

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ADJUSTMENT AND FAMILY ENVIRONMENT OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Adjustment is a crucial psychological process that enables individuals to maintain harmony with their environment. During adolescence, family environment plays a significant role in changing emotional, social and educational adjustment. The present study investigates the relationship between adjustment and family environment among secondary school students. A sample of 160 IX standard students from Bangalore district was selected using stratified random sampling. The Adjustment Inventory by N.Y. Reddy and the Family Environment Scale by Harpreet and Chandha were used for data collection. Statistical techniques such as Pearson's correlation and t-test were employed. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between adjustment and family environment. No significant difference was found between boys and girls in adjustment, whereas urban students showed better adjustment than rural students. The study highlights the importance of a supportive family climate in promoting better adjustment among adolescents and suggests educational strategies for parents and teachers.

Keywords: Adjustment, Family Environment, Adolescents, Secondary School Students.

1. INTRODUCTION

Adjustment refers to the ability of an individual to maintain harmony between personal needs and the demands of the environment. A well-adjusted person is generally happy, efficient and socially balanced, whereas maladjustment occurs when a person fails to cope effectively with life situations. The concept of adjustment has its roots in Darwin's (1859) theory of adaptation, which emphasized survival through change. Later, psychologists broadened the term to include emotional, social and educational aspects of life. Boring (1954) explained that even simple organisms modify their behavior when faced with obstacles, showing that adjustment is a natural and universal process. According to Eysenck (1960), adjustment occurs when individual needs and environmental expectations are in balance. Strang (1957) described adjustment as a continuous life-long process, while Symonds (1933) defined it as a satisfactory relationship between the organism and its environment. Studies by Agarwal (2003) and Singh (2006) further indicate that well-adjusted students tend to perform better academically, socially and emotionally.

Family environment plays a crucial role in changing a child's personality and adjustment. The family is the first social institution where children learn values, habits, emotional control and social behavior through interaction with parents and other members. A positive home environment characterized by affection, trust, communication and parental support promotes healthy emotional and psychological growth (Watson, 1957; William and Wilson, 1961). Smithson (1974) emphasized that emotional maturity develops gradually through supportive relationships within the family. Since children spend their formative years at home, the quality of parental attitudes, discipline and child-rearing practices significantly influences their behavior and development. Families that provide warmth, guidance and encouragement create children who are more confident, socially competent and capable of handling stress effectively. Recognizing the importance of

adjustment in students' lives, the present study attempts to examine the relationship between adjustment and family environment among secondary school students.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The review of related literature highlights that students' adjustment is closely associated with their family environment and plays a significant role in their overall development. Adjustment has been defined as the ability of an individual to maintain a satisfactory relationship with the environment and cope effectively with personal, social and educational demands (Symonds, 1933; Eysenck, 1960). Research indicates that well-adjusted students tend to show better academic performance, emotional stability and social competence. Agarwal (2003) found that academically successful adolescents demonstrated higher levels of social, emotional and educational adjustment compared to unsuccessful students, while Singh (2006) reported that the socio-emotional climate of the school and gender differences significantly influenced students' health and social adjustment. The family environment has been recognized as the primary context for personality development, where children acquire values, behaviors and emotional security through parental interaction (Watson, 1957; William and Wilson, 1961). Studies show that family factors such as cohesion, support, independence and healthy communication positively influence adolescents' psychological well-being, whereas conflict, aggression and lack of parental involvement contribute to maladjustment. Eberhardt and Schill (1984) and Jerslid (1963) observed that children from disrupted or parent-absent families are more prone to emotional and behavioral problems. Enos and Handal (1985) and Bernard (1991) reported that high family conflict negatively affects psychological and academic adjustment, while independence and supportive parenting enhance performance. Similarly, White (1982), Mohanraj and Latha (2005), Johnson et al. (2001) and Bronstein et al. (1996) emphasized that affectionate or ganized and emotionally expressive home environments foster better socio-emotional adjustment and peer relationships. Ahmed and Nigam (2009) further concluded that a favorable home environment significantly improves academic achievement motivation. Overall, these studies consistently demonstrate that a positive and supportive family environment is essential for promoting healthy adjustment and successful development among school students.

3. IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

The importance of studying the relationship between adjustment and family environment has increased due to changing family structures and reduced parent-child interaction. Modern lifestyles, working parents and the collapse of joint family systems often limit emotional support for children, leading to loneliness and maladjustment. Research shows that adolescents from parent-absent or conflict-ridden families face higher risks of behavioral problems and poor academic performance (Eberhardt and Schill, 1984; Jerslid, 1963). Family factors such as cohesion, independence and support positively influence adjustment, while conflict and aggression negatively affect emotional and educational outcomes (Enos and Handal, 1985; Bernard, 1991; White, 1982). Studies by Mohanraj and Latha (2005), Johnson et al. (2001), Bronstein et al. (1996) and Ahmed and Nigam (2009) also confirm that supportive and harmonious family environments enhance students' psychological well-being and academic achievement. Therefore, understanding how family environment influences students' adjustment is essential for promoting their overall development and success in school life.

4. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

“Relationship between Adjustment and Family Environment of Secondary School Students”

5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the relationship between adjustment and family environment of secondary school students.
2. To examine the differences in adjustment with respect to sex (boys and girls)
3. To examine the differences in adjustment with respect to locality (urban and rural).

6. HYPOTHESES

1. There is no significant relationship between adjustment and family environment of secondary school students.
2. There is no significant difference in adjustment between secondary school boys and girls.
3. There is no significant difference in adjustment between urban and rural students.

7. METHODOLOGY

The present study adopted the descriptive survey method to examine the relationship between adjustment and family environment among secondary school students. The population of the study consisted of IX standard students studying in schools of Bangalore district. From this population, a sample of 160 students was selected using the stratified random sampling technique to ensure proper representation of gender and locality. The sample comprised 80 boys and 80 girls drawn from both urban and rural schools. Standardized tools were used for data collection, namely the Adjustment Inventory developed by N.Y. Reddy to measure students' levels of social, emotional and educational adjustment and the Family Environment Scale developed by Harpreet and N.K. Chandha to assess the quality of family atmosphere and interactions. The collected data were analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques such as mean, standard deviation, Pearson's correlation coefficient to determine the relationship between variables and the t-test to identify significant differences between groups.

8. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1: Correlation between Adjustment and Family Environment

Variables	N	df (N-2)	'r' value	Level of Significance
Adjustment and Family Environment	165	163	0.346	**

Table 1 shows the relationship between adjustment and family environment of secondary school students. The calculated Pearson's correlation value is 0.346, which is positive and significant at the 0.01 level. This indicates a moderate positive relationship between the two variables. It means that students who experience a better and more supportive family environment tend to show better adjustment in social, emotional and educational areas. Since the relationship is statistically significant, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between adjustment and family environment of secondary school students is accepted.

Table 2: Difference in Adjustment scores of Boys and Girls

Variable and Groups	N	Mean	S.D.	't' value	Level of Significance
Boys	83	175.446	15.935	0.59	NS
Girls	83	176.841	14.332		

Table 2 presents the comparison of adjustment scores between boys and girls. The mean score of girls (176.841) is slightly higher than that of boys (175.446). However, the obtained t-value of 0.59 is not significant. This shows that the difference in adjustment between boys and girls is very small and not statistically meaningful. Hence, both boys and girls possess similar levels of adjustment. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted, indicating that there is no significant difference in the adjustment of secondary school boys and girls.

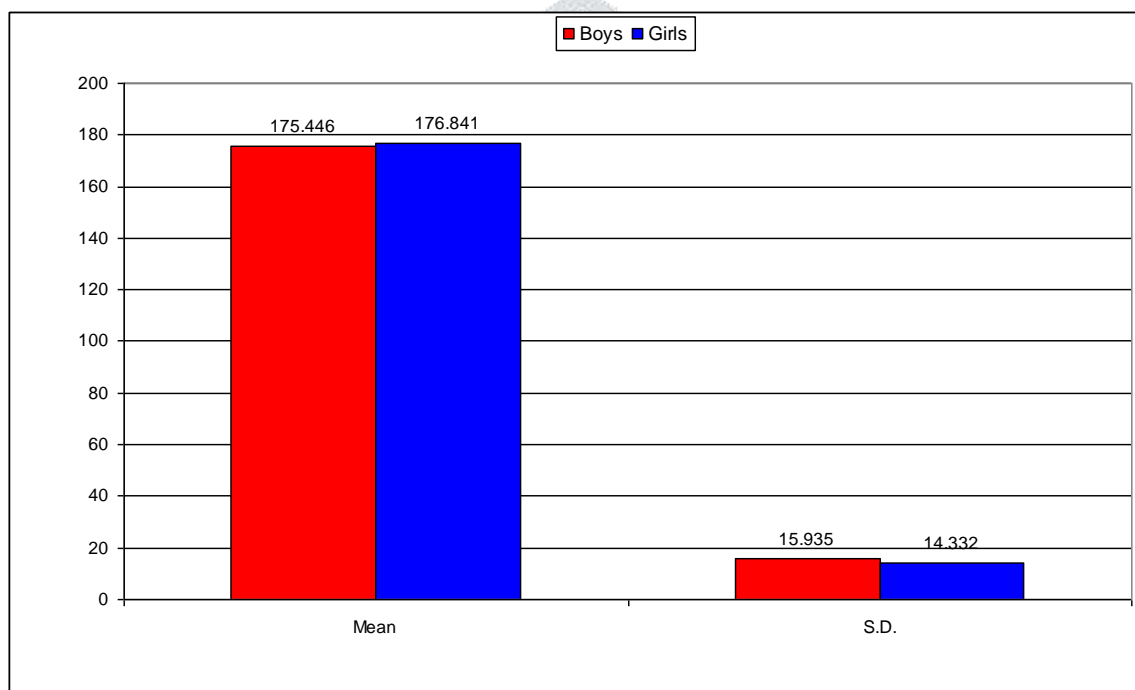
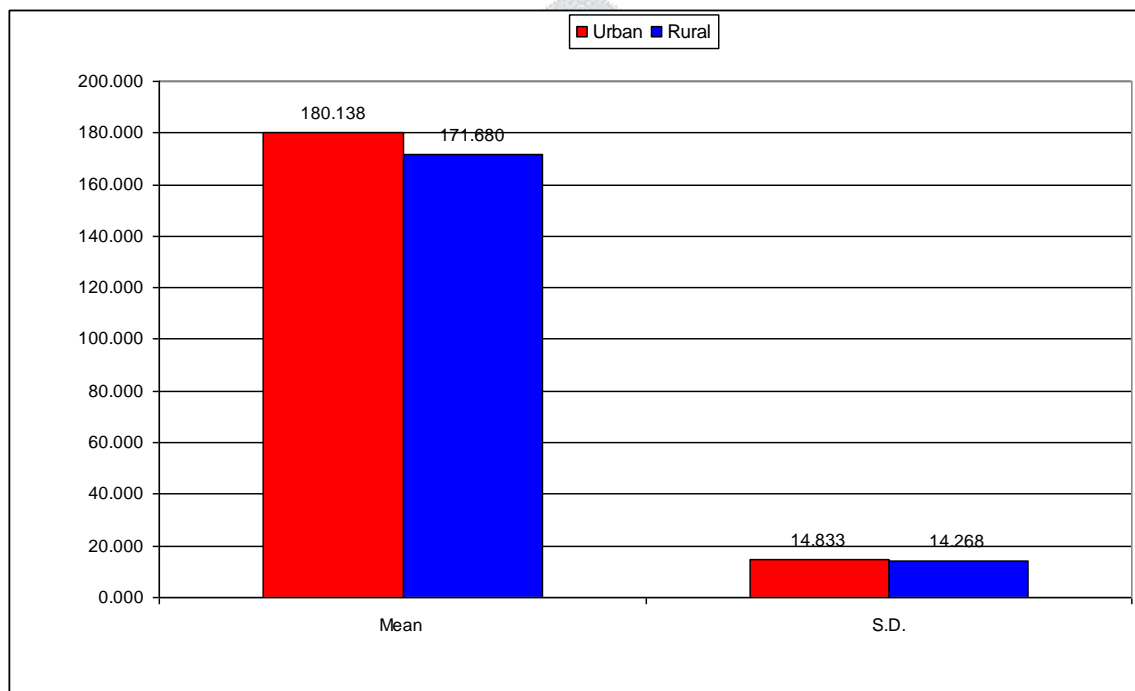
**Fig.1:** Comparison of Adjustment scores between boys and girls.

Table 3: Difference in Adjustment scores of Urban and Rural students

Variable and Groups	N	Mean	S.D.	't' value	Level of Significance
Urban	87	180.138	14.833	3.73	** (0.01 level)
Rural	78	171.680	14.268		

Table 3 shows the comparison of adjustment scores between urban and rural students. The mean score of urban students (180.138) is higher than that of rural students (171.680). The calculated t-value of 3.73 is significant at the 0.01 level, indicating a statistically significant difference between the two groups. This suggests that students from urban schools are better adjusted than those from rural schools, possibly due to better facilities, exposure and family support. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. There is a significant difference in adjustment between urban and rural secondary school students is accepted.

**Fig.2:** Comparison of Adjustment scores between urban and rural students.

9. MAJOR FINDINGS

The present study revealed several important findings regarding the adjustment and family environment of secondary school students. First, there was a positive and significant relationship between adjustment and family environment, indicating that students who experience a supportive and healthy home atmosphere show better social, emotional and educational adjustment. Second, no significant difference was found between boys and girls in their adjustment levels, which shows that gender does not play a major role in determining students' adjustment. Third, a significant difference was observed between urban and rural students, where urban students showed better adjustment compared to rural students. These findings highlight the importance of family background and locality in changing students' overall development and adjustment.

10. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The results of the study clearly indicate that family environment plays a vital role in the adjustment of students. A positive family atmosphere characterized by love, care, support, communication and proper guidance helps children develop emotional stability and confidence, which in turn improves their adjustment in school and society. The significant positive correlation between adjustment and family environment supports the view of earlier researchers who emphasized that supportive families promote better psychological well-being and academic success. The absence of gender differences suggests that both boys and girls face similar developmental challenges and receive comparable opportunities for adjustment in modern educational settings. However, the significant difference between urban and rural students may be due to differences in educational facilities, exposure to opportunities, parental education and access to resources. Urban students may receive more support and an opportunity, which helps them adjust more effectively than rural students.

11. CONCLUSION

From the findings of the study, it can be concluded that adjustment is closely related to the family environment of secondary school students. A healthy and supportive home environment greatly contributes to the emotional, social and educational well-being of children. While gender does not significantly influence adjustment, locality has a noticeable impact, with urban students showing better adjustment than rural students. Therefore, family conditions and environmental factors must be considered important determinants of students' overall development. The study emphasizes that proper parental guidance, emotional support and a positive family atmosphere are essential for developing well-adjusted individuals.

12. EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The results of the study have several important implications for parents, teachers and educators. Parents should create a warm, supportive and understanding home environment that encourages open communication and emotional security. Teachers should identify students who show signs of maladjustment and provide counseling, guidance and motivation to help them cope with their problems. Schools should organize parent education programs to make families aware of their role in children's development. Special attention should be given to rural students by improving educational facilities, providing psychological support and creating opportunities for their overall growth. By strengthening both family and school support systems, students can achieve better adjustment and succeed academically and socially.

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