

Family Pathology and Adjustment Level: A Study among Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the present study is to find out the effect of family pathology on adjustment level among adolescents. The data has been taken from the parents, both father and mother of 60 boys and 60 girls (120 children) between the age group of 15-19 years using the Family Pathology Scale (FPS) and Bells Adjustment Inventory questionnaire. The data obtained from the sample was statistically analysis by using Mean, SD, Correlation and 't'-test. Results revealed that there is a significant positive correlation between family pathology and overall adjustment level of young adolescents ($p < 0.05$). Results also revealed that there exists a moderately significant difference between the adjustment level of female and male adolescents. Thus, based on the results it can be said that male and female students significantly differ on their adjustment level. This research creates awareness regarding different problems in various domains of adjustment and its critical evaluation can help to design appropriate intervention programs.

Keywords: *Adjustment Problems, Family Pathology, Adolescents*

Social environment is an extremely important factor in the development of an individual. It impacts the growth pattern of a person as well as their relationships from childhood to adulthood. Socialization agents are an important aspect of how individuals may acquire skills, knowledge and dispositions to function effectively in society. Parents or the family of an individual is the most important, impactful and significant of the socialization agents.

Families serve as the foundational unit through which people discover their sense of self and will to survive. In acting as husband and wife, mother and father, son and daughter, etc., they connect and communicate with one another. Even if the family may use diverse operationalizations of its shared culture.

Family relationships provide resources that can help an individual cope with stress, engage in healthier behaviors, and enhance self-esteem, leading to higher well-being. If the interactions between the family members are good then the emotional bond which exists

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among the members are strong. But if some kinds of maladaptive behaviors are present in the interactions with each the family members, then they might have some pathological problems. **Family pathology** focuses on deficiencies in and deviations from salient family functions and tasks. Where, pathology refers to science of the causes and effects of diseases.

Maladaptive behaviour of individual stops him or her to adapt new situation. Maladaptive means not providing adequate or appropriate adjustment to the environment or situation. It is universally recognized that family plays a crucial role in the raising of children to become reasonably well-adjusted member of the society. Family can offer an important reinforcement in the psychiatric therapeutic management.

Adjustment is one of the most important psychological activities of human being. In psychology, it refers to the behavioural process by which humans and other animals maintain equilibrium among their various needs or between their needs and the obstacles of their environments. According to Symonds (1949), he wrote, "Adjustment can be defined as a satisfactory relation of an organism to its environment."

There are many and untouchable fields in the sphere of life, but some held prime position in life sphere such as home, health, social, emotional and educational fields. The way of adjustment of an individual in these fields affect him to create his personality according to his type of adjustment.

A well- adjusted person tries to respond in a manner reasonably consistent with the social goals and standards of the community and not too inconsistent with his own convictions and personal integrity. On the other hand, a maladjusted person adopts numerous response mechanisms for solving their problems which are probably only variant behaviour pattern for cloaking their inadequacies, for disguising their feelings, for evading their responsibilities, and for finding security and satisfaction in deceptive compromises.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Costa et.al., (2022) conducted a study on predictors of psychosocial adjustment in adolescents in residential care. This study aims to provide a review and methodological evaluation of current studies, which focus on protective and risk factors associated with the psychosocial adjustment of adolescents in residential care. Relevant literature was searched in five databases and we identified 25 publications, which met the inclusion criteria. Qualitative content analysis was used to analyze each study. The results showed that risk and protective factors, were mainly social and contextual factors. Moreover, very few individual factors were found to be related to psychosocial adjustment.

Akbari-Zardkhaneh, S. et.al. (2018) conducted a study on parent form of psychological pathology for children. A total of 190 initial item candidates were generated. After the first edition, 125 items were chosen to make up the scale's preliminary version. Parents of elementary school pupils in the six states of Alborz, Eastern Azerbaijan, Sistan & Baluchestan, and Fars & Khorasan Razavi are included in the population. About 100 parents from each state were randomly selected from each of its two largest cities to make up the sample. There are 600 parents total in the sample. Item analysis findings justified the elimination of 14 items. The item responses were subjected to factor analysis using the generalised least squares approach and equamax rotation, which produced a six-factor solution that is consistent with the theoretical framework. The reliability coefficients of the

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subscales ranged from 0.65 for self-regulation to 0.90 for inadequate homework. Evaluation of the correlation coefficients between the items and the subscales showed that they ranged from 0.17 to 0.24.

Bermejo-Martins (2018) conducted a study to evaluate and implement a health education curriculum programme which was based on developing emotional and social competence in children. Researchers put emphasis on the fact that children's emotional and social skills are important in them adopting and maintaining a lifestyle. An experimental approach was adopted with an exploratory randomized controlled trial. A total of 30 children between 5 to 6 years of age participated in the study with 15 children in the experimental group and 15 children in the control group. The participants in the experimental group received the first part of the programme which focused on developing emotional knowledge expertise in daily health habits like physical exercise, sleep and hygiene. It was given through different game-based techniques and also an emotional journal or diary. Participants in the control group continued with their normal school day. It hoped to measure basic social skills, emotional knowledge, and the children's health. The research also assessed the impact and acceptance of the programme by parents as well as teachers. Data was collected pre and post intervention and also at a seven month follow up. The study concluded that the intervention was innovative and was designed to aim at the children's healthy lifestyle holistically, by keeping in mind emotional and social competence as one of the dominant aspects of the development of children.

Martin et.al. (2017) conducted a study on social and emotional competence and at-risk children's wellbeing. The aim of the study was to analyse the role of personal and interpersonal agencies in children, who are "at-risk", for their academic, social and personal wellbeing. Four at-risk groups were formed- children with emotional and behavioural disorders, children with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), children with developmental disability and children with learning disability. Each group was assessed for identification of agency factors critical to their wellbeing. The results indicate that social and emotional competence through pathways of interpersonal as well as personal agency, portray a very important role and are extremely relevant to the at-risk child's wellbeing.

Hooda and Tyagi (2016) investigated the effect of parent child relationship on gender and residential background. Data was collected from 400 students of Haryana state using Parents Child Relationship scale given by Dr. Nalini Rao. For statistical analysis descriptive analysis and ANOVA were used. Findings revealed that gender has significant effect on parent child relationship whereas residential background has no significant effect on parent child relationship.

Bhat and Aminabhavi (2011) conducted a study on the impact of home environment with psychosocial competence of adolescents. Data was collected from 100 adolescents studying in IX and X standards in English medium high schools of Dharwad. The home environment was assessed by using Mishra's Home Environment Inventory, psycho social competence was measured using Dindial and Aminabhavi's psychosocial competence scale. Result revealed that adolescents with high control, social isolation, deprivation of privileges and rejection at home have shown significantly lower problem solving, decision making, coping with emotion, coping with stress and overall psychosocial competence. Children with high protectiveness, punishment, conformity, reward nurturance and permissiveness have better empathy. Critical thinking, empathy, self-awareness, coping with stress, interpersonal relations and effective communication as well as overall psychological competence.

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Findings of the study reveal the significance of the home environment in the development of life skills.

Aim

To investigate the relationship between family pathology and adjustment level among adolescents.

METHODOLOGY

Objectives

- To assess the relationship between family pathology and adjustment level among adolescents.
- To assess the difference between the adjustment level of male and female adolescents.

Hypothesis

- There will be a significant **relationship** between family pathology and adjustment level among adolescents.
- There will be a significant **difference** between the adjustment level of male and female adolescents.

Variables

- Family Pathology
- Adjustment level

Sample and its Selection

For the present study purposive sampling method was used. Total 120 adolescents were selected, males=60 and females=60. Age ranges from 15-19 years. Samples were collected from the private educational institution in Delhi NCR. Participations were completely voluntary.

Description of the Tool

FAMILY PATHOLOGY SCALE

The family pathology scale was developed by Archana Dogra and Vimala Veeraraghavan. The scale indicates the extent to which maladaptive behaviour is present amongst family members in their interaction with each other i.e., between spouses and between parents and children. A total of 100 items were prepared in the form of statements which had to be rated on a 3-point scale with 1 indicating low/no family pathology (never), 2 indicating average family pathology (occasional) and 3 indicating high family pathology (most often). Expert psychologists were handed these 100 statements for review, which they cut down to the final 42 in the questionnaire.

Scoring

A score of 3 was given when participant ticked “most often” response. A score of 2 was given when the participant ticked “occasionally” response, and a score of 1 was given when participant responded by ticking “never” option. Total score possible to obtain ranged between 42-126 with higher score indicating higher family pathology and lower score indicating the reverse. The interpretation of the scores are as follows:

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BELL'S ADJUSTMENT INVENTORY

Bell's Adjustment Inventory developed by Dr. R.K. Ojha (1968) was used for the purpose of data collection. This inventory includes four dimensions viz. home, health, social and emotional adjustment. The scoring of the inventory is totally negative. Each dimension has 35 questions, which are to be answered either in 'Yes' or 'No'. For each 'Yes' responses 1 score is to be given and are not concerned to the 'No' responses. When an individual answer in 'Yes' it indicates his/her difficulties, if he/she answers as 'No' it indicates that the individual has no difficulty in that particular area.

Procedure

For the present study family pathology scale and bell's adjustment inventory was used on 120 young adolescents under which 60 were males and 60 were females. After the responses were collected we calculated the independent t-test and correlation.

ANALYSIS OF THE RESULT

Table 1: The following table shows pearson's correlation between Family Pathology and Overall Adjustment Level among Adolescents

		Family Pathology Scale	Bells adjustment Score
Family Pathology scale	Pearson Correlation	1	.603**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	120	120
Bells adjustment score	Pearson Correlation	.603**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
	N	120	120

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

Table 2. Showing the Mean, S.D and T-test value of female and male students for overall adjustment:

Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	T	df	Significance (2-tailed)
Female	60	70.8000	14.89602	2.135	118	.035
Male	60	64.4833	17.41175	2.135	115.239	.035

This table shows that the significance level between female and male adolescents on their level of adjustment is significant as the significant value $p < 0.05$.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The aim of the current study was to understand the effect of family pathology on adjustment level among adolescents. To measure the same, Family Pathology Scale and bells adjustment inventory was used respectively. The main objectives of the study were to determine a relationship between family pathology and overall adjustment level among young adolescents. There were two hypotheses in the present study on the basis of the objectives.

To test the hypotheses, data was collected from the private educational institutions in Delhi NCR (N=120) and their respective parents using purposive sampling. Standardized information was provided regarding the rationale of the study, their contribution in the study and the confidentiality of their participation to all participants. General instructions

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regarding both the questionnaires was given and it was specified that the Family Pathology Scale has to be filled by a parent.

After the process of data collection, all scores were totaled for each questionnaire. Subsequently, the means of the scores were calculated and thereafter correlated using Pearson's *r* correlation and Independent sample *t* test. SPSS software was used to analyze the results.

To test the first hypothesis, Pearson correlation method (2 tailed) was conducted which showed that the Pearson correlation coefficient for family pathology and adjustment level is .603, which is significant ($p < .001$ for a two-tailed test), based on 120 complete observations. The results indicate that there is a significant positive correlation between family pathology and overall adjustment level of the individual at 0.603 at the 0.01 level. Therefore, our hypothesis is accepted. This means that if the family pathology increases, adjustment problem also increases. This means that if the family pathology of an individual is high, the individual would lack in their abilities to adjust in all the dimensions of adjustment. Between the age group of 15-19 years, is a teenage period of the adolescent that's why individuals are affected by family dynamics that influence their behavior. It can be concluded that parent, both father and mother have moderate significant effect of their pathological problem on their children behavior.

Shek, D. T. (2005) conducted a study on a longitudinal study of perceived family functioning and adolescent adjustment in Chinese adolescents with economic disadvantage. In this longitudinal study, Chinese teenagers with economic disadvantage ($N = 199$) are analysed to determine the links between perceived family functioning, adolescent psychological well-being, and problem behaviour. The findings demonstrated a correlation between perceived family functioning and indicators of adolescent psychological health (existential well-being, mastery, life satisfaction, self-esteem, and general psychiatric morbidity) and problem behaviour (substance abuse and delinquency) at Time 1 and Time 2. The relationships between teenage psychological wellbeing and problem behaviour were bidirectional, according to longitudinal and prospective studies (Time 1 predictors predicting Time 2 criterion variables). The longitudinal relationships between family functioning and adolescent adjustment were shown to be stronger in economically disadvantaged Chinese adolescent girls than in adolescent boys.

Table no.2 shows the mean scores, standard deviation, T-test value and level of significance between female ($N=60$) and male ($N=60$) students in overall adjustment. The mean for female and male adolescents are 70.8000 and 64.4833 respectively. Here, the T-test value indicates that the level of significance in overall adjustment in female and male students is moderately significant, (T-test value=2.135). Therefore, our hypothesis is accepted. It was found that the female adolescents were unsatisfactorily adjusted as compared to the male adolescents. The given result could be due to the reason that girls are sometimes given less importance in family and society than boys. McWhitner (1997) found that the female students faced more problems in health and emotional dimensions of adjustment. Pathak (1970) also reported that girls were facing problems in the areas such as social and emotional adjustment.

Dutta et.al. (1997) focused on health adjustment of 200 students drawn randomly from Assam Agricultural University and Kendriya Vidyalaya district of Jorhat, Assam. The total Adjustment inventory for college students developed by Sinha and Singh (1980) was

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administered. The results reported that boys are better adjusted than girls in the areas of health adjustment.

Limitations of the study

- The finding of the study is based on very sample.
- The study was restricted students are 15-19 years only.
- Small sample size of only 120 students are selected which is too small to generalize the findings.

Future Implications

- No research is conclusive in real sense. Every research paves the way and carves the way for future research.
- A sample of 120 students was taken in the present study. Same study can be conducted on a large sample.
- Similar research can be conducted in other regions of other District and state to study adjustment problems.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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