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A Comparative Study of Classroom Anxiety & Coping Self-Efficacy in Adolescents in Indian Schools, in Association with School Counsellor

Kaninika Bharadwaj[1], Dr. Divi Tara[2]
[1]*Student, Masters in Clinical Psychology, Amity Institute of Psychology and Allied Sciences, Amity University*
[2]*Assistant Professor, Amity Institute of Psychology and Allied Sciences, Amity University*

Abstract: ***This study aimed to evaluate and study the differences in classroom anxiety and coping self-efficacy of adolescents (14–17-year-olds) in Indian schools, with & without a school counsellor. School counselling is a growing domain in Indian educational system & an essential aspect of the system, as it provides support to students to cope with academic, social and personal challenges. Adolescence is an age of transition and changes in dynamics of self. Emotional, vocational, social & psychological support from trained professionals in the school environment can be extremely helpful & beneficial at this age. A sample of N=142 adolescents participated in the study, providing self-report measures of classroom anxiety (Classroom Anxiety Measure) and coping self-efficacy (Coping Self-Efficacy Scale). The results revealed a significant negative correlation between classroom anxiety and coping self-efficacy ($r = -0.619$, $p < 0.01$). These findings suggest that as classroom anxiety increases, coping self-efficacy tends to decrease in adolescents. Additionally, the results of independent t-test for differences in the classroom anxiety and coping self-efficacy between the two groups also revealed that there was a significant difference in the classroom anxiety of the two groups, which was higher in the students of schools without a school counsellor. The coping self-efficacy scores however, showed no significant difference in between the two groups of adolescents. The implications of this study highlight the importance of addressing classroom anxiety and promoting coping self-efficacy among adolescents. Interventions aimed at enhancing coping skills and reducing anxiety in educational settings may contribute to improved well-being and academic performance.***

Keywords: School counselling, classroom anxiety, coping self-efficacy, adolescence, schools.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. School Counselling & School Counsellors

School counselling is a beneficial and essential component of the education system, which is the need of the hour. It aims to facilitate the students with emotional and psychological support whenever it is required & to help students develop appropriate, suitable skills to manoeuvre through diverse life situations & achieve success. It addresses issues that may affect students' academic performance, which includes psychosocial and behavioral challenges (Gachenia & Mwenje, 2020).

School counsellors are trained professionals who work at schools and educational institutions, specializing in knowledge of developmental psychology, diversity in cultures, therapeutic techniques and assessments, career development paths, etc. They are skilled at applying their knowledge on working with the students, staff or school administration, when required

However, school counselling has been a fairly new domain in the Indian educational system. As mental health and its importance has seen a vast improvement in the last few years, the realisation for the importance of maintenance of children's mental health came along as well. The evolving social trends and changing society, a lot of traditional ways of functioning have been challenged, creating a gap for multiple needs of children. There is a requirement of an additional support system in their lives (Kodad & Kazi, 2014). Counselling in schools is seen as a medium to bridge this gap.

B. Classroom Anxiety

Students with classroom anxiety feel fearful, uneasy, insecure, and unhappy about the classroom settings (Richmond *et al.*, 2004). They are not at ease, calm, peaceful, and don't feel safe in the classroom. Their fear is so overwhelming and stifling that they are barely functional while they are in a classroom setting.

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Classroom anxiety, while might be perceived as a mild phenomenon, can lead to dropouts, absenteeism, withdrawal, decline in academic performance or behavioural/adjustment issues in adolescents. Prevention is a very important step here. A study by Bhasin, Saini & Sharma (2010) reports that depression, anxiety and stress levels in adolescent students are significantly high, especially in the 'board classes', referring to the 10th and 12th grades. These high levels of anxiety have a remarkable inverse relationship with academic performance of students.

C. Coping Self-Efficacy

Coping self-efficacy is the belief in one's coping behaviours or coping strategy. It is one's judgment about their ability to cope effectively with life challenges (Chesney et al., 2006). It has been associated with a range of positive outcomes, including better mental health, improved academic performance, and greater resilience.

Past researches also talk about distinguishing between three types of coping self-efficacy: problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping, and receiving support from close others (Chesney et al., 2006). Studies conducted by Bandura, Reese, and Adams (1982) give proof that increasing coping self-efficacy results in decreased psychological distress in coping with stressors.

II. METHODOLOGY

The aim of the study was to evaluate and study the difference in classroom anxiety and coping self-efficacy of adolescents in schools with & without a school counsellor. For this study, a sample population of N =142 school-going adolescents (aged between 14 to 17 years) was selected by a simple random sampling method. The participants of the study were school-going students, enrolled in schools with and without a school counsellor. The Classroom Anxiety Measure (CAM) was used to evaluate the classroom anxiety in school-going adolescents and the Coping Self-Efficacy Scale (CSES) questionnaire for measuring the coping self-efficacy. A correlational design was used to examine the relationship between classroom anxiety and coping self-efficacy. To study the differences between the classroom anxiety and coping self-efficacy of the two groups, independent t-test was conducted.

III. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The study aimed to evaluate and study the difference in classroom anxiety and coping self-efficacy of adolescents (14–17-year-olds) in schools with & without a school counsellor. The sample (N=142) was divided into two groups, adolescent students enrolled in schools with and without a school counsellor, respectively. The objective of the study was to evaluate the classroom anxiety and coping self-efficacy of school-going adolescents. Furthermore, the differences of the classroom anxiety and coping self-efficacy between the two sample groups (SC & NSC) were evaluated as well.

Table 1.1 Correlations between Classroom Anxiety and Coping Self-Efficacy

		1	2
1	Classroom Anxiety		-.619**
2	Coping Self-Efficacy	-.619**	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The results of the study (referring to table 1.1) revealed that a significant association between classroom anxiety and coping self-efficacy in adolescents. The correlational analysis revealed a moderate negative correlation between these variables ($r = -0.619$, $p < 0.01$). This finding indicates that as classroom anxiety increases, coping self-efficacy tends to decrease among adolescents.

Table 1.2 Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value for Classroom Anxiety of the two sample groups

	Group	N	Mean	SD	t-value	*df*	p-value
Classroom Anxiety	SC#	71	52.83	13.283	-2.271	140	0.025
	NSC##	71	57.65	11.961	-2.271	138.49	0.025

#SC – Sample group with students enrolled in a school with school counsellors

##NSC - Sample group with students enrolled in a school without school counsellors

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Additionally, the t-value for the classroom anxiety of the two groups was -2.271 (table 1.2). The t-value was only significant at 0.05 level, which indicates that there was a significant difference observed in the classroom anxiety of the two groups, one with students enrolled in a school with school counsellors (group SC) and one with students enrolled in a school without school counsellors (group NSC).

The results of this independent t-test suggest that apart from there being a significant difference between the two groups, the classroom anxiety scores for the SC group are less than the NSC group. This indicates that the students in the SC group experience less classroom anxiety on average than students in the NSC group, suggesting the presence of school counsellor has a significant impact on the anxiety levels experienced by adolescents in school settings.

Table 1.3 Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value for Coping Self-efficacy of the two sample groups

	Group	N	Mean	SD	t-value	d*f*	p-value
Coping Self-Efficacy	SC[#]	71	161.17	39.326	1.496	140	0.137
	NSC[##]	71	151.59	36.929	1.496	139.45	0.137

[#]SC – Sample group with students enrolled in a school with school counsellors

[##]NSC - Sample group with students enrolled in a school without school counsellors

Furthermore, the t-test results (table 1.3) for coping self-efficacy suggest that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups. The t-value obtained here is 1.496 and the p-value is 0.137, insignificant at the standard significance level. This depicts no difference in abilities to cope with stress or difficult situations of adolescents of both the groups.

However, there can be multiple reasons for this hypothesis to be rejected. Coping self-efficacy is rooted in a lot of factors like problem-focused coping, support from friends and family and emotional & physiological state of the individual. Adolescents derive their belief in their coping skills through factors like parental support, peer support and cultural influences (Hua & Howell, 2022). School counselling might not act as support enough or the only source of development of coping strategies, explaining the no significant difference between the coping self-efficacy of both the groups of adolescents.

These findings provide evidence for the importance of having a school counsellor in schools and highlight the potential benefits of providing targeted interventions aimed at reducing classroom anxiety and improving coping self-efficacy among adolescents. Moreover, further research can work on exploring the specific counselling strategies and techniques used by school counsellors that are associated with improved mental health outcomes among adolescents.

IV. CONCLUSION

The study found a significant negative correlation between classroom anxiety and coping self-efficacy in adolescents. The presence of school counsellors was associated with lower classroom anxiety levels. However, no significant difference was found in coping self-efficacy between the two groups. Further research is needed to understand the multifaceted factors influencing coping self-efficacy in adolescents.

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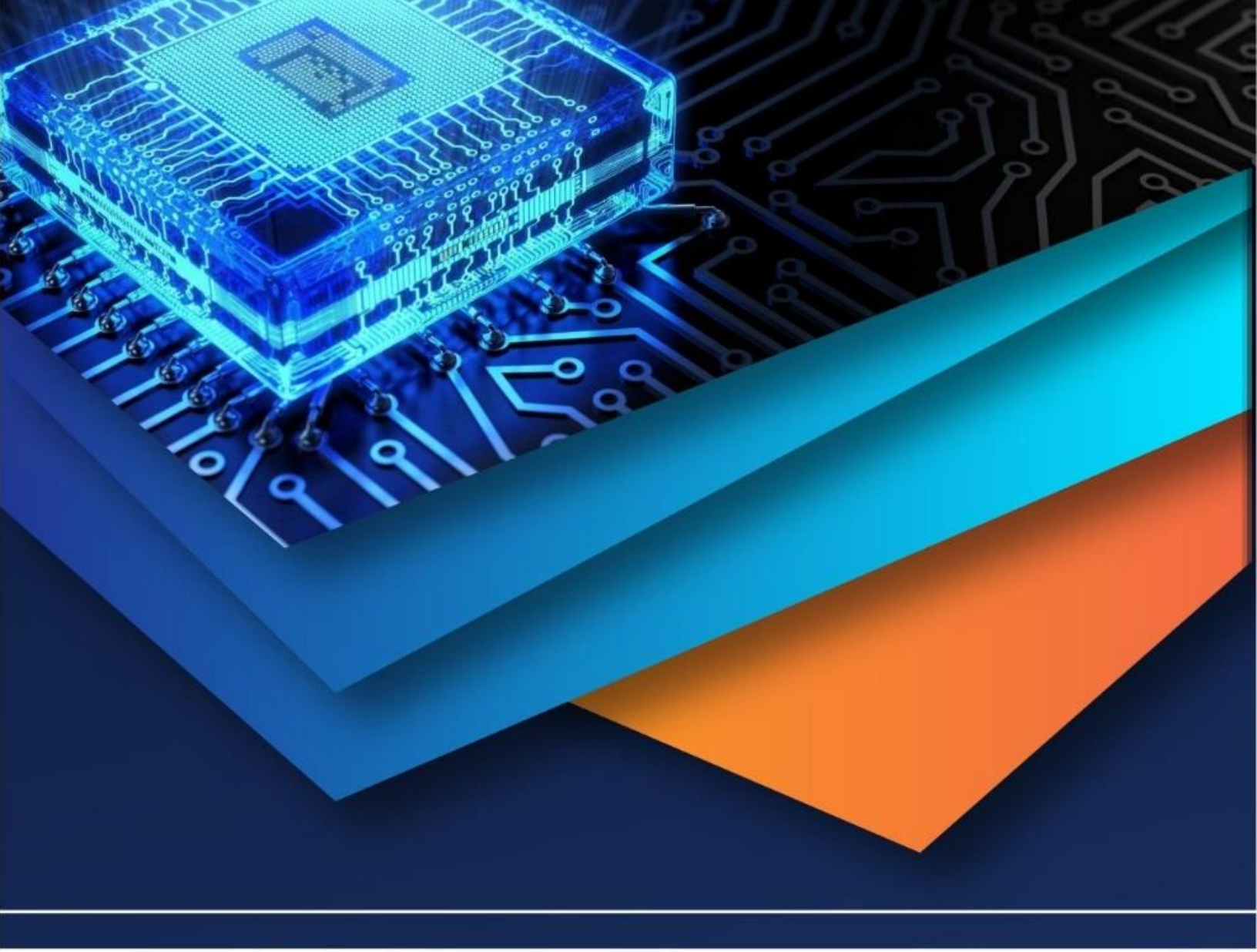
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