

Adjustment Problems among School Students

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The present study is intended to examine the adjustment problems of school students from urban and rural schools of Visakhapatnam district. Adjustment is a process by which a living organism maintains, a balance between the needs and the circumstances. The variables included for the study apart from adjustment (family, social, academic, financial and emotional) are age, gender, class, type of school etc. The study was conducted on a sample of 461 students (197 boys, 264 girls) randomly selected from the various government and private schools from urban and rural areas of Visakhapatnam district, Andhra Pradesh. A standardized questionnaire developed by Jain (1972) was adopted for this study. The data was analyzed to examine the influence of individual factors on adjustment variables. The major findings of the study have shown that adjustment of school children is primarily dependent on the school variables like the class in which they are studying, the medium of instruction present in the school, and the type of management of the school. Parental education and occupation of the school children also significantly influenced adjustment.

The term adjustment is often used as a synonym for accommodation and adaptation. Strictly speaking, the term denotes the results of equilibrium, which may be affected by either of these processes (Monroe, 1990). It is used to emphasize the individual's struggle to along or survive in his or her social and physical environment.

Good (1959) states that adjustment is the process of finding and adopting modes of behaviour suitable to the environment or the changes in the environment. Shafer (1961) emphasized that adjustment is the process by which a living organism maintains a balance between its needs and the circumstances that influence the satisfaction of these needs. Kulshrestha (1979) explained that the adjustment process is a way in which the individual attempts to deal with stress,

tensions, conflicts etc., and meet his or her needs. In this process, the individual also makes efforts to maintain harmonious relationships with the environment.

In adjustment, the two crucial factors are the individual and the environment. In the study of the individual, the considerations are the heredity and biological factors, the psychological factors, and the quality of socialization given to him or her. Whereas, the environment includes all the social factors.

Every individual from the time he or she steps out of the family and goes to school makes to a long series of adjustments between the whole unique personality and the environment. The ardent desire of each boy and girl to become an individual person having a healthy physique, a growing intellectual

ability, a greater degree of emotional poise, and increased participation in social groups, such characteristics enhance one's personality. Even parents, teachers and other significant members of the society to which person belongs will encourage this desire.

The school is the major socialization institution for any child. It is the child's first contract with the world outside the house. For nearly 12 years a child spends 5 to 7 hours a day in the school. School is one of the most important foundation pillars on which the child's personality develops. Children learn proficiencies in various abilities like, learning process and home work, social communications, handling emotion, and the management of day to day interactions at home and school. In reality, the growing child is dependent on the immediate environment i.e. the house and the school to meet his growth needs. The concern, therefore, extends to how the school facilities can be enhanced and improved to meet the growth needs of the children.

Several studies have been reported in the area of social, educational, health and emotional adjustment of school students of both sexes. Some studies try to relate adjustment with variables like intelligence, achievement, age, sex, socio-economic status, needs, anxiety, and security. Student's reaction to frustration has also been studied. A few studies focused on the nature, causes, and extent of indiscipline among students. The relation between indiscipline and variables like achievement, participation in co-curricular activities etc., were also examined.

A review of the studies carried out in the field of adjustment as reported in the three surveys of educational research edited by Buch (1991) reveals that no systematic attempt has yet been made to develop a tool for the assessment of adjustment problems of school students.

Objectives

To examine the adjustment problem's among school children from different schools.

To examine the influence of demographic variables like age, gender, class, medium of instruction, types of schools, parents' education, parents' occupation, on the adjustment problems of school children.

Method

Sample

The sample consists of 461 students from sixth to tenth class 197 boys and 264 girls. The sample boys including 132 from Telugu medium schools and 65 from English medium schools. Out of 264 girls, 211 were studying in Telugu medium schools and 53 in English medium schools. The mean age is 13.88 years, boys = 14.20 and girls = 13.77 years.

Tools

An adjustment scale developed by Jain (1972) was adopted for this study. It consists of the 50 items, which measure adjustment in five different areas: family adjustment, social adjustment, academic adjustment, financial adjustment and emotional adjustment. The students had to indicate if they experienced a particular described situation. The scoring of this scale involves counting the number of answers marked below the column 'YES' in all the areas of adjustment excepting Emotional Adjustment. Only statements that are marked in column 'YES' were counted to obtain score on the particular dimension. For the Emotional Adjustment, the number of items marked 'NO' was counted to obtain a score. In this case, high a score indicated lesser emotional adjustment. A total adjustment score indicated lesser emotional adjustment. A total adjustment score can be calculated by summing the scores on the first four dimensions and subtracting from this total score on Emotional Adjustment.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Age, Gender, Class and Medium of Instruction and Its Impact on Adjustment

Dimension	Age			Gender			Class			Medium of instruction			
	M	<13yrs n=180	>13yrs n=280	t	Boys n=180	Girls n=280	t	upp.pri n=180	Sec n=280	t	EM n=118	TM n=342	t
Family Adjustment	M	7.60	7.54	.30	7.51	76.0	0.54	7.75	7.42	1.90*	7.59	7.59	.17
	SD	2.50	1.74		1.81	1.91		1.92	1.82		1.94	1.84	
Social Adjustment	M	7.97	8.21	1.44	7.94	8.25	1.86	8.07	8.15	.49	8.07	8.14	.34
	SD	1.96	1.59		1.71	1.76		1.80	1.70		1.75	1.74	
Academic Adjustment	M	8.05	8.24	2.08	8.11	8.21	0.56	8.13	8.19	.36	8.08	8.19	.56
	SD	1.96	1.84		1.82	1.94		1.89	1.89		1.77	1.93	
Financial Adjustment	M	7.49	7.64	.70	7.31	7.78	2.23*	7.59	7.57	.70	7.64	7.56	.33
	SD	2.24	2.18		2.20	2.19		1.14	2.25		2.34	2.16	
Emotional Adjustment	M	6.08	5.86	1.01	5.70	6.13	1.97*	5.96	5.94	.65	5.56	6.08	2.09
	SD	2.42	2.25		2.38	2.26		2.33	2.31		2.63	2.19	

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

Table 1 provides results regarding the influence of age on adjustment. It can be noted from the table that age does not have a significant influence on adjustment. There are no significant differences between the two groups on any of the adjustment factors.

It also provides the findings with regard to gender and adjustment of the students. The results indicated a significant influence of gender on adjustment. Significant difference is observed between boys and girls on the financial and emotional factors of adjustment. On the financial adjustment dimension, girls have higher mean scores than the boys indicating that they have better financial adjustment. An examination of the individual items of the financial adjustment factor indicated that girl students as compared to boy students' feel their parents' fulfill their needs easily. This could be because parents of girl students tend to give more importance to the needs of their daughters.

The emotional adjustment factor, as mentioned in the methodology chapter, is reverse scored, with a higher score indicating lesser adjustment. Thus, it can be observed that boys are significantly better adjusted than girls. The analysis of the individual items of the emotional adjustment dimensions indicated that boys as compared to girls have not expressed any fear to go out alone in night, see a dead body or control their anger whenever things are not happening according to their wish. Similar findings are reported by Kasinath (1990) and Pradhan (1993).

Table 1 also proves the results with regard to class and adjustment. The sample of students has been categorized into groups of the basis of the class in which, they are studying. The group labeled as Upper Primary group includes students studying between 5th and 10th standards while the group named Secondary includes students studying between 8th and 10th class. The table shows that the class has a significant influence on family

adjustment. The students studying Upper primary have better family adjustment than their counterparts in Secondary classes. An analysis of the individual items shows that the former feel proud that their parents are educated, their family member take positive criticism in their future planned, feel that their parents, instead of accepting old familial traditions are modern and they do not hesitate to invite their friends to home.

The findings indicate that pre-adolescent students are more influenced by their parents as they form the main role models for them. It is only when they enter into adolescence that they would experience peer pressure and associated specific opinions and attitudes about themselves and their family. It also provides results regarding the influence of medium of instruction on adjustment. The Medium of instruction has been categorized into two categories on the basis of the language in which instruction is provided to the students. Category 1 includes English medium while Category 2 includes Telugu medium. It can be observed from the table that medium of instruction has medium. It can be observed from the table that medium of instruction has a significant influence on emotional adjustment. English medium students are better adjustment than Telugu medium students on this dimension. An examination of the individual items indicates that students from the English medium schools are not afraid to talk with others, do not feel jealous when somebody supercedes them, go out alone in the night or get angry when things do not go according to their wishes.

It is a common practice in English medium schools to provide training to their children to make oral presentations, face competition and control their negative emotions. Consequently, they are more likely to exhibit better emotional adjustment.

Table 2 shows that. the results regarding the type of school and adjustment. The sample of schools of school has been categorized into four groups on the basis of type of management of the school. Group 1 includes private un-aided English medium schools, while group 2 includes municipal school, group 3 includes Zilla Parishad schools and group 4 includes private aided schools. Significant differences are observed among four schools on the academic and emotional factors of adjustment. On academic dimensions, Zilla Parishad school children have higher mean scores than the children of other schools. Observation of the individual items of the academic adjusted compared to children of other schools. These students feel they easily get cooperation from co-students, they usually think that they will complete their studies adequately, their teachers never tried to downgrade them and their parents insist to study instead to join service.

In emotional adjustment dimension private unaided English medium school students are better. adjusted than other schools students. An examination of individual items of the emotional adjustment dimension indicated that the private un-aided English medium school students display the following qualities. They are not afraid of talking to others, they do not have tears in their eyes seeing anybody in trouble or distress, they do not feel jealous whenever anybody supercedes them and do not get angry nor like to beat others if they joke at them.

As mentioned earlier, students from English medium school tend to exhibit better emotional adjustment while their counterparts from rural schools display relatively better educational adjustment as they do experience stress from their teachers and parents regarding their academic performance. Studies by Sharma and Gakkar (1991) and Pradhan (1992) have obtained similar results.

Table 2 Type of School and Adjustment

Dimensions	Type of schools				F value	
	S1(n=100)	S2 (n=116)	S3 (n=87)	S4 (n=157)		
Family adjustment	Mean	7.59	7.56	7.35	7.67	547
	S.D	2.05	1.68	1.99	1.81	
Social adjustment	Mean	7.89	8.05	8.32	8.21	1.184
	S.D	1.94	1.60	1.72	1.72	
Academic adjustment	Mean	7.85	7.59	8.43	8.41	3.158*
	S.D	1.99	1.86	1.76	1.86	
Financial adjustment	Mean	7.45	7.61	7.43	7.73	0.493
	S.D	3.45	1.92	2.59	2.08	
Emotional adjustment	Mean	5.33	6.11	6.17	6.10	3.106*
	S.D	2.40	2.02	2.44	2.36	

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

S1 = private English medium school (urban). S3= Zilla Parishad Telugu medium school (Rural)

S2= municipal Telugu medium school(urban). S4= aided Telugu medium school (urban).

Table 3 provides results regarding the influence of parents' education on adjustment. The sample of parents' education has been categorized into two groups on the basis of their education. Group 1 includes students whose parents have an intermediate or less education while group 2 includes students whose parents have an inter medium. It can be noted from the table that parents' education has a significant influence on adjustment. Significant differences are observed between group I and group II in family, social and financial factors of adjustment. On the three dimensions, students of group II have higher

mean scores than group I. An examination of the individual items of the family adjustment factor indicates the former get love and affection in the family and they get pleasure from the family members. In social adjustment, they get pleasure in respecting the aged people of the society. And available in their home, they do not suffer in their life due to poverty and they do not select friends on the basis of financial status. A study by Mishra, S.K, and Sing, R.D(1998) showed that parental education had a significant influence on the aspiration levels of their children.

Table 3: Parents Education and Adjustment

Parents education	Below inter (n= 297)	Above inter(n=63)	t' value	
Family adjustment	Mean	7.44	8.14	2.630**
	SD	1.97	1.60	
Social adjustment	Mean	8.05	8.52	1.890*
	S.D	1.88	1.26	
Academic adjustment	Mean	8.13	8.04	780
	S.D	2.03	1.48	
Financial adjustment	Mean	7.38	8.23	2.690**
	SD	2.32	2.04	
Emotional adjustment	Mean	5.90	5.77	390
	SD	2.37	2.49	

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

Table 4: Parents Occupation and Adjustment

Parents occupation		Labour	Clerical	Executive	"F value
Dimensions		(n= 199)	(n= 122)	(n- 58)	
Family adjustment	Mean	7.34	7.62	8.08	3.600*
	S.D		1.92	1.91	1.63
Social adjustment	Mean	8.02	8.09	8.54	1.881
	S.D		1.84	1.81	1.48
AcademicAdjustment	Mean	8.15	8.19	8.43	463
	S.D		1.99	1.96	1.56
FinancialAdjustment	Mean	7.43	7.45	8.20	2.804
	S.D		2.24	2.51	1.88
EmotionalAdjustment	Mean	6.15	5.86	5.34	2.738
	S.D		2.11	2.58	2.62

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

Table 4 indicated that the influence of parents occupation on adjustment. The sample of parents occupation divided into three categories on the basis of their profession. Category I include labour while category II includes clerical and category III includes executives. Significant differences are observed among clerical, labour and executives in the family factors of adjustment. In this dimension, children of executives have higher mean scores than the labour and clerical. An examination of the individual items of the family adjustment factor indicated that children of executives are better adjusted compared to children whose parents are doing labour and, clerical jobs. These children feel that their family members take active criticism in their future plans, because their parents have status in the society and generally parents take care of the welfare of their children. Executive parents by virtue of their better educational background may offer a more conducive atmosphere at home thereby facilitating better family adjustment among their children.

Conclusion

The adjustment of school children is determined by their gender, the class in which they are studying, the medium of instruction adopted in their school, the type of management of the school and their parents education and occupation. Differences across the children with regard to their adjustment are noted" mainly with regard to the school in which they are studying. While family adjustment is more higher classes, academic adjustment, is better among children from schools that are founded by the government, and emotional adjustment is higher for students from English and privately managed schools. Further parental education and occupation significantly influenced the emotional adjustment of the school children.

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