

Family Pathology and Adjustment among Young Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

In this paper the motive is to understand how the deviances and diversions in familial relationships contribute to the development, mental health and over all functioning and the level of adjustment of the adolescents. To what extent a faulty behavior can cause harm to the behavior of the young teenagers and cause hindrances in the adjustment in the society. The main aim of this study was to assess the impact of family pathology on the adjustment level of young adolescents. Accordingly, the study was conducted on two set of populations the mothers of young adolescents and the young school going adolescents aged 14 to 18 years old. The main areas of judgment were the level of adjustment and the following sub scales that were emotional, social, and educational. The data was collected from these two groups and was further analyzed with the help of SPSS tool. The methods used for the analysis were Mean, Standard deviation (SD) to know about the comparison between the two genders and correlation to find the significant relation between the two variables. The finding suggests that there is a significant relationship between the two variables and family pathology affects the adjustment level of young adolescents, and children can find difficulty in adjustment in emotional, social, and educational spectrums respectively. The results reveal that males have a higher mean and SD score in all the adjustment subscales and major scale which suggests that in comparison to females, males found it more difficult to adjust in school environment in the presence of family pathology or maladaptive behavior.

Keywords: *Family Pathology, Social, Emotional, Educational Adjustment, Family Structure, Maladaptive Behaviour, Adolescents*

FAMILY as we come across this word in our daily life, we tend to recognize different meanings and virtues of this 6-letter word. Every individual may have different dimensions and meanings for this word, some may take it as only blood relations and some may take it more than just blood relations but also the involvement of abstract things like togetherness, affection, care, bonding, love. Family is a closely bonded group and integral part of societal relationships. Family has different defined meanings in different wordbooks. In a formal way it is known as the very prime unit that exists in society. The motive of the families is to maintain cordial relationships with each other and function accordingly. The members of the family work for the sheer wellbeing of each other. The core idea is to facilitate the basic needs of each member in the family.

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In this paper the motive is to understand how the deviances and diversions in the familial relationships contribute to the development, mental health and over all functioning and the level of adjustment of the adolescents. To what extent a faulty behaviour can cause harm to the behavior of the young teenagers and cause hindrances in the adjustment in the society.

Family pathology as a concept

Family pathology basically means deviation or deficiencies from the actual functioning inside the family accompanied by maladaptive behavior of any individual from the family. This maladaptive behavior is harmful for the developing members (children or teenagers) this behavior ceases the doors of adaptation in an individual's life.

The person may find it difficult to adjust to new things or situations. In order to control his or her faulty behavior the individual may try mechanisms of withdrawal, avoidance, aggressiveness passively, self-harm, self-doubt and anger etc. these may cause variety of mental problems and social problems in an individual's life in future. Hence it is important to understand how this whole concept of family pathology and adjustment of adolescents are related to each other, what are the underlying factors behind such behavior and the predetermined consequences of this whole notion.

Adjustment as a concept

The concept of adjustment in psychology basically refers to a process of making a balance between the various needs that humans have or experience in a life time. basically, the series of adjusting or adjustment originates when a basic requirement is felt and ends when that particular requirement is fulfilled accordingly.

According to various studies in this area it is said that this involves four segments- the first one includes the aim of the presented stimulus, the second one involves unfulfillment of the particular need, the third includes problem solving with varied activity and the fourth one involves some kind of action of response to that need that stops or brings reduction in the originating stimulus and leads to the completion of adjustment process.

Adjustments (social and cultural) are way more identical to physiological adjustment.

In general people have an innate need to be comfortable in their environment or surroundings and to have their psychological needs or wants to be fulfilled with the help of some social networks. At the point when necessities emerge, particularly in new or changed environmental factors, they actuate relational action intended to fulfil those requirements. Along these lines, individuals increase their commonality and solace with their surroundings, and they generally expect that their necessities will be met later on through their informal organizations. Continuous troubles in friendly and social change might be joined by tension, depression or anxiety.

The formation of any adjustment ability starts from the very biggening years of any individual. The children generally seek this ability from their family, parents or generally mothers as mostly they are close to them. The basic development of any individual starts from the early years of origin and continues till adulthood. Their habits and self are generated in these formation years and at this very time parents can inculcate the habit of adjustment in their children for the rest of their life. The behavior of the innate circle reflects on the concept of adjustment of a child.

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There are some basic traits that individuals with consistent behavior or basic adaptive characteristics have which are the level of satisfaction in various aspects of life, consistent ability to be adaptive while performing tasks, adequate functioning, being more open about emotions and its processing, a sense of reassurance, being supportive during the transition periods, monitoring progress in different environments (i.e.: home and school).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Leung and Shek (2020). The study was conducted on teenagers of Hong Kong to examine the effect of controlled parental and psychological behavior on the mental health of teenagers. The sample size used here was 2369 that were in the age group of 14 years. Two aspects, that is hopelessness and satisfaction, were assessed. The method used for conduction was the interview method. The analysis of the results suggested that when the level of control was high from the fathers or the mother's side the self-esteem and the wellbeing of the teenagers tend to drop.

Muller, et.al (2019) studied the relationship between childhood experiences and how it can generate social dysfunctioning effecting the attachment style. The data was collected from adults ranging between 18 to 41 years. the sample size used here was of 121 adults. The method was by online recruiting. The result suggested that lower levels of plasma oxytocin levels indicated high levels of neglect emotionally and further represented attachment style which was insecure.

Hong, et.al (2018) aimed to study childhood mistreatment and its impact later in life in various areas like resilience, self-efficacy, and emotional regulation. The effect of habitual use of emotion regulation strategies on psychopathology has also been shown to be partially dependent on individuals' emotion regulation self-efficacy - that is, how effective individuals believe they can be in implementing emotion regulating strategies (Goldin, Manber-Ball, Werner, Heimberg, & Gross, 2009, 2012). Thus, evaluations of the possible interaction impact of emotion regulation self-efficacy and techniques on felt stress on the indirect effect of childhood maltreatment on perceived stress in young adults should be improved.

Olowokere and Okanlawon (2018) examined the relationship between improvement psychosocial health and vulnerable school environment through activities paying emphasis on resilience building and peer support. The sample size was of 340 students who were vulnerable and were studying in public schools. Method that was used was comparative prospective design. The study revealed that resilience training is more effective than peer support activities in improving self-esteem and lowering anxiety symptoms. Both treatments had comparable impacts on depression and social connectedness. Given the limited resources available to support school health services in the research context, resilience training may be more effective in relieving psychological distress among vulnerable in-school students.

Ghosh and Chakraborty (2017). conducted research to study the effect of family pathology on children and to assess the conduct and wellbeing of the children. The collection of the data was done randomly. The sample size used was 120 out of which 60 were boys and 60 were girls the age group being 9-12 years. The tool for conduction was family pathology scale, the data obtained resulted that parent having high level of family pathology had children with behavioral and emotional problems.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Aim

To assess the impact of family pathology on the adjustment level of young adolescent.

Objectives

The objectives of this study are listed below-

- To understand the impact of family pathology on adjustment of young adolescents.
- To understand the concept of family pathology and adjustment with relation to mothers and young adolescents.
- To assess the adjustment level in adolescents on the basis of gender difference.
- To understand the various factors that lead to adjustment in young adolescents.

Hypothesis

The hypothesis for this study has been discussed below-

- There will be significant difference in adjustment amongst male and female adolescents.
- There would be significant difference in family pathology among male and female adolescents.
- There will be significant relationship among family pathology and adjustment in male adolescents.
- There will be significant relationship among family pathology and adjustment in female adolescents.

Research Design

The research design of this paper is a quantitative design. This study contains two variables which are family pathology and adjustment level, independent and dependent respectively. The relationship between these two variables is assessed with the help of some of the best suitable tools. The positive or negative relation between the two variables is assessed and comparison between the two genders with respect to the variables is seen.

Sample selection

The sample size used in this paper is 120 people out of which 60 are teenagers (boys and girls) and 60 mothers. The selection was done through random selection method. The age group of adolescents was from 14 to 18 years. Different scales for different sample population was used accordingly. The family pathology scale was used on 60 mothers of young adolescents and Adjustment inventory for school students was used for young adolescents.

Data Collection Procedure

The data collected with respect to the variables of the topic and a variety of research papers were assessed. The research paper from the past 20 years was read and was understood in a manner to get a better understanding regarding the whole concept. The participants were selected randomly to get unbiased results and findings and ethical standards during the whole process was followed.

The participants were presented with both the scales on in person. Every participant was well introduced to the topic and the purpose of the research, and their due informed consent was taken. Once the data was collected, individual scale wise scoring was done. Moreover,

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the results were analyzed and interpreted using some of the statistical methods (by using the SPSS) for better calculations and evaluation.

Psychological Measures

A total of two tools were selected to imply in this study in accordance to the two variables. The first tool used was family pathology scale (FPS) to assess the level of family pathology or maladaptive behavior present in an individual, parents or mothers. The second tool used was adjustment inventory for school children (AISS) to assess the level of adjustment in young adolescents or school going children (aged 14 to 18).

The *Family pathology scale (FPS)* was developed by Dr. Vilma Veer Raghavan is a self-administrating scale. It measures the level of family pathology or maladaptive behavior present in an individual. It consists of 42 items. It is rated on a 3-point scale including options like Most often, occasionally, never which has a score of 3,2,1 respectively.

The *Adjustment inventory for school students (AISS)* by is an adjustment inventory consisting of a total of 60 items. It is further divided into 3 subscales (emotional, social, and educational) and it consists of 20 items each. It has only two options of YES/NO against each item.

RESULTS

Table- 1. Mean and SD scores of the two scales.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
AISS SCORE	60	26.08	4.724
FPS SCORE	60	80.25	17.617

The above table shows the mean score and the standard deviation scores of the two variables. The n here denotes the total sample size for the respective scale. It can be seen that the mean score of FPS is higher than AISS.

Table-2. Difference between the mean and SD scores of the three subscales of AISS scale

Sub- scales of AISS	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Emotional	60	9.78	2.218
Social		8.53	2.029
Educational		7.77	1.952

The above table shows the mean and standard deviation scores for the sub scales of adjustment. It can be seen that there is a high score in emotional adjustment sub scale as the teenagers are more emotionally disturbed because of the existing family pathology.

Table-3. Gender wise comparison between mean, SD and t test scores in AISS scale.

	GENDER	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-test
ADJUSTMENT	Female adolescents	30	23.20	4.063	.742	.635
	Male adolescents	30	28.97	3.419	.624	

The above table shows the gender wise difference in the scores of the mean standard deviations and t test of the family pathology scale. Here the mean and standard deviation scores are higher for mothers of male adolescents.

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Table-4 Gender wise comparison between mean, SD and t test scores in FPS scale

MOTHERS OF ADOLOSCENTS		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-value
FPS SCORE	Male Adolescents	30	83.77	19.256	3.516	.090
	Female Adolescents	30	76.73	15.331	2.799	

The above table shows the gender wise difference in the scores of the mean and standard deviations of the family pathology scale. Here the mean and standard deviation scores are higher for mothers of male adolescents. There is no significance difference in between the mothers of males and females' adolescents on the level of family pathology as the value is found insignificant at 0.01 level.

Table-5 Correlation between adjustment and family pathology among Males

	N	r	P
FPS SCORE ADJUSTMENT	30	1.000	sig**

The table above depicts the correlation between adjustment and family pathology among scores, thereby denoting a relationship between the two variables.

Table-6 Correlation between adjustment and family pathology among Females

	N	r	P
ADJUSTMENT FAMILY PATHOLOGY	30	.565**	sig**

The table above depicts the correlation between adjustment and family pathology among scores, thereby denoting a relationship between the two variables.

DISCUSSION

The studies that have been discussed above are mainly based on child and parent relationship. Most of these studies showed how the behavior of the child gets affected by the unhealthy behavior of the parent. Some of the cases discussed above have shown that divorced of the parents has badly affected the teenagers' behavior causing them mental health issues and issues related to adjustment in the society. Some teenagers even show aggression and some get social media addiction in order to avoid the unwanted weird family environment around them. Some of them showed the signs of social anxiety as they found it difficult to face the people because of low self-confidence. In some families the presence of authoritative behavior towards the child led to frustration and anger issues. In 2-3 researches it is revealed that the ill mental health of the parent has affected the child badly causing him issues like faulty eating habits, staying out of the house most of the time, drug abuse and getting indulged in criminal activities.

In table 1 the mean and SD scores of the two scales are demonstrated accordingly. The mean score for the family pathology scale is on a higher end which suggests that there is more persistence of family pathology in mothers as compared to adjustment levels of the young adolescents.

The table 2 depicts the Mean and SD scores for the particular sub-scales of AISS scale. The mean score was 9.78, 8.53, 7.77 for emotional, social and educational areas respectively. It

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is seen that the mean score was higher in emotional adjustment spectrum in comparison to the other two which means that the adolescents faced difficulty to adjust emotionally in school in comparison to the other areas.

The table 3 shows the gender wise difference in the scores of the mean and standard deviations of the adjustment scale. Here the mean and standard deviation scores are higher for male adolescents (28.97). the t- value is 0.635 which means that it is not significant at 0.01 level of significance. The mean score here depicts that male adolescents find it more difficult to adjust in a certain environment in school and have low levels of adjustment with respect to emotional, educational and social spheres. It can also be understood that males may develop problems in adjusting as they are less expressive in comparison to female adolescents with respect to what they feel. Generally, they are not that vocal about their feelings and emotions with respect to family issues and other co-existing issues.

The table 4 shows the gender wise difference in the scores of the mean and standard deviations of the family pathology scale. Here the mean and standard deviation scores are higher for mothers of male adolescents (83.77). the t- value is 0.90 which means that it is not significant at 0.01 level of significance. The score here depicts that the mothers of the male teenagers have a higher level of family pathology than the mothers of the female teenagers. This means that there is a high level of deviances and depiction of maladaptive behavior by the mothers of male adolescents than females because of which males are the ones who get affected more and tend to struggle in adjusting in various areas of social settings.

The Table 5 The table above depicts the correlation between adjustment and family pathology among scores, thereby denoting a relationship between the two variables. The correlation coefficient between the family pathology and adjustment is 1.00. This means that there is a significant relation at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). SPSS generated a positive r value hence we can say that there is a positive correlation between the two variables which means that higher family pathology scores higher the level of non-adjustment prevails at all the social levels in males.

The Table 6 The table above depicts the correlation between adjustment and family pathology among scores, thereby denoting a relationship between the two variables. The correlation coefficient between the family pathology and adjustment is 0.565. This means that there is a significant relation at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). SPSS generated a positive r value hence we can say that there is a positive correlation between the two variables which means that higher family pathology scores higher the level of non-adjustment prevails at all the social levels in females.

This means that the Female Students Better Home, Social, Emotional and Health Adjustment than Male Students (Babasaheb 2019). It is seen that males have poor levels of adjustment in comparison to females at all the levels i.e., social, educational and emotional.

CONCLUSION

To conclude we can say this paper throws a light on family relationships which gets impacted by maladaptive or faulty behavior of an individual (member) of the family or members in a family which puts an effect on the adjustment level of adolescents in a family. In this paper the basic idea was to understand the different dimensions on which a family sails and how these dimensions can vary in accordance to the family structures. The family structures are briefly explained in the introduction part. Family is the very basic unit that

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persists in our society from years. The criterion of family has changed over the period of time due to evolution of human's basic nature, thinking, mind set and behavior. The generation gap has increased and so is the relationship between human beings. The thinking has become broader in many aspects but still in some or the other ways family relationships are stressed. The word pathology as has a significant reference here. Pathology among the family or family pathology all over means the deficiencies of deviances that persist in the family which causes problems in the functioning of relationship in the family ultimately affecting the people in close family relations. The basic data that has been procured states that children in the developing stage and the adolescents are the ones who get badly affected by the maladaptive behavior that is generally displayed by a parent or both the parents.

Limitations of the study

- The sample size was insufficient for statistical measurement.
- There was a lack of previous research studies in this area/topic.
- Not much research is done on this topic in India at present.
- Getting better understanding of family pathology and adjustment.
- Discrepancies between the mothers and children can be resolved through better communication at all the levels.
- Developing a sense of awareness on these aspects in order to understand that what can be done when discrepancies occur and what steps/action plan can be taken to resolve the same.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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