

A Structural Equation Model of Perceived Stress, Optimism, Self-Concept, and Adolescent Mental Health

Jwmwishree Boro*, Dhanalakshmi D** and Shoma Chakrawarty***

Abstract

Being a vast and complex construct, the study of mental health and its determinants has occupied the centre stage of research attention in Psychology. Based on the context, life stage, and problem in relation to which mental health is being studied, different perspectives emerge and must be tested out in real life. In the current study, adolescent mental health was the focus. Stress, optimism, and self-concept were used as predictors in a Structural Equation Model (SEM) due to the relevance of variables in this stage of life. Using a multi-stage sampling strategy, 670 adolescents were surveyed using the Perceived Stress Scale, Life Orientation Test- Revised, Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale, and the Mental Health Inventory. Perceived stress and poor mental health were associated, while self-concept and optimism and positive aspects of mental health were positively associated. Supplementary analysis revealed that students attending government schools reported greater stress and anxiety, and lower behavioural adjustment and life satisfaction, than their private-school counterparts. The SEM shed light on the role of self-concept as an important mediator in adolescent mental health. The findings highlight the key role of self-perception and self-knowledge as important pathways to mental health that must be recognized and emphasized by parents, teachers, and significant others.

Keywords: Adolescent mental health, perceived stress, optimism, self-concept, structural equation modelling

*Asst Prof. Department of Psychology, The Assam Royal Global University, Guwahati, Assam, Email: jsrboro@gmail.com

**Asst. Prof. Dept of Applied Psychology, Pondicherry University, Pondicherry, Email: divyalak@gmail.com

***Asst. Prof, Dept. of Psychology, Maniben Nanavati Women's College, Mumbai, Maharashtra, Email: shomachakrawarty011@gmail.com