

Comparison of Emotionally Maladjusted and Adjusted Adolescents on Mental Health, Self-Esteem, and Aggression

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Abstract

Adolescence is a stage of turmoil. A lot of changes take place during this period. These changes affect adjustment among adolescents immensely. Emotional adjustment is very much affected during this stage. There may be various factors which actually play role in emotional adjustment of the adolescents. The present study aims to find out the differences between emotionally adjusted and maladjusted adolescents on self esteem, aggression and mental health. The sample for the present study consists of total 228 adolescents (114 adjusted and 114 maladjusted). Four standardized scales i.e. Bell Adjustment Inventory, Mental Health Battery, Self-Esteem Inventory, , and Aggression Questionnaire were administered on the sample. The data are subjected to t-test and discriminant functional analysis. Results of t-test show that emotionally maladjusted adolescents are having poor self esteem, higher aggression and poor mental health as compared to their adjusted counterparts. Significant differences are found on eight out of eleven variables. When all the variable taken together to find out discriminants between the groups, four variables i.e. emotional stability, socially perceived self, overall adjustment and self-concept are found to differentiate between emotionally maladjusted and adjusted groups.

Keywords: Emotionally Maladjusted, Self Esteem, Aggression, Mental Health, Adolescent

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Introduction

Emotional reactions frequently arise during adolescence because of biological and environmental changes. Though this seems to be a natural phenomenon yet adolescents use different ways to deal with it. These ways ranges from drugs, alcohol to even engagement in other activities like sex. These strategies which are used by adolescents usually make them adjusted in the environment but sometimes they are not successful enough to deal with it and become maladjusted. Emotional maladjustment is one of the prominent problems. This maladjustment turned into a personality disorder which is manifested by alienation from significant people, unable to control impulse, and feel emotionally distressed. Those adolescents who had never used any drug found themselves anxious and poor in social skill (Shedler et al., 1990) and also some studies found that maladjusted adolescents have poor mental health as compared to their adjusted counterparts. Adolescents show guilt, impairments in performing general functions, and difficulties in interpersonal relationships (Forehand & McCombs, 1988; Waxler et al., 1990) which lead to mental health problems.

Maladjustment and Mental Health:

Researchers are conducting studies to find out a clear direction of relationship between

emotional maladjustment and mental health. Through research, it has become evident that emotion and mood are integral part of adjustment, and findings from research show how change in emotions across time is tied to people's well-being and maladjustment (Ebner -Priemer et al. , 2009; Kuppens et al. ,2010).

Witt and coworkers (2003) conducted a study on disable children and found that their psychosocial maladjustment is positively associated with poor maternal health and mental health, poverty and family burden. The limitations in the functional activity of children and stressors in family significantly correlate with psychosocial adjustment of children. The related literature suggests that parental depression has a negative impact on children's psychological development and their psychosocial adjustment (Beardslee et al., 1998; Dodge, 1990). Another line of studies focused on mental health of the children reported how people response and emotional regulation related to events reflected in the patterns and regularities of emotions change across time.

Though a positive and linear relationship is found between self-esteem and adjustment generally yet other studies showed complicated results. In a study on college students by Karmos and Karmos (1981) a negative relationship is

found between self esteem and emotional adjustment. It shows that people poor in self esteem has better emotional adjustment. It is evident that association between self esteem and academic achievement is not only related to the level of self- esteem but also on “contingence of self worth”.

Crocker and Luhtanen (2003) found that social problems among new college students are predicted from low self esteem whereas academic problems were predicted by competence in academics. The findings of another study showed both self esteem and impostor phenomenon were potent predictors of college adjustment. Self esteem played a mediated role through social support seeking and avoidant coping, while problem-solving coping was not related to college adjustment (Lefkowitz, 2003). Ningamma and Armin (2010) found that self-esteem has positive influences over emotional, school and academic adjustment of the students. Overall self esteem influence health adjustment of the student positively.

As far as level of aggression is concerned, maladjusted adolescents have higher level of aggression. Literature shows that overt aggression is a very potent predictor of socio-psychological adjustment among school children (Coie, et al.1990; Parker & Asher, 1987). Earlier research found children’s physical or overt acts of aggressive behavior toward peers. Findings from this works suggested that boys are higher on overt aggression as compared to girls. Girls are higher on relational aggression in which they use relationship with other child or friends to harm other rather than using any physical type of act (Crick 1997; Galen & Underwood, 1997). Recent literature indicates that relational aggression is influencing current and future adjustment of the children not only girls but both sexes. Crick et al. (1995) concluded children higher on relational aggression had higher risk of maladjustment in life. Prinstein et al. (2001) mentioned that relational aggression and victimization are the factors mainly associated with current adjustment of the children. Victimized person shows more of internalizing symptoms, and peer aggression affected individual shows external symptoms like disruption. Results supported that victims of multiple forms of aggression had greater adjustment difficulties than victims of one or no form of aggression. Social support from close

friends worked as a buffer on adjustment against victimization.

Those adolescents who have a lower self-esteem reported a significantly higher susceptibility to social maladjustment behaviour compared to their counterparts with a high self esteem. Adolescents from private secondary schools reported significantly higher social maladjustment behaviour compared to their counterparts in public schools; and the younger adolescents were more socially maladjusted compared to older adolescents (Tunde & Boluwatife 2015).

Objective of the study:

The present study is conducted to find out difference between adjusted and maladjusted adolescents on mental health, aggression, and self esteem.

Hypotheses

1. Maladjusted adolescents are likely to have poor mental health and self esteem as compared to adjusted adolescents.
2. Aggression and self esteem would predict mental health for group differentiation adjusted and maladjusted adolescents.

Method

Sample

The sample for the present study consists of 460 adolescents (both male and female) selected by using cluster sampling method from various senior secondary school of Haryana state. Emotional Adjustment Section of Bell Adjustment Inventory is given to 460 adolescents. Then total 228 adolescents (114 adjusted and 114 maladjusted) are drawn by using criteria of P_{25} and P_{75} on score of Emotional Adjustment scale score. Those who score less than P_{25} are taken as adjusted and those who score more than P_{75} are taken as maladjusted adolescents. The age range of the sample is from 14 to 18 years. The sample consists of participants from all walks of life.

Measure

The Four standardized scales are use in this present study i.e. Bell Adjustment Inventory, Self-Esteem Inventory, Mental Health Battery, and Aggression Questionnaire. Brief description of the tests given below:-

Bell Adjustment Inventory

Hindi version of Bell Adjustment Inventory (Mohsin et al., 1987) was used in the present study. Though the inventory consisted of 124 items but only 32 items are used in the present study for differentiating emotionally adjusted and emotionally maladjusted. The test-retest reliability on undergraduate college students for Home 0.851, Health 0.862, Social 0.805, Emotional 0.834, and Total Adjustment is 0.826. The odd-even reliability of the test for home 0.826, health 0.815, social 0.844, emotional 0.861, total adjustment 0.921. In the process of standardization of the modified Hindi version of bell adjustment inventory, its validity was found to be high.

Mental Health Battery

Mental Health Battery (MHB) is developed by Singh and Gupta(2000). Mental health battery has six dimensions: Emotional Stability, Overall Adjustment, Autonomy, Security/Insecurity, Self Concept and Intelligence. In total, mental health battery has 130 items. Both temporal stability and internal consistency of MHB were computed on a sample of 102 subjects and the mean age of 15.6 years. The test-retest reliability of the battery for Emotional Stability is .876, Overall Adjustment .821, Autonomy .767, Security/Insecurity .826, Self Concept .786 and for Intelligence .823. Odd-even reliability for Emotional Stability is .725, for Overall Adjustment .871, Autonomy .812, Security/Insecurity .829, Self Concept .861, and for Intelligence, it is .792. The concurrent validity ranges from .67 to .82 and construct validity range from .60 to .68. Intelligence is not taken in the final analysis.

Aggression Questionnaire

Aggression Questionnaire is developed by Buss and Perry (1992) which has four subscales: Physical Aggression, Verbal Aggression, Anger and Hostility. It is based on Hostility Inventory by Buss and Durkee (1957). The questionnaire consists of 29. The alpha coefficient was .85 for Physical Aggression, .72 for Verbal Aggression, .83 for Anger, and .77 for Hostility, with overall internal consistency .89. The test retest reliability for different dimensions when temporal interval was taken as two weeks were .80 for Physical Aggression, .76 for Verbal Aggression, .72 for

Anger and .72 for Hostility. The test retest reliability for the whole questionnaire is .80. Buss and Perry (1992) concluded that convergent, concurrent, discriminant and construct validity of the questionnaire was proved to be satisfactory.

Self Esteem Inventory

Self Esteem Inventory developed by Parsad and Thakur (1977) has been used for assessing self esteem of adolescents. The inventory measures two types of self esteem one is personally perceived self and other socially perceived self. It consists of 30 items for personally perceived self and 30 items for socially perceived self. The reliability of the test computed in the two sets of the inventory was administered to a sample of 400 students. split half reliability coefficients were calculated for both the sets of the inventory which come out to be .82 and .78 for personally perceived self and socially perceived self and the re-test reliability coefficient were found for both test were .69 and .66 for personally perceived self and socially perceived self.

Results

In order to achieve the major objectives of the study, the obtained data was analyzed for t-test and Discriminant Function Analysis by using SPSS 16. The results are described below:-

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 shows mean, standard deviations, and t-ratio of emotionally maladjusted and adjusted groups on all variables. A perusal of the Table 1 reveals that out of eleven variables, statistically significant differences are found on eight variables. On the Emotional Stability (ES), the mean of emotionally maladjusted group is 9.13, whereas for emotionally adjusted, the mean is 10.81. Standard Deviation (SD) for the same variable is 2.19 and 1.84 for emotionally maladjusted and adjusted groups, respectively. The t value for Emotional Stability is 6.25 which is significant at .01 level. These results show that emotionally adjusted adolescents are more emotionally stable as compared to their emotionally maladjusted counterparts. The significant differences are found on Overall Adjustment (OA). The mean and SD of emotionally maladjusted group on OA variable has come out to be 26.68 and 3.76, respectively,

whereas for emotionally adjusted group, the mean is 29.32 and SD is 3.30. The t-ratio for the OA variable is 5.65 which is significant at .01 level. This indicates that emotionally maladjusted adolescents are low on Overall Adjustment as compared to their emotionally maladjusted counterparts.

On Autonomy (AY), mean score for emotionally maladjusted group is 11.07 and SD is 1.70 as compared to mean of 10.95 and SD of 1.55 for emotionally adjusted group. The t-ratio is .57 which is non-significant. This indicates show that emotionally adjusted and maladjusted individuals do not differ significantly on

Autonomy. No significant difference between the groups is found on the Security/Insecurity (SI) component. This indicates that emotionally adjusted and maladjusted adolescents scored almost equally on Security/Insecurity component of Mental Health Battery. On Self Concept (SC) component, the mean and SD for emotionally maladjusted group is 8.36 and 2.24, respectively, and for emotionally adjusted group, mean and SD are 9.39 and 1.72, respectively. The t-ratio for SC is 3.84, which is significant at .01 level. This indicates that emotionally maladjusted adolescents are having lower self concept as compared to their emotionally adjusted counterparts.

Table-1
Mean differences on variables for both Emotionally Maladjusted and Adjusted Groups

Variables	Emotionally Maladjusted		Emotionally Adjusted		t-ratio	Significance level(p)
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Mental Health						
ES	9.13	2.19	10.81	1.84	6.25	.01
OA	26.68	3.76	29.32	3.30	5.65	.01
AY	11.07	1.70	10.95	1.55	0.57	NS
SI	9.96	2.53	9.74	2.19	0.79	NS
SC	8.36	2.24	9.39	1.76	3.84	.01
Self Esteem						
PPS	134.33	20.49	146.43	19.75	4.54	.01
SPS	132.86	19.49	144.54	19.55	4.52	.01
Aggression						
AN	20.09	4.94	17.32	4.61	4.38	.01
PA	23.88	6.08	21.68	5.59	2.83	.01
VA	14.81	4.70	13.92	4.57	1.44	NS
HS	20.78	6.39	18.18	6.78	2.99	.01
TOTAGG	79.55	17.01	71.10	16.71	3.79	.01

NS-Non Significant, ES- Emotional Stability, OA- Overall Adjustment, AY- Autonomy, SI- Security

Insecurity, SC- Self Concept, PPS- Personally Perceived Self, SPS- Socially Perceived Self, AN- Anger, PA- Physical Aggression, VA- Verbal Aggression, HS- Hostility, TOTAGG- Total Aggression

Then subjects are compared on the three variables of aggression, viz. Anger (AN), Physical Aggression (PA), Verbal Aggression (VA) and Hostility (HS), along with Overall Aggression scores. Significant differences are found on four out of the five variables of Aggression. On the Anger (AN), the mean and SD of emotionally maladjusted group are 20.09

and 4.94 respectively whereas these are 17.32 and 4.61 for the emotionally adjusted group. The t-ratio for this variable is 4.38 which is significant at .01 level. It shows that emotionally maladjusted adolescents are having high level of anger as compared to emotionally adjusted counterparts. On the Physical Aggression (PA), the mean and SD of emotionally maladjusted group are 23.88 and 6.08 respectively whereas these are 21.68 and 5.59 for the emotionally adjusted group. The t-ratio for this variable is 2.83 which is significant at .01 level. It indicates that

emotionally maladjusted adolescents are high on Physical Aggression as compared to their emotionally adjusted counterparts. No significant differences are found on the Verbal Aggression (VA) scores. The maladjusted subjects have a mean of 14.81 and SD of 4.70, whereas emotionally adjusted participants have a mean of 13.92 and SD of 4.57. The t-ratio has come out to be 1.44, which is non-significant. It shows that emotionally maladjusted and adjusted participants do not differ on Verbal Aggression.

On the Hostility (HS), the mean and SD of emotionally maladjusted group are 20.78 and 6.39 respectively, whereas these are 18.18 and 6.78 for emotionally adjusted group. The t-ratio for this variable is 2.99 which is significant at .01 level. It indicates that emotionally maladjusted adolescents are higher on hostility as compared to their emotionally adjusted counterparts. On Overall Aggression, the mean score for emotionally maladjusted group is 79.55 and SD is 17.00, as compared to the mean of 71.10 and SD of 16.71 for emotionally adjusted group. The t-ratio has come out to be 3.79, which is significant at .01 level. This indicates that as far as the Overall Aggression is concerned; emotionally maladjusted adolescents are more aggressive than emotionally adjusted counterparts.

Subjects are then compared to the score of the two variables of Self Esteem i.e. Personally Perceived Self (PPS) and Socially Perceived Self (SPS). There are significant differences found on both variables of Self Esteem. On the Personally Perceived Self, the mean and SD of emotionally maladjusted group are 134.33 and 20.49 respectively whereas these are 146.43 and 19.75 for the emotionally adjusted group. The t-ratio is 4.54 which is significant at .01 level. It indicates that emotionally adjusted adolescents are having higher on personally perceived self as compared to their emotionally maladjusted counterparts. Lastly, significant differences are found for the Socially Perceived Self (SPS) variable. The mean score on this variable for emotionally maladjusted group is 132.86 and a SD of 19.49, whereas the mean is 144.54 and SD is 19.55 for emotionally adjusted group. The t-ratio is 4.51 which is

significant at .01 level. It indicates that emotionally adjusted adolescents are having higher socially perceived self as compared to emotionally maladjusted participants.

Discriminant Functional Analysis

In order to find discriminant between emotionally maladjusted and adjusted groups, the data were subjected to discriminant function analyses. The method of discriminant function analyses which was used for present study was stepwise method (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989).

This stepwise analysis picks up the variables one by one on the basis of discriminant value of respective variables. The analysis was conducted with the criteria of F to enter is 3.84 and F to remove is 2.71 with probability of F to remove is .1 and minimum tolerance. F to remove and tolerance statistics play important role in such analyses. Sometimes a variable entered in the equation loses significance after the entry of some other variables. Therefore such a variable needs to be removed from the equation. Tolerance is a statistics, which serve as a check against collinearity among variables and in accuracy in predicate equation. A variable having small tolerance is supposed to be removed from the equation.

Table-2 shows the results of discriminant analysis and perusal of these results indicate that five variables related to Mental Health and Self Esteem contribute significantly to the prediction of emotionally maladjusted and adjusted group membership. These results clearly indicate that five variables which are related to Mental Health and Self Esteem entered in the discriminant equation which differentiate between emotionally maladjusted and adjusted groups.

The Wilks Lambda coefficient appears to be decreasing with entry of new variable. Lambda value is an indicator of lack of discrimination by the variables equation. Higher value shows less discrimination. If the value of Lambda is exactly 1.00 it means the variable does not show any differentiation between groups. The Lambda coefficient of four variables ranges between .85 and .70 for variables Emotional Stability, Self Concept, Overall Adjustment, Socially Perceived Self and Autonomy, respectively.

Table-2
Discriminant Functional Analysis

Step	Wilks Lambda	df	F	p
Emotional Stability	.85	1/226	39.10	.001
Self Concept	.76	2/225	23.19	.001
Overall Adjustment	.74	3/224	19.65	.001
Socially Perceived Self	.72	4/223	17.39	.001
Autonomy	.70	5/222	15.49	.001

The variable Emotional Stability being the major contributor to the group discrimination entered the equation at step one. The Wilks Lambda of the variable is .85 which is the highest among the variables which entered in the equation. The F-value of discriminant equals to 39.10 (df 1/226) which is significant at .001 level. Therefore Emotional Stability is variable which discriminate poorly among emotionally maladjusted and adjusted group of adolescents.

The next discriminant which entered in the equation is Self concept. The Wilks Lambda for the variable is .76 and the F-value is 23.19 (df 2/225) which is significant at .001 probability level. The third discriminant which entered the equation is Overall Adjustment. The Wilks Lambda of the variable is .74 and the F-value is 19.65 (df 3/224) which is significant at .001 level of probability. It is clear that from above results that Self concept and Overall adjustment discriminate well between adolescents having emotionally maladjusted and adjusted group. The fourth discriminant which entered the equation is Socially Perceived Self. The Wilks

Lambda of the variable is .72 and the F-value is 17.39 (df 4/223) which is significant at .001 probability level. The next and last discriminant which entered the equation is Autonomy. The Wilks Lambda of the variable is .70 which the lowest among the variables entered in the discriminant equation. The F-value for this variable is 15.49 (df 5/222) which is statistically significant at .001 level. It is clear that all above results that Emotional Stability, Self Concept, Overall Adjustment, Socially Perceived self and Autonomy discriminant between adolescents having emotionally maladjusted and adjusted group. It is clear from the predictor frequencies given in Table-3 that out of 114 cases of emotionally maladjustment, 80 were correctly identified and 34 cases were not identified correctly whereas out of 114 cases of emotionally adjusted, 88 work correctly identify and 26 were not identified correctly. The percentage of correct identification is 70% among emotionally maladjusted group and 77% among emotionally adjusted group in total about 74 % of the classification is correct.

Table-3
Predicted Classification of Emotionally Maladjusted and Adjusted Group

	Emotionally Maladjusted	Emotionally Adjusted	Total
Emotionally Maladjusted	80	34	114
%	70%	30%	100%
Emotionally Adjusted	26	88	114
%	23%	77%	100%

Discussion

In general, most of the findings of the present study are in support of the hypotheses. These findings are discussed in the light of earlier research. One of the findings of present study is that maladjusted adolescents have higher mental health problems as compared to their emotionally adjusted counterparts . It is found that emotionally

adjusted adolescents are more emotionally stable, have better overall adjustment and higher level of self concept as compared to their emotionally maladjusted counterparts. On autonomy and security/insecurity, emotionally adjusted and maladjusted adolescents have more or less same level. This finding is consistent with earlier finding like Witt et al. (2003). On the basis of

these findings, the hypothesis regarding emotionally maladjusted adolescents having poor mental health as compared to emotionally adjusted adolescents is accepted.

Significant differences are found on aggression between emotionally adjusted and maladjusted adolescents. Emotionally maladjusted adolescents are having higher level of anger, physical aggression and hostility as compared to emotionally adjusted adolescents. On verbal aggression both emotionally adjusted and maladjusted adolescents are having more or less same level. So the hypothesis 3 regarding there are no difference on aggression between emotionally adjusted and maladjusted adolescents is rejected. More studies are required to establish the difference between these groups.

Significant differences are found on self esteem between emotionally adjusted and maladjusted adolescents. Emotionally adjusted adolescents are having higher level of personal and socially perceived self as compared to emotionally maladjusted counterparts. Emotionally adjusted people perceive themselves better personally and in social conditions whereas emotionally maladjusted individuals consider themselves lower than others and not able to work properly and deal social conditions appropriately. Similar findings were observed in recent studies (Ningamma & Armin, 2010; Pasha & Munaf, 2013; Tunde & Boluwatife, 2015). So the hypothesis regarding emotionally maladjusted group is likely to have poor self esteem as compared to adjusted group is also accepted.

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