijan) and non-disadvantaged students from Andhra Pradesh, involving 600 Class X students. The results showed that Harijan students scored lower in academic performance compared to their non-Harijan peers. However, both groups had similar levels of mental ability. There was a noticeable difference in academic adjustment, with non-Harijan students showing better adjustment than Harijan students.
3. Sharma (1979) explored the relationship between self-concept, level of aspiration, and mental health with academic performance among 1060 students from Grades X to XII in Uttar Pradesh. The study revealed that both boys and girls had better mental health during early adolescence (around 13 years of age). However, in later adolescence, boys were found to have better mental health than girls, which could influence their academic outcomes.
4. Shivappa (1980) investigated the factors influencing academic achievement among 900 Class X students from different regions of Bangalore. The findings showed that good study habits, high educational aspirations, socio-economic background, and intelligence (IQ) had a positive impact on academic success. On the other hand, poor personality adjustment and high anxiety levels had a negative effect. These patterns were consistent across both urban and rural students, and especially among boys.
5. Ross and Parker (1980) studied the academic and social self-concepts of 147 gifted students in Grades 5 to 8. They found that these academically gifted students had a strong academic self-image but a relatively lower sense of social self-confidence. This means that while they believed in their academic abilities, they were less confident in social situations.
6. Reddy and Nagarathamma (1994) studied 720 students from classes VII and IX and found that students' views about their school environment (whether positive, average, or negative) had a strong connection with their mental health both in terms of strengths and challenges.
7. Vani (1995) found that girls had better mental health than boys overall. However, boys studying in co-educational schools were found to be mentally healthier than

## **A Study of Academic Achievement, Mental Health and Adjustment Problem of Secondary School Students**

those in boys-only schools. Interestingly, this kind of difference was not seen among girls.

8. Pal (1996) explored what helped students do better in math. He studied urban and tribal students and discovered that urban students, especially those whose fathers had a higher level of education, performed better in mathematics. This showed a link between family background and academic ability.
9. Jain (1998) focused on 260 adolescent girls and found that girls who felt accepted by their parents were mentally more stable. Those who did not feel accepted were more likely to feel fearful, shy, and emotionally weak.
10. Srivastava (1999) compared the mental health of students from Hindi and English medium schools. His study found that Hindi medium students had better mental health. English medium students showed more signs of emotional instability and self-centered behavior. He suggested that both parents and teachers should work together to address these issues.
11. Roeser (1999) studied mental health changes from early to middle school years. He found that most students maintained a stable mental state over time. However, students who initially had multiple emotional issues showed some improvement as they progressed.
12. Reddy (2002) investigated the effect of school type on students' mental health. He found that students from co-educational schools had better mental health than those in single-gender schools, and this was true for both boys and girls.
13. Kakkar (1964) studied adjustment problems in 150 adolescents (75 boys and 75 girls) from class XI in Allahabad. The findings showed that 43% had serious adjustment issues, especially in school. Girls were more obedient to parental control, while boys often complained. Boys were found to be more curious and aggressive, while girls were more shy and nervous. Many students worried about health and personal issues like nail-biting and low confidence. Interestingly, students with higher intelligence also had more adjustment difficulties, especially in social situations.
14. George (1966) compared students who completed 10 and 11 years of schooling in Kerala. He found that students with highly educated fathers performed better academically. Those with high intelligence adjusted well and achieved more, while personality traits like extraversion affected only a few aspects of adjustment. Intelligence and education stream together had a notable effect on school and health adjustment.
15. Reddy (1966) studied the connection between home environment and adolescent adjustment using a large sample of 1,280 students from Hyderabad and Secunderabad. He found that extreme parenting styles led to adjustment problems. Children of liberal fathers adjusted better than those from conservative homes. Older teens (17–19 years) showed more personal adjustment issues. Also, first-born

## A Study of Academic Achievement, Mental Health and Adjustment Problem of Secondary School Students

children had more problems than their younger siblings. Better parental education was linked to improved adjustment in children.

16. Sabberwal (1967) explored how emotional tension affects students' performance in exams. He found a negative link between stress and exam performance meaning more tension led to lower scores. However, tension did not appear to influence students' overall personality adjustment.
17. Pandey (1968) investigated adjustment issues among 491 adolescents from various schools in Eastern U.P. He found that students from urban upper-class backgrounds had fewer adjustment problems, except in one area. Rural and semi-urban students faced more difficulties. Social behavior improved with age, and urban students scored highest in this area, followed by semi-urban and rural students.
18. Bhagia (1969) looked at school adjustment issues among 618 students from 20 secondary schools in Rajasthan. His study revealed that girls adjusted better to the school environment and its organization than boys. Rural students were better adjusted to their teachers and peers compared to urban students. Also, students from private schools showed better adjustment with their teachers than those from government schools.

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### ***Sample:***

In this study, the researcher selected 400 students, both boys and girls, aged between 13 and 18 years. These students were from 9th and 10th grades and were studying in schools during the academic year 2023–2024.

#### ***Objective of study:***

1. Differences in Academic Achievement of Secondary School Students in Relation to Male and Female.
2. Differences in Mental Health of Secondary School Students in Relation to Male and Female Students.
3. Differences in Adjustment Problems of Secondary School Students in Relation to Male and Female.

#### ***Hypotheses***

1. There is no significant difference in academic achievement of secondary school students in relation to male and female.
2. There is no significant difference in mental health of secondary schools students in relation to male and female.
3. There is no significant difference in adjustment problems of secondary school students in relation to male and female.

#### ***Tools:***

- **Adjustment Inventory:** The Adjustment Inventory, developed by H.S. Asthana, is a tool designed for the quick assessment of adjustment levels among Hindi-speaking school and college students. Its reliability was tested using the split-half method with the Spearman-Brown correction, which yielded a high reliability coefficient of 0.97, indicating strong consistency in results. To assess its validity, item analysis was

## A Study of Academic Achievement, Mental Health and Adjustment Problem of Secondary School Students

conducted using the bi-serial correlation technique, comparing each item with the total test score. This analysis revealed that items 21 and 34 had relatively low validity, and therefore, they were removed in the revised version of the inventory.

- **Mental Health Battery:** The Mental Health Battery, developed by Arun Kumar Singh and Alpana Sen Gupta, was found to be most suitable for this research, so the researcher used it for the study. After reviewing earlier studies by experts like Jahoda, Maslow, Rogers, and others, six key areas of mental health were included in the battery: emotional stability, overall adjustment, autonomy, security-insecurity, self-concept, and intelligence. The battery has two parts—Section A and Section B. For this study, only Section B was used, as it was most relevant for analyzing the data.
- **Academic Achievement:** For the present study, the researcher used students' academic performance reports to collect data on their academic achievement. These reports included basic academic and demographic details and mainly focused on the marks or percentages obtained by secondary school students during the 2023–2024 academic session. The report card format was specially prepared by the researcher under the guidance of the supervisor to suit the needs of the study. During the process, the researcher observed that different schools followed different marking or grading systems. Students received marks in each subject, and based on their total marks or grades, they filled out the academic performance report accordingly—in marks, percentages, or grades. For consistency and analysis purposes, the researcher converted all data into percentage form, as it was essential for effective comparison and interpretation.

### *Data Analysis:*

As per the objectives of the study, the researcher used descriptive statistical methods such as frequency, mean, standard deviation, standard error, skewness, and kurtosis. For deeper analysis, inferential techniques like Pearson's correlation, t-test, and one-way ANOVA were applied. To analyze and tabulate the data, the researcher used SPSS software version 16.0.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

*Table No. 1 There is significant difference in academic achievement of secondary school students in relation to male and female*

Scores of Sex	N	Mean	SD	DF	't' value	Level of significance
Male	200	57.8100	19.86775	398	2.439	Significance at 0.05 level
Female	200	62.8500	20.80171			

*\*The t-test value is significant at 0.05 levels of significance.*

The table above clearly shows a meaningful difference in academic achievement between male and female secondary school students. The calculated t-value is 2.43, which is higher than the critical value at the 0.05 level of significance. This means the difference in their academic performance is statistically significant.

The average academic score of male students is 57.81, while female students have a higher average score of 62.85. Because of this significant difference, the null hypothesis has been

## A Study of Academic Achievement, Mental Health and Adjustment Problem of Secondary School Students

rejected at the 0.05 level. Therefore, based on the data, it can be said that female students perform better than male students in academic achievement.

**Table No. 2** *There is significant difference in mental health of secondary schools students in relation to male and female.*

Scores of Sex	N	Mean	SD	DF	't' value	Level of significance
Male	200	91.9200	3.61927	398	8.101	Significance at 0.05 level
Female	200	88.1050	5.59109			

*\*The t-test value is significant at 0.05 levels of significance.*

The table above shows that there is a significant difference in the mental health of male and female secondary school students. The calculated t-value is 8.101, which is higher than the critical value at the 0.05 level of significance. This means the difference is statistically important.

The average mental health score of female students is 91.92, while the average score for male students is 88.10. Since the difference is significant, the null hypothesis has been rejected at the 0.05 level. Therefore, based on the data, it can be said that female students have better mental health compared to male students.

**Table No. 3** *There is significant difference in adjustment problems of secondary school students in relation to male and female.*

Scores of Sex	N	Mean	SD	DF	't' value	Level of significance
Male	200	20.6500	3.54121	398	3.739	Significance at 0.05 level
Female	200	19.4250	2.98815			

*\*The t-test value is significant at 0.05 levels of significance.*

The table above shows that there is a significant difference in the adjustment problems of male and female secondary school students. The calculated t-value is 3.739, which is higher than the critical value at the 0.05 level of significance. This means the difference is statistically important.

The average score for adjustment problems among male students is 19.42, while it is 20.65 for female students. Since this difference is significant, the null hypothesis has been rejected at the 0.05 level. Based on the data, it can be said that girls are better adjusted than boys in overall adjustment.

### REFERENCES

- Abraham, M. (1985). A study of certain psycho-social correlates of mental health status of university entrants of Kerala (Doctoral dissertation). University of Kerala.
- Bailur, K. B. (2006). Influence of relations of family, peers and pressures of PUC II year students on their adjustment and academic performance (Master's thesis). University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad.
- Bajpai, S. (1998). Effect of age, sex and locale on self-concept of high school tribal adolescents. *Indian Psychological Review*.

## **A Study of Academic Achievement, Mental Health and Adjustment Problem of Secondary School Students**

- Bean, R. A., Bush, K. R., McKenry, P. C., & Wilson, S. M. (2003). The impact of parental support, behavioral control, and psychological control on the academic achievement and self-esteem of African American and European American adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 18(5), 523–541.
- Begum, S. T., & Phukan, M. (2001). Academic achievement and intelligence: A correlational study in boys and girls. *Indian Psychological Review*, 56(2), 103–106.
- Best, J. W., & Kahn, J. V. (2004). *Research in education* (7th ed.). Prentice-Hall of India.
- Best, J. W., & Kahn, J. V. (2005). *Research in education* (9th ed.). Prentice-Hall of India.
- Bhatnagar, J. K., & Sharma, M. (1992). A study of the relationship between parental background and academic achievement in a semi-rural setting. *Psychological Studies*, 37(2–3), 126–129.
- Bhatnagar, R. P. (1970). A study of self-concept of bright achievers and non-achievers. *Journal of Educational Psychology Review*, 10(3), 101–105.
- Buch, M. B. (Ed.). (1986). *Third survey of research in education: 1978–1983*. National Council of Educational Research and Training.
- Census of India. (2001). Retrieved from <http://www.censusindia.gov.in>
- Census of India. (2011). Retrieved from <http://www.censusindia.gov.in>
- Chadha, N. K. (2005). *Encyclopaedia of psychology* (Vol. 1, p. 7). Shri Sai Printographers.
- Chandrakandan, K., & Karthikeyan, C. (2004). *Behavioral research methodology*. Classical Publishing Company.
- Chaube, S. P. (2002). *Psychology of adolescents in India*. Concept Publishing Company.
- Chaudhary, V. (2004). A comparative study of intelligence and academic achievement of the secondary school students. *Indian Psychological Review*, 62(4), 177–181.
- Cherian, V. I. (1990). Family size and academic achievement of children. *Journal of Family Welfare*, 36(4), 56–59.
- Coolican, H. (1990). *Research methods and statistics in psychology*. Hodder & Stoughton.
- Crow, L. D., & Crow, A. (1956). *Adolescent development and adjustment*. McGraw-Hill.
- Devi, S., & Mayuri, K. (2003). The effects of family and school on the academic achievement of residential school children. *Journal of Community Guidance and Research*, 20(2), 139–148.
- Fraenkel, J. R., & Wallen, N. E. (2006). *How to design and evaluate research in education* (6th ed.). McGraw-Hill.
- Gallagher, J. R., & Harris, H. I. (1961). *Emotional problems of adolescents*. Oxford University Press.
- Gallatin, J. E. (1975). *Adolescence and individuality: A conceptual approach to adolescent psychology*. Harper & Row.
- Gander, M. J., & Gardiner, H. W. (1981). *Child and adolescent development*. Little, Brown & Company.
- Ghanshyam. (1975). *A study of relationship between socio-economic status and academic achievement* (Unpublished master's dissertation). Allahabad University.
- Gilmore, A. (1971). Academic achievement as a function of economic status and educational standards of parents. *Psychological Studies*, 22(2), 24–26.
- Gokulnathan, P. P. (1972). *A study of achievement motivation and educational achievement among secondary school pupils* (Doctoral dissertation). Dibrugarh University.
- Hamachek, D. (1995). Self-concept and school achievement: Interaction dynamics and a tool for assessing the self-concept component. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 73(4), 419–425.
- Jersild, A. T., Brook, J. S., & Brook, D. W. (1978). *The psychology of adolescence* (3rd ed.). Macmillan Publishing Co.

## **A Study of Academic Achievement, Mental Health and Adjustment Problem of Secondary School Students**

- Kakkar, S. B. (2007). Educational psychology. Prentice-Hall of India.
- Khan, M. W. (2003). Importance of education. Retrieved from <http://www.keydegree.com>
- Kothari, C. R. (2008). Research methodology: Methods and techniques (2nd ed.). New Age International Publishers.
- Lambert, B. G., Rothschild, B. F., Atland, R., & Green, L. B. (1972). Adolescence: Transition from childhood to maturity. Wadsworth Publishing.

### ***Acknowledgment***

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

### ***Conflict of Interest***

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

***How to cite this article:*** Kumar, A. & Kumar, A. (2025). A Study of Academic Achievement, Mental Health and Adjustment Problem of Secondary School Students. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 13(3), 055-064. DIP:18.01.005.20251303, DOI:10.25215/1303.005