

A Study of Mental Health among Teaching & Non-Teaching Employees of Patna University, India

Benkat Krishna Bharti, UGC – NET

Department of Psychology, Patna University, Patna, Bihar, India

***Corresponding Author:**

Benkat Krishna Bharti

Abstract: The present study is aimed at studying the extent of mental health among teaching and non-teaching employees working in Patna University, Patna. As it is often observed that teaching and non-teaching staffs differs to each other in respect of their institutional values, other related opportunities and problems, therefore, the present investigation is planned to make a comparative study of mental health among teaching and non-teaching employees working in Patna University, Patna – a well known capital town of Bihar. For the same, it was hypothesized that teachers working in Patna University and its constituent colleges may have better mental health in comparison to their non-teaching employees. The sample of the present investigation consisted of one hundred twenty (N = 120) employees comprising teachers (n=60) and non-teaching (n=60) which were randomly selected from different departments of Patna University and its constituent colleges located at Patna. A standardized mental health inventory was administered individually on the sample. This inventory also consists of 56 items covering 6 dimensions such as self- evolution, perception of reality, integration of personality, autonomy and stability, growth oriented attitude and environmental mastery. In this inventory high score of the inventory indicates good mental health. Finally, results revealed significant difference between means of two groups between teaching and non-teaching employees as t value was found statistically significant at .01 level of confidence. Although, teaching employees has been found to have better mental health as compared to non-teaching employees, hence, such discrepancy of results has been discussed in detail by giving probable reasons.

Keywords: Mental Health, Teaching and Non-Teaching Employees, Patna University.

INTRODUCTION

In this fast changing scenario of human life no body is free from stress which causes many psychological problems especially pertaining to mental health. Mental Health is a psychological state of well-being, characterized by continuing personal growth, a sense of purpose in life, self-acceptance, and positive relations with others. Some people define mental health as the absence of mental illness, but many psychologists consider this definition too narrow. Mental health can also refer to a field of study encompassing both mental health and mental illness.

These days a large number of distinct dimensions of mental health have been identified by psychologists and other behavioral scientists. These include self-acceptance, or self-esteem, characterized by a positive evaluation of oneself and one's past experiences; personal growth reflected in one's sense of continued psychological growth and development; a sense that one's life has purpose and meaning; positive relations with others; environmental mastery, the capacity to manage effectively in the surrounding world; and autonomy, a sense of self-determination and the ability to control one's own life. Self-acceptance,

relations with others, environmental mastery, and autonomy usually improve as a person ages and gains life experience. Though, many people find that their personal growth and sense of purpose in life begin to decline in midlife.

Some psychologists viewed mental health as the ability to maintain a balance between positive and negative emotions, such as elation and sadness. In this view, a person who displays emotional extremes in either direction is less well-adjusted. Other psychologists emphasize the role of one's environment in influencing well-being. This perspective sees mental health reflected in a person's overall happiness with various domains of life, such as social relationships, work, and community.

Surgeon General's report focused for the first time on mental health rather than physical health. In that report, mental health was defined as "a state of successful performance of mental function, resulting in productive activities, fulfilling relationships with people, and the ability to adapt to change and to cope with adversity" [1]. In 2004, the World Health Organization's historic first report on mental health

promotion defined mental health as: a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community [2]. In contrast, mental disorder (synonymous with *mental illness*) is a persistent deviation from normal functioning that is sufficient to cause emotional suffering and role impairment, diminishing individuals' capacities to execute their responsibilities as a parent, spouse, or employee [3]. Although it sounds serious, and its name equates it with physical illness, mental illness was not considered a priority by the medical and public health community until the last decade of the twentieth century. Health is an essential aspect of human life. It is well-recognized truth from the time immemorial that possessing good health is pre-requisite for every human being for all-round growth and development. The word "Mental" means "of the mind". It describes our thoughts, feelings and understanding of ourselves and the world around us. The word "health" generally describes the working order of our body and mind. So, that when we talk about mental health we refer it to the working order of an individual's mind.

Mental health, however, is a contested and still much debated concept, with no universally accepted definition [4, 5]. In fact, it has been argued that there can be no universally accepted definition [4-6] due to the fact that mental health is multi-dimensional and value-laden. A wide range of meanings and definitions exist amongst individuals, reflecting, for example, differences in terms of age, sex, socio-cultural contexts, experiences, and lack of common language. Additionally, interpretations are dynamic and mental health is often used interchangeably with, emotional, psychological and subjective well-being. Thus, no definition is ideal or without problems and mental health is more complex and subjective than any definition in this regard. It is recognized that focusing on achieving a consensus on definitions of an abstract concept like mental health may not be the most beneficial use of efforts or necessary [4, 5, 7]. However, the way mental health is defined and conceptualized will affect how it is measured.

Mental health is defined as a state of well being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a contribution to her or his community. The World Health Organization defines mental health as "a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a contribution to his or her community" [8]. Boehm [9] says that the condition and level of mental health should be socially acceptable. According to Charandas [11]

mental health is the adjustment of human being to the world and to each other with maximum of effectiveness and happiness. It is an important aspect of one's total health. From perspectives of the discipline of positive psychology mental health may include an individual's ability to enjoy life and procure a balance between life activities and efforts to achieve psychological resilience.

One of the distinguished scholars, viz., Weare [11] is of the personal opinion that mental health is getting its deeper concern with some important positive characteristics of the individual such as: resilience and an inner sense of coherence; the ability to make relationships, to attach to others and to love the ability to think clearly including emotional matters; the ability to manage the emotions successfully and appropriately; the ability to be sensitive to one's own and other's emotions; and the capacity to have an accurate self concept and high self-esteem [11-13].

A moment ago the field of Global Mental Health has emerged, and defined as 'the area of study, research and practice that places a priority on improving mental health and achieving equity in mental health for all people worldwide' [14].

The term mental health has been classified into two different broader categories known as positive and negative mental health. Mental health from the positive angle refers to behavior, attitudes and feeling that respect an individual's level of personal effectiveness, success and satisfaction. Argyris [15] suggested that persons with positive mental health should have the ability to understand the realities which exists both externally and internally when he/she strives to be aware of their one self. Buck [16] found that employees who reported working under pressure indicated decreased mental health. Emmons [17] viewed that mentally healthy persons are able to fulfill their social roles successfully. They enjoy peace of mind, happiness, self confidence and others' companionship. Negative mental health covers a wide variety of deep feelings including sorrow, disappointment, anger and empathy etc. O'Neil and others [18] found that stress in the work environment has a negative impact on the physical and mental health of working women. Rastogi and Kavita [19] found a significant negative relationship between occupational stress and mental health. Nagaratnamma [20] says that employees of different organizations differ with regards to their mental health. According to Johns *et al.* [21] mental health is a condition which is characteristics of the average person who meets the demands of life on the basis of his own capacities and limitations.

Mental health impairments popularly known as mental illness refer to all diagnosable mental disorders.

Mental disorders are health conditions that are characterized by alterations in thinking, mood or behavior (or some combinations thereof) associated with distress and/or impaired functioning [22].

An analysis of fifteen major studies conducted over last forty years on the prevalence of mental disorders in India by Ganguli [23] suggested that 73 persons have mental disorders in a population of 1000 persons. Sharma and Singh [24] revealed that in the state of Goa the prevalence of mental disorder was 60%, more among males as compare to females and likewise it was found much higher among Christians as compared to Hindus; but it was found very much similar in urban and rural areas. Recently, Zilli and Ali [25] have conducted a study on mental health among players and non-players. The findings of the study revealed significant difference between players and non-players on mental health dimensions. Similarly, Zilli *et al* [26] concluded that female youth scored higher on mental health dimensions as compared to their male counterparts.

Mental health is the launch pad of thinking, communication skills, learning, emotional growth, resilience and self steam. It is how people look at themselves, their lives and the other people in their lives; evaluate their challenges and problems; and explores choices. This includes handling stress, relating to other people and making decisions. Sanadnarj *et al.* [27] investigates the relationship between physical health and mental health among 260 male and 252 females' higher secondary school students in Tamil Nadu. They studied 10 physical health variables and 6 mental health variables. Among the 60 correlations computed between physical health and mental health variables, 57 correlations were significant at 0.01 level and the remaining three were significant at the 0.05 level. It was found that those who enjoy good physical health are most likely to have better mental health as compare to those who are suffering from poor mental health.

A meta-analytic review by Stansfeld and Candy [28] provides robust consistent evidence that (combination of) high demands and low decision latitude and (combination of) high efforts and low rewards are prospective risk factors for common mental disorders and suggested that the psychological work environment is important for mental health. The impact of work stressors on common mental disorders differ from men to women.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PRESENT STUDY

Mental health is generally described as that state in the interrelationship of the individual and his environment in which the personality is relatively stable and the environmental stressors are within its

absorption capacity. It is important to be mentioned here that mental health of the teachers and all employees working in the same institution is a condition in which they are effective in their work, take pride and satisfaction in the activities they pursue, manifest cheerfulness in the performance of their duties and are humanely considerate of their pupils and other colleagues. Thus, the present research endeavor is of utmost value.

Having reviewed the wide survey of literature on the study of mental health, it has been observed that none of the studies are available on the problem pertaining to teaching and non-teaching employees with reference to Patna University, Patna, India, hence, the present study is of immense value which will fill the void of knowledge in the area concerned. As it is generally assumed that teaching and non-teaching employees differ to each other in respect of their institutional values, other related opportunities and problems, therefore, the present investigation was planned to study mental health among teaching and non-teaching employees with particular reference to Patna University, Patna.

HYPOTHESES

In the light of the objectives the following hypotheses were formulated:

1. Teaching employees would have better mental health as compare to non-teaching employees on over all mental health inventory
2. Teaching employees working in Patna University would have better mental health as compare to no-teaching employees on positive self-evaluation, a dimension of mental health.
3. Teaching employees would have better mental health as compare to non-teaching employees on perception of reality – a dimension of mental health.
4. Teaching employees working in Patna University would have better mental health as compare to non-teaching employees on integration of personality dimension of mental health.
5. Teaching employees would have better mental health as compare to non-teaching employees on autonomy, a dimension of mental health.
6. Patna University teachers would have better mental health as compare to their non-teaching employees on group-oriented attitude, a dimension of mental health.
7. Teachers working in Patna University would have better mental health as compare to their non-teaching staff on environmental mastery, a dimension of mental health.

METHODOLOGY

Sample: Total sample of the present Study consisted of (N=120) employees, comprising teaching (n=60) and non-teaching (n=60) which were randomly selected from different departments of Patna University and its constituent colleges located at Patna – a well known capital town of Bihar. The subjects’ age were ranged 35 to 63 years.

Tools used: The following measures were used in the present piece of research work.

1. **Mental Health Inventory:** For measuring mental health of the school teachers a standardized mental health inventory developed by Jagdish and Srivastava [30] was used. Inventory consisted of 56 items, including 24 negative and 32 positive and having a lowest score of 56 and highest score of 224. Since the neutral point is at 140, scores below 140 indicate poor mental health while scores above 140 reflect good mental health. Each item of the inventory was rated on 4 point rating scale ranging from always to never with a score of 1 to 4. Inventory comprises of six dimensions such as, Positive self-evaluation (PSE), Perception of reality (PR), Integration of personality (IP), Autonomy (Autonomy), Group-oriented attitudes (GOA), and Environmental Mastery (EM).
2. **Biographical Information Blank (BIB):** Biographical Information Blank (BIB) was also prepared by the present investigator and used for analyzing the obtained results. Information included in it was like age, income, job tenure, number of depends, total working experience, qualifications, etc.

Procedure

These two materials were in printed form and were administered on each teaching and non-teaching employees who were working in different departments of Patna University and its constituent colleges located at Patna by giving assurance that information provided by them will be kept strictly confidential.

The responses were scored according to the procedure and the individual scores were obtained. Having obtained the data, the data were tabulated for giving statistical treatment for obtaining the results and presented in tables. Finally, the results were discussed and the formulated hypotheses were tested.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As the obtained result presented in Table- 1 also reveals the clear cut picture regarding the levels of perceived reactions of teaching and non-teaching employees working in Patna University, Patna on the degree of mental health. As it could be seen from the table-1, 45% teachers working in Patna University had shown higher degree of mental health than non-teaching employees working in the same university i.e. 38.33%. It is also evident from the table, 30% teachers from the same university have been found possessing moderate level of mental health than non-teaching employees i.e. 31.67% which is comparatively little higher in percentage, whereas, 15% teachers of Patna University had low degree of mental health which is comparatively lesser than their non-teaching counterpart i.e. 30%.

Table 1: Showing Comparative Difference between the group of Teaching and Non-teaching Employees working in Patna University on their levels of Mental Health

Levels	Group of Teaching Employees (n=60)		Group of Non-Teaching Employees (n=60)	
	n	Percentage	n	Percentage
High	27	45%	23	38.33%
Moderate	18	30%	19	31.67%
Low	15	25%	18	30%

In continuation of the obtained results presented in Table- 2 clearly indicates that in the case of teaching group the mean and SD was found to be 183.3 and 14.13, while in the case of non-teaching group the Mean and SD was found to be 170.2 and 13.21 respectively, which is statistically significant at 0.01 level as t – value has been found 5.19. Thus, the result proves the present underlying major hypothesis of our present piece of research work that “teachers working in Patna University would have better mental health as compare to non-teaching group on overall mental health dimensions”, stands accepted.

Table 2 clearly indicated that in the case of teaching group on different dimensions of mental health the means values has been found high than their non-teaching counterparts, hence, all the dimensions of mental health, viz., positive self evaluation, perception of reality, integration of personality, autonomy, group-oriented attitude and environmental mastery has been found statistically highly significant as their t – values are 4.79, 14.85, 3.78, 7.81, 3.96, and 3.40 respectively. By obtaining such type of results hypotheses formulated revealed the fact that all formulated hypotheses also stand accepted especially from where the present research endeavor has been carried out.

Table 2: showing mean, SD and t-values between the group of teaching and non-teaching employees working in Patna University, Patna on overall mental health scores and dimensions-wise

Dimensions	Group	Mean	SD	t-value	P*
Overall mental health	Teaching	183.3	14.13	5.19	< .01
	Non-Teaching	170.2	13.21		
Positive self evaluation	Teaching	31.6	2.89	4.79	< .01
	Non-Teaching	29.3	2.31		
Perception of reality	Teaching	24.4	1.88	14.85	< .01
	Non-Teaching	19.5	1.76		
Integration of personality	Teaching	34.4	5.18	3.78	< .01
	Non-Teaching	31.3	3.69		
Autonomy	Teaching	17.8	1.68	7.81	< .01
	Non-Teaching	15.3	1.71		
Group oriented attitude	Teaching	29.8	3.17	3.96	< .01
	Non-Teaching	27.3	3.69		
Environmental mastery	Teaching	27.8	2.76	3.40	< .01
	Non-Teaching	26.2	2.26		

In this case positive self-evaluation of employees clearly indicates that teachers use to assess themselves more positively as compare to non-teaching group, since they realize their potentialities in a better way, have good confidence level and self-confidence among themselves as compared to their non-teaching employees.

It is quit clear from the above mentioned findings that teachers are more realistic, farsighted and sharp in decision taking in their different matter of the organization as compare to non-teaching employees especially on the perception of reality – an important dimension of. Mental health. Moreover, in case of integration of personality – a dimension of mental health significant of difference has also been found as the Mean, SD and t – values presented in table 1 which clearly indicates that teachers group possess highly well-behaved, delightful, incorporated and value-oriented personality; therefore, they got better mental health as compared to non-teaching employees.

As the obtained result presented in table 2 also clearly indicated that teaching group are getting better autonomy and job-related freedom, therefore, they got better mental health as compared to non-teaching employees working in Patna University as their t- 7.81 has been found highly significant at 0.01 level of confidence on the dimension of mental health i.e. autonomy. Similarly, group oriented attitude and environmental mastery – dimensions of mental health has also been found significant at .01 level of confidence

It is also quit clear from the results cited above in the table-2 that the teachers working in Patna University Patna are getting more group-oriented attitude, sense of oneness and generosity because of their environmental brought-up/ mastery provided by

the organization as compared to non-teaching employees in the same institution, hence, they got better mental health as compared to their counterparts because of their positive personality.

The result obtained and presented in table No. 2 on total dimension of mental health clearly highlight the facts that teachers are getting comparatively more sound mental health as compared to non-teaching due to high conducive organizational climate, more autonomy and moreover much authoritative power invested to them along with lower level working stressful situations. A number of studies conducted by Buck [16], O’Neil and others [18], Nagaratnamma [20], and Ahmad [29] extend their whole heartedly support to present findings in this regard.

CONCLUSION

In the light of the obtained results and its discussion the important conclusions are summed up below:

1. Significance of difference has been found between teaching and non-teaching employees, although, both the group have shown quite favorable inclination towards their sound mental health.
2. Significance of differences have been found between teaching and non-teaching employees on all dimensions of mental health, namely, Positive self-evaluation (PSE), Perception of reality (PR), Integration of personality (IP), Autonomy (Autonomy), Group-oriented attitudes (GOA), and Environmental Mastery (EM).
3. Teachers working in Patna University, Patna were comparatively more prone to higher degree of perceived mental health than their non-teaching counterpart.
4. Observations have revealed the fact that there is a need to pay much more attention to the necessities of non-teaching employees who are engaged in

doing painstaking job for the promotion of educated society. Therefore, sound mental health is the need of the hour in general and in all walks of life to make congenial environment within Indian socio-cultural milieu. Since, quality teaching plays a key role in determining the mental health status of teachers, it is essential that more proactive measure should be adopted to improve the efficiency of the teachers. This will have two split benefits, at one level the quality of the teaching - learning process will improve and secondly, we will have the teachers with functional stress levels ensuring better mental health. However, the sample of this study is given up inadequate but it may have its own value far-reaching implications in its wider point of views.

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