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# Correlation between Educational Stress and Mental Health among Adolescents



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**Keywords:** Educational stress, Mental Health, Adolescents.

## ABSTRACT

**Background:** Adolescents are generally more prone to stress and anxiety. Being in a transitional stage between childhood and adulthood, adolescents have to confront varied types of stresses and strains. The high expectations of parents and teachers in terms of scores and academic performance sometimes put an extra mental burden on children, which may generally if not dealt with effectively cause many physical or mental ailments. **Aim:** The present study was conducted to find out the correlation between educational stress and mental health among adolescents studying in selected schools, in Puducherry. **Methodology:** A Quantitative correlational survey research design was adopted for the study. A total sample of 240 adolescents was selected by using the convenience sampling technique. Data was collected by using socio-demographic variables, Educational Stress Scale for Adolescents (ESSA), and the Mental Health Continuum - Short Form (MHC\_SF) Scale. **Results:** The study results revealed that most of the adolescents 56.3% had high educational stress and 69.2% had a moderate level of mental health. The correlation value indicated a substantial negative correlation between educational stress and mental health among adolescents. **Conclusion:** The study concluded that less the educational stress level better will be the mental health. Therefore, knowledge of stress management helps adolescents to cope with the problem of stress.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The modern world, which is said to be a world of achievement, is also a world of stress. One finds stress everywhere; whether it is within the family, business organization, or any other social or economic activity. Stress is a physiological and psychological imbalance. The effect of stress is understood in many walks of life with diverse populations, especially among adolescents. Stress was found to be a part of students' life and could give an impact on how students cope with the demands of education life. <sup>[1]</sup>

Worldwide, 80% of adolescents have stress after exam papers, problem sets, and other assignments. 36.5% of U.S. adolescents pointed to stress as the biggest reason why their academic performance suffered negatively. Educational-related events are believed to be major stressors, especially in Asian countries, as their academic performance at this stage plays a decisive role in higher education and career. <sup>[2]</sup>

Educational stress is mental distress concerning some apprehended frustration associated with academic failure, apprehension of such failure, or even an awareness of the possibility of such failure. <sup>[3]</sup>

Educational stress affects the personality make-up of adolescents the most. In the academic area, students have to face a variety of stressors such as examinations, qualifying entrance examinations for admission, classroom and coaching assignments, presentations, heavy academic workload, length of working hours, etc. <sup>[4]</sup>

Mental health describes either a level of cognitive or emotional well-being or an absence of a mental disorder. A state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her abilities can cope with the normal stresses of life can work productively and fruitfully and can make a contribution to his or her community (World Health Organization). <sup>[5]</sup>

The rising expectations of the parents in terms of scores and academic performance sometimes put an extra burden on children, which may sometimes cause many physical or mental ailments, if not dealt with effectively. But educational stress hurts the mental health of adolescents, healthy parents and healthy teachers are always a boon to society. <sup>[6]</sup>

Researchers have shown that stress in the academic institution can have both positive and negative effects. If a student cannot be able to cope effectively with educational stress, then he/she may have to face serious psychological and emotional health consequences. [7]

Due to the ever-expanding population in India, the education system has become highly competitive. In the Indian system of education, obtaining good marks is more important than acquiring knowledge. This leads to overburdening the students with academic workload causing a lot of educational stress among Indian adolescents. [8]

One of the most challenging problems faced by psychologists, counselors, educational administration, and teachers of today is the accurate prediction of the psychological traits of children. This problem has aroused the attention of many psychologists and is assuming greater importance day by day as our society has changed drastically. Because adolescence is the age of stress and strain and children have to cope with many types of stressful situations, educational stress affects the personality make-up of the child the most. It has an adverse effect on the mental health of adolescents. [5]

#### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:**

“A Correlational study between Educational Stress and Mental Health among adolescents studying in selected schools, Puducherry”.

#### **OBJECTIVES**

1. To assess the level of educational stress among adolescents.
2. To assess the level of mental health among adolescents.
3. To identify the relationship between educational stress and mental health among adolescents.
4. To find out the association of the level of educational stress among adolescents with selected demographic variables.
5. To find out the association of level of mental health among adolescents with selected demographic variables.

## II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

A Correlational survey design with a convenience sampling technique was used to select the sample. Total samples of 240 adolescents were selected. The data were collected after obtaining permission from the concerned authority. Informed consent was obtained from each sample before data collection. The level of educational stress and mental health among adolescents were assessed by using the Educational Stress Scale for Adolescents (ESSA) and Mental Health Continuum- Short Form (MHC\_SF). Both Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data.

## III. RESULTS

The study results on demographic variables revealed that out of 240 samples, with regard to age, the majority of the 177(73.8%) belong to the age group of 17- 19 years. With respect to gender, most of them 124(51.7%) were female. Regarding religion, the majority of the 232(96.7%) were Hindus. In relation to residence, most of them 161(67.1%) were residing in an urban area. Regarding the number of siblings, the majority of 133 (55.4%) had one sibling. In relation to the type of family, most of them 163(67.9%) belonged to a nuclear family. Concerning the Education of mothers, the majority of the 205 (85.4%) were educated up to school education. Concerning the Education of fathers, the majority of the 208 (86.6%) were educated up to school education.

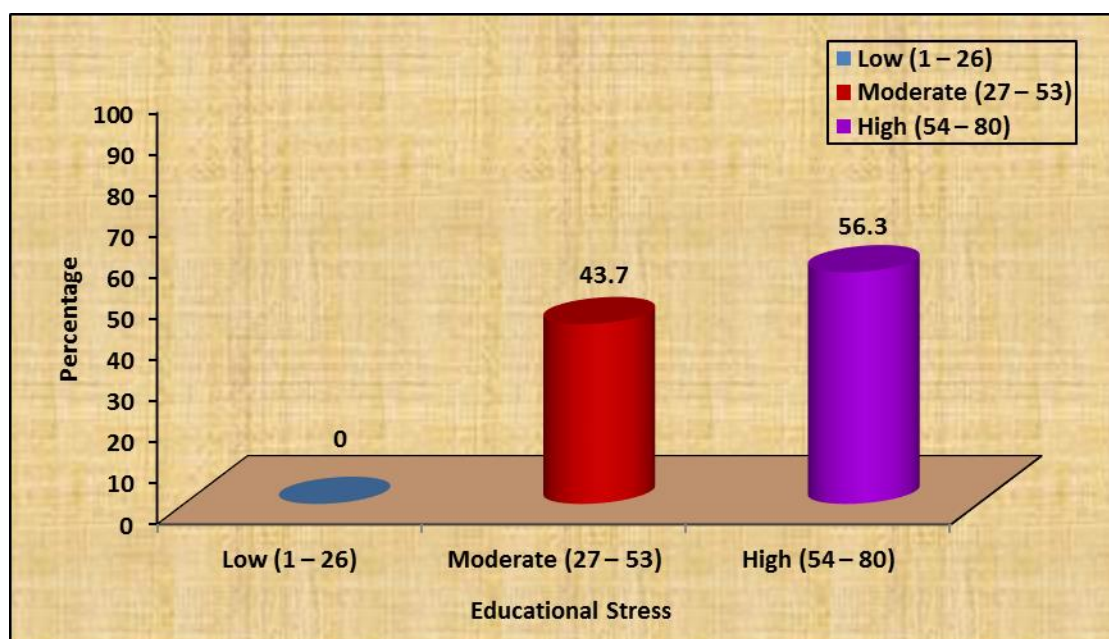
Regarding the occupation of fathers, the majority of the 162(67.5%) were laborers. Regarding the occupation of mothers, the majority of the 85(35.4%) were laborers. In relation monthly income of the family, the majority of the 227(94.6%) had a monthly income of  $\leq 10,001$ . Regarding the history of alcoholic fathers showed that the majority of the 154 (64.2%) had a history of an alcoholic father. About hobbies/ leisure time activities showed that the majority of the 117(48.8%) had games as leisure time activities.

**Table 1: Frequency and Percentage wise Distribution of Level of Educational Stress among Adolescents**

N = 240

Level of Educational Stress	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Low Educational Stress (1 – 26)	-	-
Moderate Educational Stress (27 – 53)	105	43.7
High Educational Stress (54 – 80)	135	56.3

The above table showed that most of the adolescents 135(56.3%) had high educational stress and the remaining 105(43.7%) had a moderate level of educational stress.



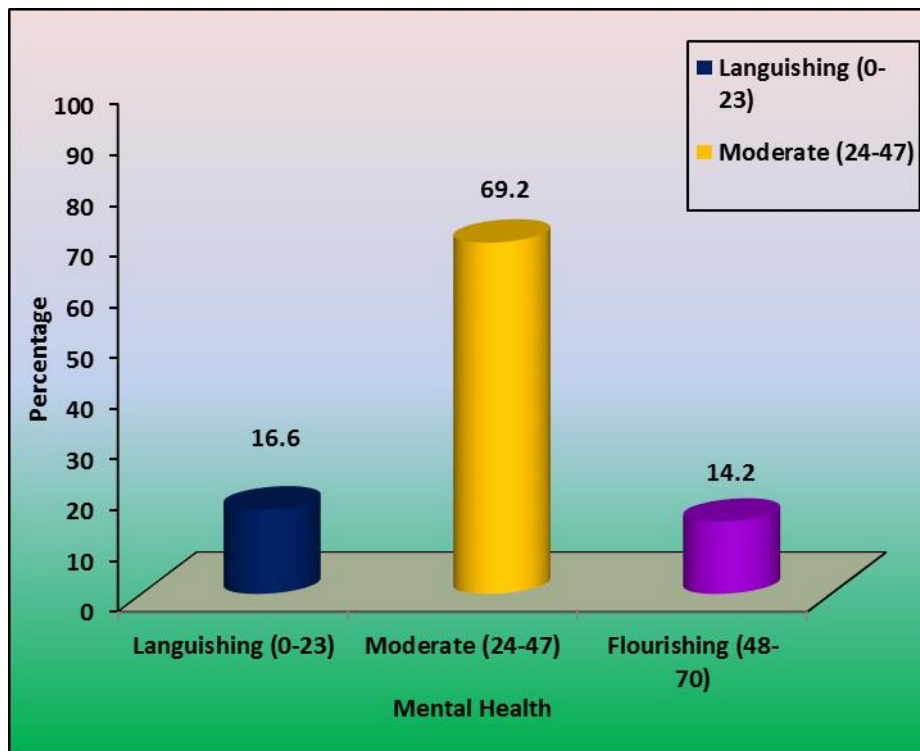
**Figure 1: Percentage Distribution of Level of Educational Stress among Adolescents**

**Table 2: Frequency and Percentage wise Distribution of Level of Mental Health among Adolescents**

N = 240

Level of Mental Health	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Languishing (0-23)	40	16.6
Moderate (24-47)	166	69.2
Flourishing (48-70)	34	14.2

The above table depicted that most of the adolescents 166 (69.2%) had moderate mental health, the remaining 40(16.6%) had languishing and 34(14.2%) had a flourishing level of mental health.



**Figure 2: Percentage Distribution of Level of Mental Health among Adolescents**

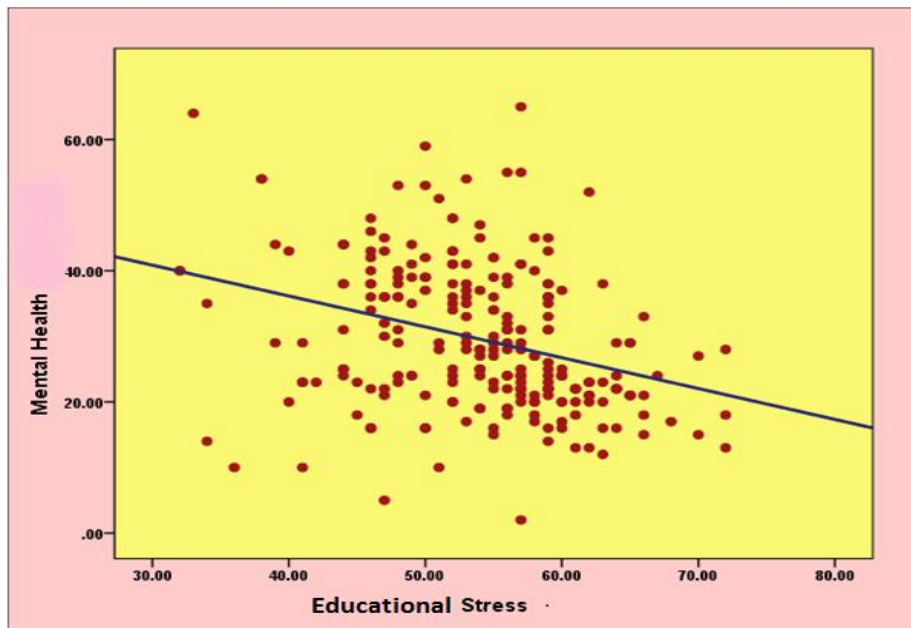
**Table 3: Correlation between Educational Stress and Mental Health among Adolescents**

N = 240

Variables	Mean	S.D	Correlation (r)	Level of Significance
Educational Stress	53.89	7.59	<b>-0.320</b>	<b>S**</b>
Mental Health	29.61	11.16		

**\*\*p<0.01, S – Significant**

From the above table, it is inferred that calculated Karl Pearson’s coefficient of correlation between educational stress and mental health is found to be -0.20 which is negative & significant at the .001 level. It indicated that with the increase in the level of educational stress, the mental health of adolescents decreases.



**Figure 3: Scatter Dot Diagram showing the Correlation between**

**Educational Stress and Mental Health among Adolescents**

**Table 4: Association between Level of Educational Stress with Selected Demographic Variables among Adolescents.**

**N = 240**

Demographic Variables	Low		Moderate		High		Chi-Square value
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
<b>Age in years</b>							$\chi^2=0.017$ d.f=1 p=0.897 <b>(N.S)</b>
14 – 16 years	-	-	28	11.7	35	14.6	
17 – 19 years	-	-	77	32.1	100	41.7	
<b>Gender</b>							$\chi^2=0.208$ d.f=1 p=0.649 <b>(N.S)</b>
Male	-	-	49	20.4	67	27.9	
Female	-	-	56	23.3	68	28.3	
<b>Religion</b>							$\chi^2=1.292$ d.f=2 p=0.524 <b>(N.S)</b>
Hindu	-	-	101	42.1	131	54.6	
Muslim	-	-	0	0	1	0.4	
Christian	-	-	4	1.7	3	1.2	
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	
<b>Residence</b>							$\chi^2=2.372$ d.f=1 p=0.123 <b>(N.S)</b>
Rural	-	-	29	12.1	50	20.8	
Urban	-	-	76	31.7	85	35.4	
<b>No. of siblings</b>							$\chi^2=3.834$ d.f=3 p=0.280
Nil	-	-	1	0.4	4	1.7	
One	-	-	65	27.1	68	28.3	



Demographic Variables	Low		Moderate		High		Chi-Square value (N.S)
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Two	-	-	30	12.5	49	20.4	(N.S)
Three and above	-	-	9	3.8	14	5.8	
<b>Type of family</b>							$\chi^2=0.778$ d.f=2 p=0.678 (N.S)
Nuclear family	-	-	70	29.2	93	38.8	
Joint family	-	-	22	9.2	30	12.5	
Extended family	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Single parent family	-	-	13	5.4	12	5.0	
<b>Education of mother</b>							$\chi^2=3.593$ d.f=4 p=0.464 (N.S)
Postgraduate	-	-	1	0.4	0	0	
Undergraduate	-	-	1	0.4	5	2.1	
Diploma	-	-	4	1.7	3	1.2	
School education	-	-	90	37.5	115	47.9	
Illiterate	-	-	9	3.8	12	5.0	
<b>Education of father</b>							$\chi^2=3.765$ d.f=4 p=0.439 (N.S)
Postgraduate	-	-	2	0.8	0	0	
Undergraduate	-	-	1	0.4	2	0.8	
Diploma	-	-	3	1.2	2	0.8	
School education	-	-	88	36.7	120	50.0	
Illiterate	-	-	11	4.6	11	4.6	
<b>Occupation of father</b>							$\chi^2=9.888$ d.f=4 p=0.042 S*
Government job	-	-	6	2.5	3	1.2	
Private job	-	-	11	4.6	16	6.7	
Labour	-	-	65	27.1	102	42.5	
Unemployed	-	-	9	3.8	3	1.2	
Others	-	-	14	5.8	11	4.6	
<b>Occupation of mother</b>							$\chi^2=6.005$
Government job	-	-	4	1.7	1	0.4	

Demographic Variables	Low		Moderate		High		Chi-Square value
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Private job	-	-	26	10.8	45	18.8	d.f=4 p=0.199 (N.S)
Labour	-	-	35	14.6	50	20.8	
Homemaker	-	-	33	13.8	31	12.9	
Others	-	-	7	2.9	8	3.3	
<b>Monthly income of the family</b>							$\chi^2=9.826$ d.f=3 p=0.020 S*
≥199,862	-	-	-	-	-	-	
99,931 – 199,861	-	-	-	-	-	-	
74,756 – 99,930	-	-	-	-	-	-	
49,962 – 74,755	-	-	1	0.4	0	0	
29,973 – 49,961	-	-	0	0	1	0.4	
10,002 – 29,972	-	-	8	3.3	1	0.4	
≤10,001	-	-	96	40.0	133	55.4	
<b>History of an alcoholic father</b>							$\chi^2=0.010$ d.f=1 p=0.919 (N.S)
Yes	-	-	67	27.9	87	36.2	
No	-	-	38	15.8	48	20.0	
<b>Hobbies/ leisure time activities</b>							$\chi^2=7.109$ d.f=4 p=0.130 (N.S)
Games	-	-	53	22.1	64	26.7	
Reading storybooks	-	-	11	4.6	15	6.2	
Hearing music	-	-	7	2.9	20	8.3	
Drawing	-	-	16	6.7	10	4.2	
Others	-	-	18	7.5	26	10.8	

\*p<0.05, S – Significant, N.S – Not Significant

Table 4 showed that demographic variables, occupation of the father ( $\chi^2=9.888$ , p=0.042), and monthly income of the family ( $\chi^2=9.826$ , p=0.020) had shown statistically significant association

with the level of educational stress among adolescents at  $p < 0.05$  level respectively. The other demographic variables had not shown a statistically significant association with the level of educational stress among adolescents.

**Table 5: Association between Level of Mental Health with Selected Demographic Variables among Adolescents**

N= 240

Demographic Variables	Languishing		Moderate		Flourishing		Chi-Square value
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
<b>Age in years</b>							$\chi^2=0.168$
14 – 16 years	11	4.6	44	18.3	8	3.3	d.f=2
17 – 19 years	29	12.1	122	50.8	26	10.8	p=0.919 (N.S)
<b>Gender</b>							$\chi^2=0.119$
Male	20	8.3	79	32.9	17	7.1	d.f=2
Female	20	8.3	87	36.2	17	7.1	p=0.942 (N.S)
<b>Religion</b>							$\chi^2=1.669$
Hindu	39	16.2	161	67.1	32	13.3	d.f=4
Muslim	0	0	1	0.4	0	0	p=0.796
Christian	1	0.4	4	1.7	2	0.8	(N.S)
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	
<b>Residence</b>							$\chi^2=1.668$
Rural	13	5.4	58	24.2	8	3.3	d.f=2
Urban	27	11.2	108	45.0	26	10.8	p=0.434 (N.S)
<b>No. of siblings</b>							$\chi^2=7.460$

Demographic Variables	Languishing		Moderate		Flourishing		Chi-Square value
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Nil	0	0	4	1.7	1	0.4	d.f=6 p=0.280 (N.S)
One	26	10.8	89	37.1	18	7.5	
Two	8	3.3	57	23.8	14	5.8	
Three and above	6	2.5	16	6.7	1	0.4	
<b>Type of family</b>							$\chi^2=4.669$ d.f=4 p=0.323 (N.S)
Nuclear family	26	10.8	111	46.2	26	10.8	
Joint family	9	3.8	35	14.6	8	3.3	
Extended family	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Single parent family	5	2.1	20	8.3	0	0	
<b>Education of mother</b>							$\chi^2=14.007$ d.f=8 p=0.082 (N.S)
Post graduate	0	0	1	0.4	0	0	
Undergraduate	2	0.8	1	0.4	3	1.2	
Diploma	0	0	6	2.5	1	0.4	
School education	32	13.3	144	60.0	29	12.1	
Illiterate	6	2.5	14	5.8	1	0.4	
<b>Education of father</b>							$\chi^2=32.718$ d.f=8 p=0.0001 S***
Post graduate	0	0	0	0	2	0.8	
Undergraduate	0	0	0	0	3	1.2	
Diploma	0	0	4	1.7	1	0.4	
School education	35	14.6	148	61.7	25	10.4	
Illiterate	5	2.1	14	5.8	3	1.2	
<b>Occupation of father</b>							$\chi^2=10.487$ d.f=8 p=0.232 (N.S)
Government job	0	0	8	3.3	1	0.4	
Private job	2	0.8	18	7.5	7	2.9	
Labour	29	12.1	119	49.6	19	7.9	

Demographic Variables	Languishing		Moderate		Flourishing		Chi-Square value
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Unemployed	3	1.2	6	2.5	3	1.2	
Others	6	2.5	15	6.2	4	1.7	
<b>Occupation of mother</b>							$\chi^2=10.681$ d.f=8 p=0.220 (N.S)
Government job	0	0	5	2.1	0	0	
Private job	6	2.5	50	20.8	15	6.2	
Labour	18	7.5	57	23.8	10	4.2	
Homemaker	14	5.8	43	17.9	7	2.9	
Others	2	0.8	11	4.6	2	0.8	
<b>Monthly income of the family</b>							$\chi^2=6.748$ d.f=6 p=0.345 (N.S)
≥199,862	-	-	-	-	-	-	
99,931 – 199,861	-	-	-	-	-	-	
74,756 – 99,930	-	-	-	-	-	-	
49,962 – 74,755	0	0	0	0	1	0.4	
29,973 – 49,961	0	0	1	0.4	0	0	
10,002 – 29,972	2	0.8	6	2.5	1	0.4	
≤10,001	38	15.8	159	66.2	32	13.3	
<b>History of an alcoholic father</b>							$\chi^2=9.750$ d.f=2 p=0.008 S**
Yes	25	10.4	115	47.9	14	5.8	
No	15	6.2	51	21.2	20	8.3	
<b>Hobbies/ leisure time activities</b>							$\chi^2=18.654$ d.f=8 p=0.017 S*
Games	16	6.7	86	35.8	15	6.2	
Reading story books	1	0.4	21	8.8	4	1.7	

Demographic Variables	Languishing		Moderate		Flourishing		Chi-Square value
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Hearing music	5	2.1	18	7.5	4	1.7	
Drawing	2	0.8	19	7.9	5	2.1	
Others	16	6.7	22	9.2	6	2.5	

\*\*\*p<0.001, \*\*p<0.01, \*p<0.05, S – Significant, N.S – Not Significant

The above table showed that the demographic variables, education of the father ( $\chi^2=32.718$ ,  $p=0.0001$ ), history of an alcoholic father ( $\chi^2=9.750$ ,  $p=0.008$ ) and leisure time activities ( $\chi^2=18.654$ ,  $p=0.017$ ) had shown statistically significant association with the level of mental health among adolescents at  $p<0.001$ ,  $p<0.01$  and  $p<0.05$  level respectively. The other demographic variables had not shown a statistically significant association with the level of mental health among adolescents.

#### IV: DISCUSSION

**The first objective** of the study was to assess the level of educational stress among adolescents. The study findings revealed that most of the adolescents 135 (56.3%) had high educational stress and 105(43.7%) had moderate educational stress among adolescents.

The present study was supported by **Anupama K, Sarada D** conducted “An exploratory study on Academic stress among high school children, Tirupati”. The study results showed that the majority (57.9%) of the adolescents had high academic stress, 40 percent had very high academic stress, a small percent (2.1%) of them had medium stress and none of them had low stress.<sup>[9]</sup>The above findings are more or less similar to the present findings.

**The second objective** of the study was to assess the level of mental health among adolescents. The study findings revealed that most of the adolescents 166(69.2%) had moderate mental health, 40(16.6%) had languishing and 34(14.2%) had flourishing mental health among adolescents.

The present study was supported by **Guo. C, Tomson. G, Keller.C, Soderqvist. F** conducted “A cross-sectional study on prevalence and correlates of positive mental health in Chinese

adolescents, Weifang”. The study results showed that More than half (57.4%) of the participants were diagnosed as flourishing.<sup>[10]</sup>The above findings are more or less similar to the present findings.

**the third objective** of the study was to identify the relationship between educational stress and mental health among adolescents. The mean score for education stress among adolescents was  $53.89 \pm 7.59$  and the mean score for mental health was  $29.61 \pm 11.16$ . The calculated Karl Pearson’s coefficient of correlation between educational stress and mental health is found to be -0.20 which is negative & significant at the .001 level. It clearly indicated that with the increase in the level of educational stress, the mental health of adolescents decreases.

The present study was supported by **Javet A**, conducted “A descriptive study on Relationship between Academic Stress and Mental Health of Undergraduate Nursing Students at Mother College of Nursing, Thrissur, Kerala”. The study results showed that the majority of students (79%) were in the range of high stress. Maximum students (72%) were in the range of average mental health. There was a significant negative relationship between academic stress and mental health ( $r=-0.45$ ) at a  $p<0.05$  level.<sup>25</sup> The above findings are more or less similar to the present findings.<sup>[11]</sup>

The **fourth objective** of the study was to find the association of the level of educational stress among adolescents with selected demographic variables. It includes age, gender, religion, residence, number of siblings, type of family, education of mother, education of father, occupation of father, occupation of mother, monthly income of the family, history of an alcoholic father, and hobbies/leisure time activities. The study results revealed that the occupation of the father ( $\chi^2=9.888$ ,  $p=0.042$ ), and the monthly income of the family ( $\chi^2=9.826$ ,  $p=0.020$ ) had shown a statistically significant association with the level of educational stress among adolescents at  $p<0.05$  level respectively. The other demographic variables had not shown a statistically significant association with the level of educational stress among adolescents.

The **Fifth objective** of the study was to find the association of the level of mental health among adolescents with selected demographic variables. It includes age, gender, religion, residence, number of siblings, type of family, education of mother, education of father, occupation of father, occupation of mother, monthly income of the family, history of an alcoholic father, and

hobbies/leisure time activities. The study results revealed that the education of the father ( $\chi^2=32.718$ ,  $p=0.0001$ ), history of an alcoholic father ( $\chi^2=9.750$ ,  $p=0.008$ ), and leisure time activities ( $\chi^2=18.654$ ,  $p=0.017$ ) had shown statistically significant association with the level of mental health among adolescents at  $p<0.001$ ,  $p<0.01$  and  $p<0.05$  level respectively. The other demographic variables had not shown a statistically significant association with the level of mental health among adolescents.

## **VI: CONCLUSION**

The study concluded that the majority of the adolescents had a high level of educational stress and had a moderate level of mental health. The coefficient of correlation indicates that there exists a significant and negative relationship between educational stress and the mental health of adolescents which infers that less the educational stress level better will be the mental health.

## **VI: RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Replication of the study may be done with the larger samples in different settings to generalize the study findings.
- This study can be conducted by using the probability sampling technique to generalize the result findings more effectively.
- A comparative study can be done between educational stress and mental health among rural and urban adolescents.
- An experimental study can be conducted to assess the effectiveness of stress management techniques for relieving educational stress among adolescents.

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## Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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