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## A study to identify issues related to the emotional well-being of adolescents

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### Abstract

The Emotional well-being of adolescents is related with both personal and social factors that are shaped by everyday experiences as they grow and develop. Emotional well-being is influenced by the self-concept which includes behavioral problems during adolescence for e.g. body dissatisfaction is common among adolescents and is regarded as a result for low self-esteem, decreased emotional well-being and increased the chances for depression. The majority of the research supports the idea that strong attachments to parents during early childhood and adolescence are associated with positive self-perceptions, such as high levels of self-esteem and self-efficacy. Peer groups are very important during developmental phases as they mold the wide range of adolescent outcomes including academics performance, psychological well-being and social functioning. But at the same time, peer pressure could bring hindrance in ones' life that may lead to distractive or productive results. Many researches on the relationship between psychological well-being and use of Internet has found that daily use of Internet is one of the reason of low level of well-being. There are enormous factors that affect the developmental phases of adolescents and there is a need to identify and resolve them for better future of adolescents. This study focused to identify such issues that affect emotional well-being of Adolescents. Questionnaires were prepared for 490 Students and 52 School Counselors to gauge the issues affecting Emotional well-being from their perspectives. The findings of the study highlighted various issues affecting Emotional Well-being of adolescents like academic performance, peer relationship, social media etc.

**Keywords:** Emotional well-being, Self-concept, Depression, Peer Pressure, Developmental phases

### Introduction

The experiences of childhood and adulthood have a major impact on the development of self-concept and emotional well-being of the individual. The period of a person's life between childhood and adulthood is known as adolescence. A young person needs to face a transition throughout this stage of human development from dependence to independence and maturity. Adolescence is a process that lasts for a substantial portion of a person's life. Individual variances exist, though some adolescents go through puberty far more swiftly than others. The physiological, psychological, and social changes that are influential during adolescence include several difficulties. Nearly 20% of all children and adolescents experience mental health issues, and at least half of them exhibit poor academic performance.

The incapacity of an adolescent to adequately address and manage a developmental obstacle may have unfavorable psychological, emotional, and behavioral effects. Adolescents are under enormous pressure because of the difficulties and ambiguities of this transition. Also, their level of enthusiasm rises, sometimes manifesting as sensitivity and extreme excitation. Children today are vulnerable groups due to the rigors of modern life and ever-increasing academic stress. A global study has centered on children's emotional development for the last 20 years, and as a result, our understanding is fast expanding.

There is a frequent report of anger outbursts, unruly, provocative, and violent behaviors in youngsters. Adolescents are really likely to be the most susceptible to giving in to peer pressure.

Today, about half of all adolescents report finding it difficult to handle daily stress at home or at school. These stressors comprise significant life transitions like switching schools, ongoing family strife, and daily difficulties like tests, disagreements with siblings, peers, and parents. These could result in behavioural issues, inadequate academic performance, truancy, and dropping out of school. Others may even take things so far as to attempt suicide. There is an important aspect that needs to consider that the fast-paced lifestyle has somehow ignored the impatient, stubborn and other behavioral problems in adolescents. Their choices are expanding and the desire to become independent is increasing. Influence from media has awakened their interest to experiment new things that are trending to become a part of huge society and accepted. But at the same time tendency to get misguided is also high. Helping children develop emotional awareness will reduce their chances of contracting internalizing disorders like depression (Beveren et al, 2019) <sup>[14]</sup>, obsessive-compulsive disorder (Berman et al, 2018) <sup>[12]</sup>, and anxiety (Renna et al, 2017). If stressors are not resolved, long-term consequences can occur (Beveren et al, 2019) <sup>[14]</sup>. Mental health demands underline the importance of providing resources that assist children with acquiring emotional regulation skills, such as Emotion Regulation Therapy (ERT) in this sense, schools are the ideal setting for providing such therapies to those in need. Therefore, it is very crucial to address issues related to adolescents for their better future.

Various studies have highlighted issues related to emotional well-being of adolescents and importance to prevent them from negative affect of those issues on their development. According to the literature, adolescent emotional well-being is influenced by both personal characteristics and the environments in which they grow up, including school, a crucial developmental setting (Weare and Nind, 2011; Cefai and Cavioni, 2015) <sup>[15]</sup>. Children who struggle with mental health issues at school often struggle academically, have trouble focusing, perform poorly, have trouble forming strong social bonds, and engage in more health risky behaviours like substance use, dropping out of school, and being expelled (Valdez et al., 2011) <sup>[13]</sup>. Problems like excessive stress and the pressure of standing up to the expectations of their teachers, parents, and themselves result in experiencing negative emotions to them. Also, rather getting rid of the negative emotions, it is more important for the students to experience positive emotions (Sanghani & Arya, 2016) <sup>[10]</sup>. There is a need to strengthened the need to promote positive mental health for the overall well-being of adolescents (Singh et al., 2015) <sup>[11]</sup>. For this purpose, Schools can play important role by organizing of promotion programs and their association with the mental health i.e., how they can improve the mental and emotional well-being and other related outcomes for the young people (Leventhal et al., 2018) <sup>[7]</sup>.

There are various effects of increased self-esteem on students' emotional and psychological intelligence that is raising one's self-esteem has a favourable impact on emotional intelligence (Urvashi et al., 2016) <sup>[12]</sup>. Adolescents that are emotionally intelligent has strong self-esteem and that's why emotional immaturity should be diagnosed as soon

as possible. The schools could help to manage these adolescents by offering various emotional management programs to enhance self-esteem (Kaur & Maheshwari, 2015) <sup>[6]</sup>. The effects of mindfulness practices on school children and the practicability, acceptability and functionality have positive results to reduce stress and better the emotional well-being of adolescent children in the school setting (Anand & Sharma, 2011) <sup>[11]</sup>.

During COVID-19 pandemic, lives are affected differently to different age groups. Students too felt the effects of the pandemic. Many campuses around the world closed, and classes switched to online platforms (Yong, 2020) <sup>[16]</sup>. Studies investigating mental distress have shown some varying degrees of anxiety, depression, and other emotionally disturbing factors including depression and anxiety relatively higher and more severe among adolescents. In a cross-sectional, country-wide research of Chinese undergraduates, it was discovered that acute stress (34.9%), anxiety (21.1%), and depressive symptoms (11.0%) were common during the pandemic (Ma et al., 2020) <sup>[8]</sup>. Several factors correlated with depression and anxiety including almost negligible physical activity, excessive internet use, high screen time, no outdoor activities, zero social interaction, etc. (Chawla et al., 2021) <sup>[3]</sup>. Therefore, mindfulness movement is needed to educate people about the growing problems of depression and anxiety in children and adolescents specially during such situations (Dubey et al., 2020) <sup>[5]</sup>.

### Objective of the study

The main objective of the study was to identify issues related to emotional well-being of adolescents.

### Methodology of the study

The researcher used survey method to explore issues affecting emotional well-being of adolescents. The population for the study were Students of class 10<sup>th</sup> class and the Counsellors of the Schools in Directorate of Education. The sample comprised 490 students and 52 Counsellors working in senior secondary schools of Directorate of Education.

### Tools and techniques

Following were the tools for the study

1. Adolescent issues related to EWB questionnaire for Students.
2. Adolescent issues related to EWB questionnaire for Counsellors

### Analysis and Interpretation of Data

The findings of the data collected from Students and School Counsellors are following:

#### 1. Findings of Adolescent issues related to Emotional well-being for Students

On the basis of responses collected from Students, the issues were categorized into three broad areas educational, peer relationships, and the role of social media. Adolescents find academics a major concern for their Parents and Teachers. For them, if their children excel in education only then he/she could survive in society and that's why they emphasize more on studies. Because of this pressure from their Parents and Teachers, adolescents felt that their stress levels increases as they were scared of failure. Also, the peer relationship issues like peer pressure of competition in studies, becoming a

favorite, having a boy/girlfriend, going out partying, trying new things, and experimenting with new substances (drugs or alcohol) were highlighted by adolescents which usually affects their well-being. Findings also showed that adolescents get affected by social media by different means like social media accounts, making reels, YouTube, Instagram, online friendship sites, and more.

The findings clearly showed that this fast-changing world is bringing many challenges and expecting a lot from adolescents. They often feel less connected with their Parents and more connected with friends that too through the virtual world. They enjoy using online platforms to get updated about ongoing changes in the world. But in this process, they are sometimes confronted with issues like cyberbullying, and the tendency of stress and anxiety increases. Adolescents find peer relationship issues more important than all other things. They want to be accepted and praised by their peer group. From their perspective, Parents don't understand their view point and tries to impose rules according to them. Students feel that parents' high expectations cause stress. Early academic stress in children is sometimes caused by family expectations. Parents want their kids to achieve in a world where there is a lot of competition, which seems to be only achievable through academic excellence. Newspaper and television adverts emphasize how parents value children who excel academically and can secure a secure future.

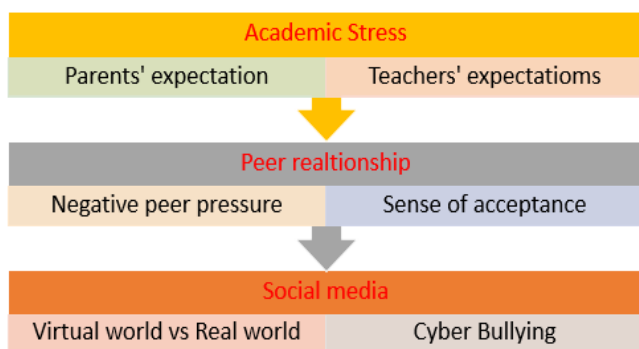


Fig 1

## 2. Findings of Adolescent issues related to Emotional well-being for Counsellors

For this purpose, a self-developed questionnaire was circulated among 52 School Counsellors/ EVGCs working in Senior Secondary Schools. Majority of counsellors stated that students are unclear about the purpose of attending school. Also, Students are not aware about the goal to get education and exposure in Schools. Students attend Schools just because they are asked to do so from their Parents and Society. Students don't have cordial relationships with their teachers. Counsellors stated that lack of proper guidance leads students into conflicts very frequently. Due to Scarcity of guidance services, Students feel directionless and sometimes get misguided with manipulated decisions.

According to reported responses, students often have behavioral issues such as unmanaged anger which leads to aggression (verbal as well as physical), unhealthy relationships between peers and with teachers and parents, attention seeking behavior, etc. The reasons could be located in personal, familial and/or social settings. Counsellors reported that Teachers get disturbed due to unaccepted behavior of the children like disturbing in between the teaching process or talking in the class or make non-sense

statements to become highlighted within peer group etc. and so refer them to counsellors. Parents ask help from the counsellors to make their ward understand the importance of education and make the child a civilized person. Although students are least concerned about these issues and approach the counsellors for their own issues like bullying, teacher's attitude, parents' expectations and some other family dilemmas etc.

According to Counsellors, students feel that personal problems disturb them in their studies. These personal problems are related to their emotional, social and psychological aspects that affect their well-being. During the stage of adolescents, students easily get distracted from the surroundings and indulge in less important things. They find other things more important and interesting than studying. With the advent of puberty, worries related to physical appearance may change to include matters of body image, loving relationships, academic performance, and peer acceptance. Adolescence are frequently a highly turbulent time in life. Relationships, attitudes, and emotions can change on a daily, or even hourly, basis. And many adolescents face episodes of low self-esteem throughout this time. Up to half of all adolescents are predicted to struggle with low self-esteem.



Fig 2

Students and Counsellors highlighted various issues which could affect the emotional well-being of adolescents from their respective perspectives. There is a need to address these issues and set measures to promote emotional well-being in adolescents. Parents, Teachers, Students and other stakeholders should be sensitized about the importance of developing healthy emotional well-being of adolescents. Healthy relationships between peers could contribute in building identity and self-esteem in adolescents. Positive relationship with parents and teachers helps the child to overcome with failures and move on to do better.

## Conclusion

One of the strategies to live a happy life is to be emotionally balanced. When people are emotionally healthy, they can handle both positive and negative situations easily. Emotionally balanced people feel more in control and firm

with their emotions, but this form of emotional balance, on the other hand, is not readily available to adolescents. Academic pressure, social pressure, and hormones associated with growth cause students to have difficulties maintaining their mental health because they have natural emotional urges. As a result, it is challenging for them to maintain their emotional health. Furthermore, lack of motivation, low grades, behavioral issues, peer pressure, and other factors could also affect children's emotional well-being. Helping children develop emotional awareness lowers their risk of developing internalizing disorders such as depression, anxiety, stress, and more.

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